



DOHA INSTITUTE  
FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

Institutional Effectiveness and Quality  
Assurance Framework

Office of Institutional Effectiveness  
and Quality Assurance

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# **Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Policy**

## **I. Introduction**

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) utilizes a formal framework for Institutional Effectiveness (IE) and Quality Assurance (QA) to ensure that it is effectively and efficiently attaining its mission in the following areas:

- Academic programs;
- Research;
- Academic services;
- Administrative services;
- Public service.

This framework also guarantees the advancement of the institution through regular monitoring and evaluation of academic programs and administrative departments, and the use of the evaluation results for continuous improvement.

DI's commitment to the principles below sets the scope of work for institutional effectiveness and quality assurance and gives direction and guidance to its activities and functions:

- Pursuing academic excellence;
- Benchmarking of DI's academic and administrative standards with peer institutions;
- Improving student learning experience;
- Fostering self-evaluation as means of development;
- Participative decision-making in partnership with stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, employers, and others;
- Collegiality and collaboration among internal and external peers as vital means to identify areas for improvement and exchange of best practices;
- Continuous review and improvement of the institutional effectiveness and quality assurance framework and its practices.

## **II. Policy Statement**

DI realizes this framework by implementing two primary processes: (A) the internal annual assessment of academic programs and administrative departments; and (B) the internal and external periodic review of academic programs.

Both processes work together in complementarity. The first process is internal and focuses on realizing and demonstrating institutional effectiveness in both academic programs and administrative departments, while the second is a broader process of assuring and improving the quality of the academic provision of each program at DI using an external peer review component.

## **A. Annual Assessment**

The purpose of the annual assessment process is to determine internally whether DI' units, academic and administrative, are meeting the goals they have established for themselves to fulfill DI's mission. It also enables the units to use assessment results towards continuous improvement.

All units shall conduct an annual assessment throughout the academic year culminating in an end-of-year assessment report.

The annual assessment is a cyclical process comprised of three phases:

### **1. Planning**

Each unit defines its goals for the year and how it is planning to assess itself. Each unit is normally expected to provide the following:

- **Mission statement and general goal(s)** of the unit and how they are aligned with DI's mission and strategic plan/directions;
- **Objectives and outcomes** that are clear and aligned with the unit's mission and goals. For academic programs, this consists of program and course objectives and student learning outcomes. For administrative departments, this consists of operational and functional objectives and outcomes;
- **Assessment methods** that are aligned with objectives and outcomes and are able to measure how the latter were achieved;
- **Targets and levels of success** that indicate an overall level of satisfactory performance in relation to achieving objectives and outcomes.

### **2. Assessment**

Each unit will conduct the assessment activities it has described in the planning phase above. The unit will analyze and evaluate the assessment data to determine the extent to which outcomes have been accomplished and whether the targets and levels of success have been met. The unit is expected to provide a summary of collected data and its analysis in the end-of-year assessment report.

### **3. Improvement**

Each unit will use the assessment results to develop plans for improvement for the following year. During the subsequent planning phase, the unit will provide evidence that it has used assessment results in its planning for the next year and may want to modify expected outcomes, assessment tools, and/or targets of success based on improvements it has identified.

The procedures and guidelines for conducting the annual assessment, including the template for the annual assessment report, annual assessment timeline, and samples/examples of assessment are enclosed in the "IE and QA Guidelines".

## **B. Periodic Review of Academic Programs**

The periodic review compliments and expands on the annual assessment conducted by the academic programs. It is a comprehensive evaluation activity based on a reflective self-study prepared by the program being evaluated.

The periodic review is twofold, internal and external. The internal review is overseen by the Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Committee (IEQAC) and precedes the external one, which is conducted by a panel of external reviewers outside of DI.

The aim of the periodic review is to examine and evaluate the program's academic delivery, quality of teaching and learning, learning experience of the students, adequacy of the supporting services, the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and any relevant challenges and priorities that need to be addressed.

The periodic review verifies that DI's academic programs meet international standards of academic excellence, which DI has adopted through reviewing and considering the following accrediting and quality assurance bodies: the Quality Assurance Agency in the United Kingdom (QAA), the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET).

Moreover, in the design of its graduate programs, DI references the QAA's "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement" and more specifically the "Framework for Higher Education Qualifications" as a qualification descriptor for the award of a master's degree at Level Seven (7). The periodic review will verify that the DI programs objectives and learning outcomes are consistent with and conforming to the specifications set in the above documents.

All degree-awarding programs are required to undergo a periodic review every three (3) years. At later stages of DI's development, the review span may be extended, after reaching a steady and mature stage of operation, to a four (4) or five (5) years duration.

Degree-awarding programs that are accredited by an internationally recognized body are not subject to the DI periodic review as long as they are maintaining valid accreditation.

The procedures and guidelines for the periodic review including the timeline, standards for the self-study, self-study template, and the guidelines for appointing the external peer reviewers along with the evaluation guidelines are described in the "IE and QA Guidelines".

### **III. Administration of the Policy**

Ultimate responsibility of all IE and QA activities set within this policy resides with the President, who delegates this responsibility to the Provost (Vice President for Academic Affairs), Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) and the Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Committee (IEQAC).

The IEQAC is an institution-wide committee appointed by the President, and should have at least one representative of each School and of the academic/administrative services, in addition to the OIE Director. The President appoints the chair of the committee from among its members.

The IEQAC has oversight of the annual assessments for academic programs and their periodic reviews and the annual assessments for administrative departments, including the appraisal of assessment results and actions plans.

Administrative responsibility of the implementation of this policy is provided by the OIE, including the responsibility for:

- providing resources and support to all units in conducting the annual assessments and periodic reviews;

- collaborating with program heads and administrative department directors, as needed, on issues arising from the annual assessment;
- leading and supporting the development and delivery of periodic training on QA practices, planning, and assessment;
- reporting to the President on the conduct of all the assessments and periodic reviews; identifying major findings, strengths and weaknesses; and recommending necessary actions to be taken with regards to IE and QA.

The responsibility for conducting the annual assessments and periodic reviews resides with the relevant deans, heads of programs, and administrative department directors.

The results of the assessments and the review will inform the decision making processes and planning at the level of all units. The consolidation of these results and the overall QA and IE reports from the OIE will feed into the DI strategic plan.

# Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

This document outlines the major components of DI's Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (IE&QA) Framework and the activities and processes for implementing the "IE&QA Policy" through its two major activities: the academic periodic review and the annual assessment process. It also serves as a reference document for faculty and staff to use when conducting annual assessments and periodic reviews.

The IE&QA Framework is an overarching system of procedures and activities aimed at ensuring that DI attains its mission (institutional effectiveness) and assures and enhances the quality of its academic provision (quality assurance).

**Institutional effectiveness** is the systematic process of measuring and assessing the performance of an institution in relation to its mission. Such assessment activities are shaped by the institution's mission and strategic plan and are closely linked to the planning process of the institution. Effectiveness is demonstrated through assessment activities conducted at the level of academic and administrative units, on an annual and periodic basis. Assessment results are used to inform programmatic and administrative decisions, strategic planning, budget requests, and resource allocations.

**Quality Assurance** is a system used to ensure that an institution's academic standards are well defined and verified, are consistent with similar standards locally and internationally, and the quality level of learning, research and community involvement are adequate, and meet stakeholders' expectations. The periodic review of academic programs is a cornerstone activity within this system and essentially serves to verify that DI's academic programs meet international standards of academic excellence through a self-reflection process that is reviewed by external peers.

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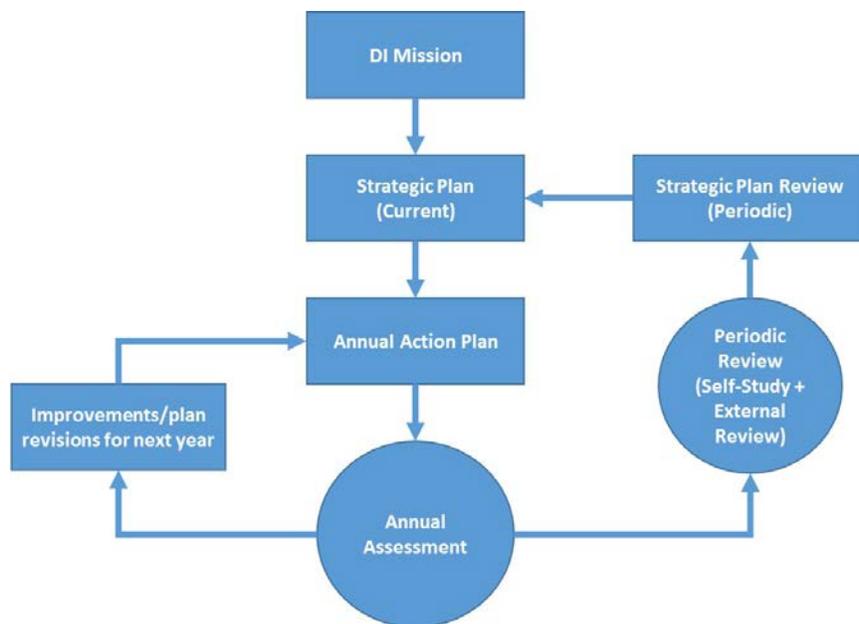
<sup>1</sup> The DI would like to acknowledge the following sources as they were consulted and referenced while developing the framework:

- Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Template for a Self-Study Report;
- Guidelines to Periodic Review for Academic Programs (American University of Beirut);
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA);
- Self-Study Guide by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC);
- Self-Study Instructions by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA);
- Official Site Visit Manual by NASPAA;
- Standards for Licensure and Accreditation by the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA) in the United Arab Emirates; and
- Licensing and Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Institutions by the Supreme Education Council (SEC), Higher Education Institute in Qatar.

The citations of the above resources can be found at the end of this document, in the Bibliography.

It is important to note that quality assurance and institutional effectiveness are inter-related streams that ensure that the institution achieves its mission in the best possible way while continuously developing.

The workflow below illustrates how annual assessment and periodic review work interactively to guarantee that the DI regularly and systematically reviews its annual action and operational plans while feeding into the strategic plan review.



## II. Annual Assessment

### A. Overview of the Process

All units at DI, whether academic programs or administrative departments, will conduct an annual assessment to determine whether they are meeting the goals they have established for themselves and to use these assessment results towards continuous improvement for the following year.

The annual assessment is a recurring process that starts at the beginning of each academic year and is completed by the end of that year.

All units will complete the following parts of the annual assessment report template (Appendix A) by November of each academic year: the mission, goals, objectives and outcomes of the unit for the current year, the assessment methods, and the targets and levels of success.

The major objectives and outcomes for academic programs are the educational objectives and student learning outcomes. Whereas for administrative departments, they are the intended operational objectives and outcomes of a unit in any given year.

By the end of the current academic year – August for administrative departments and June for academic programs – the units will complete the remaining components of the annual assessment report template by documenting and analyzing the assessment results obtained and how these results will be used in improvements for the following year including impact on resources.

The IEQAC will review the first partial submission of the reports at the beginning of the year and the full reports at the end of each academic year (August-September) and provide feedback to the units on the improvement plans they have developed.

The IEQAC will also provide the President with an annual QA and IE report summarizing results of all assessments and identifying major findings, strengths and weakness, recommendations, and necessary actions to be taken. The report will also highlight improvements in various units and services and provide evidence that results have been used in planning.

The report, will be disseminated to all units at DI. It will also be submitted to the DI Council and will feed into the institutional-level operational planning for the following years as well as the strategic plan at the time of its periodic review.

Moreover, the report will be published internally on the DI website.

The annual assessment process will facilitate this alignment by ensuring that operational objectives and outcomes for administrative units as well as educational objectives and student learning outcomes for academic programs both respond to the strategic plan and goals of DI in service of its mission.

## **B. Components of the Annual Assessment (The Report)**

The report is the main deliverable of the annual assessment process and includes all the major components needed to produce an assessment and improvement plan at the end of the year. A template (Appendix A) is provided for all units to guide and standardize the assessment process. The template captures the major components of the annual assessment and is structured as follows:

### **1. Mission Statement and Goals**

Each unit should have a mission statement that defines the overall purpose(s) the unit aims to achieve. It should also show how the unit's mission connects and contributes to the overall DI mission.

The unit should also define general goals that help achieve its mission. Goals are statements that provide the scope and priorities of the unit's academic or administrative activities and functions, and set the basis of defining the unit's objectives and outcomes.

Goals are general statements that do not change year to year and are normally not directly measurable (as opposed to objectives and outcomes). Objectives and outcomes can be measured and provide evidence of how well a program or a department is achieving its goals. All goals should have measurable objectives and outcomes linked to them.

An example of an academic program goal is:

- The Master of Public Administration (MPA) prepares students for careers in public service and non-governmental organizations.

An example of an administrative department goal is:

- The IT department will deliver products and services that meet the needs of the DI community and its stakeholders, and achieve the highest level of customer satisfaction.

### **2. Objectives and Outcomes**

Objectives and outcomes are clear and specific statements that are derived from the unit's goals (each goal may have more than one outcome) which, in turn, will determine the effectiveness of meeting these goals (how well the unit is achieving its goals).

Each unit should describe specific objectives and outcomes using measurable actionable verbs and specific content.

For an **academic program**, there are two types of objectives/outcomes. The first relates to the students' learning and is referred to as program educational objectives or Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). These describe what the students will have gained as a result of their educational experience, and are directly linked to the knowledge and understanding, and skills students will have acquired at the end of their program.

The program objectives and outcomes are the main educational concepts that cover all the courses that create a program, and as such, the program should describe where in the curriculum each student learning outcome is covered and, where applicable, specify *when* the student should be able to attain an outcome.

For example:

- Students completing the Master of Public Policy will demonstrate understanding of policy development and analysis.
- Students completing the Master of Sociology and Anthropology will be able to write a research article that contributes to the field.

Moreover, in developing the program's learning outcomes, the following typology extracted from the QAA's "Guidelines for preparing programme specifications"<sup>2</sup> should be referred to:

- knowledge and understanding of a subject is often developed through lectures and seminars. Such direct teaching methods are usually supported by directed study of textbooks and journal articles and by assignment or project work. Knowledge and understanding is often assessed through written examinations, but most if not all assessment methods will require some demonstration of knowledge and understanding.
- intellectual skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and problem solving may be practiced and demonstrated through more active learning processes involving assignments or projects, group-learning activity such as a seminar or tutorial, workshop, or field-based activity. Assessment of intellectual skills can utilize written examinations or problem-based exercises. Independent project work or research dissertations are typically used to demonstrate capability in a range of intellectual skills linked to specialist knowledge, understanding and practical skills.
- practical skills need to be developed through opportunities to practice the activity in an appropriate learning context (eg. field, or workplace placement). Workbooks or guidance manuals may also be used to support learning. Assessment of competence in exercising a practical skill must involve practical demonstration of it.
- transferable/key skills that are readily transferable to employment and other contexts, such as communication, teamwork etc. can be developed through naturally arising opportunities within the curriculum. For example, written communication skills can be developed and assessed through essays or dissertations; oral communication skills through presentations in seminars; or team working skills through collaborative projects. Skills may be developed also through extra-curricular activities including work experience, student representative work, and social and cultural activities.

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<sup>2</sup>"Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications." *Qaa.ac.uk*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Guidelines-for-preparing-programme-specifications.pdf>>. *Now replaced by Expectation A2.2 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards.*

The other type of objectives/outcomes for academic programs are the non-learning ones and they are used to measure the effectiveness of the program itself and can include admission rates, student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, graduation rates, and retention rates. For example:

- MPA graduates will possess the skills necessary to qualify them for employment in the public sector after they graduate.
- Graduates of the Master in History program will be sufficiently prepared to enroll in PhD programs in international universities.

For an **administrative department**, the objectives/outcomes describe operational and administrative targets that the unit intends to accomplish. Examples of administrative objectives/outcomes:

- The student learning process will be supported by IT through the use of the Learning Management System (Moodle);
- All staff and faculty will have their salaries paid in a timely and efficient manner;
- Recruitment and admission activities will result in a diverse and highly qualified student body.

### **3. Assessment Methods**

Assessment methods are tools that will measure how well the unit achieved its stated objectives/outcomes.

For an **academic program**, assessment methods are the tools used to measure the degree to which the program and students meet the expected objectives/outcomes. Each SLO or non-learning program outcome should have at least one measure.

Measures can be direct or indirect and describe short-term and long-term objectives/outcomes. Examples of direct measures include standardized exams, comprehensive tests, and internship evaluations. Examples of indirect measures include student satisfaction surveys, student course evaluations, and graduating students exit surveys. Indirect measures usually strengthen the interpretations one makes from direct measures as they provide more insight. Additionally, methods of assessment can be qualitative or quantitative.

For an **administrative department**, assessment methods are tools used to measure the effectiveness for each intended objective/outcome. Measures can be direct or indirect and describe short-term and long-term objectives/outcomes. Examples of direct measures are direct data collection on certain operations (such as number of visits to a website), whereas examples of indirect measures include satisfaction surveys.

### **4. Targets and Levels of Success**

A target is the desired or expected result from the measurement of an objective/outcome. It specifies the level of success or effectiveness needed to determine whether an outcome or a goal has been achieved.

Therefore, once measures have been identified, it is important that targets are established/specified by the program and departments for each of the outcomes.

Targets should be set at a realistic level where it allows the unit to verify that a specific outcome has been achieved. Targets can also be adjusted based on changes or improvements made to a program or department over time.

For an **academic program**, examples of targets and levels of success could be:

- 80% of students will complete the program successfully in two years.

For an **administrative department**, examples of targets and levels of success could be:

- 90% of students at the DI will use the Learning Management System (Moodle).
- 95% of IT issues will be resolved in a timely manner as per the IT policy.
- Reimbursement claims for faculty and staff will be processed within two business days.

#### **5. Reporting Results and Analysis (Conducting the Assessment)**

The actual assessment is carried out at the end of the year by measuring the outcomes using the assessment methods described, and by analyzing and interpreting the results relative to the target levels that were set for each objective/outcome. The analysis should answer the following questions:

- Did the unit reach its target(s)? If not, what could be the reason(s) it did not reach them?
- To what extent do these results support the conclusion that the unit is meeting an objective/outcome? Was the assessment measure flawed or are external circumstances to blame?
- Was there something done last year that might explain the current results (if applicable)? Have last year's improvement plans influenced the findings this year? If results did not improve, will the unit follow the same improvements of last year or will it change them?
- If the results are credible but are lower than expectations, what would be possible explanation(s) on why that could be the case?

It is important to note that if results are weaker than expected, these should not be viewed negatively, but rather as opportunities to improve the performance of the unit.

The purpose of this analysis is essentially to help the unit in two ways: (A) determine the unit's performance and effectiveness, and (B) help identify the changes to be made to improve in the following year.

#### **6. Improvements for the Next Academic Year**

Improvements are the steps that the unit will need to take in following academic year to enhance the unit's program offerings, teaching, resources or any other feature of the program that will advance objectives/outcomes (academic) or performance and services (administrative). These improvements will constitute the unit's improvement plan.

In the annual assessment report, the unit shall provide the following information:

- A detailed description of the recommended improvements and how they will enhance student learning outcomes and program objectives (academic) or how they will address a department's performance issues (administrative).
- A reference to improvements of previous year's improvement plan highlighting how proposed improvements this year are different or similar.
- An implementation plan including a timeline.
- A description of resources required for the implementation plan, if applicable.

Example of improvements based on the use of assessment results include:

- A result from the student course evaluation surveys in the HIS101 course indicate that library resources in the field are inadequate.  
Improvement: Request library to acquire the needed resources in the next budgetary cycle.

- IT satisfaction survey indicates that users suffer from slow internet bandwidth. Improvement: Increase bandwidth to accommodate the staff bandwidth needs.

## **C. Other Elements that Support the Annual Assessment of Academic Programs**

To ensure adequate annual planning and assessment of academic programs, the OIE will coordinate, monitor, and provide the necessary support of the following:

### **1. Program Specification**

The Program Specification Document is required from all programs and is a major component of the Program File.

The program specification will document the conformance of the program design and specification with the "Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland," "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement," and "Guidelines for preparing programme specifications."<sup>3</sup>

To support programs in writing their specification document, a specification template and guidelines have been included in Appendix E of this framework.

### **2. Program and Course Files**

Each program will retain the following materials:

- The Program Specification Document (see section 1 above) that includes information about the program such as (but not limited to) its mission, goals, objectives/student learning outcomes, structure (for e.g. credits, admission and degree requirements) and career destinations;
- The program's course materials in the form of Course Files (see below);
- Assessment surveys such as students' evaluation of their program, graduation survey, employer survey and their analyses;
- Annual assessment and evaluation report of the program;
- Copies of all student theses;
- The program self-study and the external reviewers' report when available.

In addition, at the level of each course, the program will retain a course file that includes:

- The syllabus of each course in a program that includes the course's details such as (but not limited to) its name, credit hours, instructor(s), requisites, duration, as well as its goals, student learning outcomes and their relation with program objectives/outcomes, teaching methods, assignments, assessment tools, weekly course syllabus plan;
- Assessment instruments (examinations, assignments, etc.) and marking criteria/guidelines used in the course;
- A representative sample of student papers/exams with evidence of instructor feedback;

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<sup>3</sup>"Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications." *Qaa.ac.uk*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Guidelines-for-preparing-programme-specifications.pdf>>. *Now replaced by Expectation A2.2 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards.*

- Teaching materials used in the course by the instructor;
- Student evaluation of the course;
- Instructor's evaluation of his/her course including analysis of student performance.

### **3. Student Course Evaluation**

The OIE will administer a Student Course Evaluation, in the form of a survey, to be completed by students for the courses they have registered in during a given semester. The surveys collect feedback on courses in terms of content, delivery, quality and methods of instruction, and learning environment (see Appendix B for an example of the survey).

The OIE collects and analyzes the survey results and shares them with the relevant course instructor and heads of programs. The OIE will report major findings to the Deans and the Provost.

## **III. Periodic Review of Academic Programs**

### **A. Overview of the Process**

The periodic review serves to assess and appraise the programs at DI by ensuring that the academic standards of graduate degrees awarded are of good standing and comparable with peer higher education institutions regionally and beyond. It is a quality assurance mechanism that supports confidence in the academic degrees DI awards and is an integral part of the IE&QA Framework at DI.

The foundation of the review process is the self-study. In the self-study, a program engages in a comprehensive analysis of its operations including teaching and learning; faculty member profiles; and student profiles through the collection and analysis of data, and the use of the results of this analysis to make recommendations for program improvement and development.

The self-study is organized and prepared in reference to the standards stipulated in the next section. These standards establish criteria and guidelines for academic quality and function as a framework for program self-evaluation and improvement. By meeting these standards, the program demonstrates that it:

- has clearly defined mission goals that are appropriate to serve DI's mission;
- has assembled and organized the resources necessary to achieve its mission and goals;
- is achieving its mission and goals;
- and has the ability to continue to achieve its mission and goals and improve the ways it does so.

The self-study is the responsibility of the program, through its head, who may delegate all or parts of the study to faculty of the program at his/her discretion.

All program members must take part in reviewing and endorsing the draft self-study before finalizing it.

When the self-study is finalized, the head of the program will submit it to the respective Dean who may comment on it or ask for it to be revised again by the program.

Once endorsed by the Dean, the self-study is submitted to the IEQAC, which ensures its compliance with the policy and guidelines set within this document.

The IEQAC will send a preliminary report to the head of the program and copy the relevant Dean regarding the suitability of the self-study for submission to the external peer-reviewers. The report may ask for further clarifications and suggest recommendations and changes to the self-study.

The head of program will respond to the report by clarifying any issues, discussing the recommendations and suggested changes, and if needed review the self-study and resubmit.

The IEQAC, in consultation with the relevant Dean, will decide if the self-study is ready to be submitted for external review. At this point, the self-study is sent to the Provost who in turn sends it to the appointed external reviewers.

The nomination, selection, and appointment guidelines of the external reviewers are specified in Section D.

The external reviewers are expected to commence their evaluation of the self-study, conduct the site visit, and submit the external evaluation report to the Provost within six (6) weeks of receiving the self-study. The schedule for the visit is coordinated by the OIE in consultation with the Dean and the head of program.

Normally visits will be scheduled less than four (4) weeks from the date of dispatch of the self-study to the external review team.

No visits shall take place during weekends or holidays.

The external evaluation report must be written in reference to the standards in section B and must address the evaluation guidelines set in Section E.

When received, the Provost sends the external evaluation report with his/her instructions, to the IEQAC, the relevant Dean, and the head of the program.

The head of the program examines the external evaluation report and prepares a formal response in consultation with program members. The response is sent to the Dean who may wish to prepare an independent response. The response(s) is sent to the Provost and the IEQAC.

If needed, the response(s), in addition to any clarifications and corrections of errors of fact in the external evaluation report, may be sent to the external reviewers for a final evaluation report, which is then submitted to the Provost.

The head of the program is requested to submit to the Dean a draft action plan for improvements of the program based on the self-study and the external evaluation report. The Dean will review and approve the action plan.

The Provost calls for a concluding meeting with the Dean, head of program, a representative of the IEQAC, and the Director of the OIE, to discuss implementation of the action plan based on the program review.

The head of the program is responsible for implementing the action plan and working with the program members to this end.

The Dean of the school will monitor the implementation of the approved action plan in the year(s) following the review. The OIE will provide any needed support to facilitate the implementation of the plan.

All degree-awarding programs at DI are reviewed every three (3) years.

Programs maintaining a valid accreditation from an internationally recognized body are exempted from the periodic review; however, they will still need to submit a self-study, the accrediting body's evaluation report, and the program's action plan to the relevant Dean, the Provost, the IEQAC, and the OIE Director. In such cases, programs will use the same self-study and the standards, requirements, and timelines set by the relevant accrediting body.

The OIE, in consultation with the IEQAC or its chair, will oversee the integrity and administration of the entire review process. It also provides, when needed, continuous advice and support to programs on conducting the self-study.

## **B. Standards**

International accreditation standards have practically converged to a universal set of benchmarks of quality and excellence in education. DI has adopted the standards below after consideration of a number of leading accrediting bodies.<sup>4</sup>

These standards serve as a guiding framework for DI's own quality assurance and continuous improvement, and also serves as a means for DI to achieve international institutional accreditation in the future in line with its strategic aspirations.

### **Standard One: The Academic Program**

The program must have a defined mission and goals consistent with the mission of the DI and the needs of the program's various constituencies. There must be a documented and effective process for the periodic review and revision of these goals to ensure they remain consistent with the institutional mission.

The program must have defined educational objectives/student learning outcomes that prepare graduates to attain the program goals. There must be a documented and effective process for the periodic review and revision of the student learning outcomes.

The program shall have a plan of study and a curriculum that aligns with the program goals. The program curriculum and its associated prerequisite structures must support the attainment of student learning outcomes. The program curriculum shall integrate an interdisciplinary component that helps attain the student learning outcomes.

The program must regularly use appropriate, documented processes for assessing and evaluating the extent to which the student learning outcomes are being attained. The results of these evaluations must be systematically utilized as input for the continuous improvement of the program.

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<sup>4</sup> This include mainly ABET and references to NEASC, NASPAA and QAA.

The program design shall conform to the QAA's "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement"<sup>5</sup> and the "Framework for Higher Education Qualifications"<sup>6</sup> as the descriptor for qualification at the master's degree level.

### **Standard Two: Students**

Consistent with its mission and the DI mission, the program defines the characteristics of the student body it seeks to serve and shall have student recruitment, admission, and enrollment criteria and practices that are appropriate for its goals.

Student performance will be evaluated and progress will be monitored to foster success in attaining student learning outcomes, thereby enabling programs to meet their program goals.

The program will ensure the implementation of DI policies for accepting both new and transfer students, and awarding appropriate academic credit for courses taken at other institutions.

The program will ensure the availability of services such as academic advising, career counseling, and job placement assistance.

The program will ensure the implementation of DI procedures to verify and document that students who graduate meet all graduation requirements.

The program will subscribe to promoting diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions, and student support in line with DI policy.

### **Standard Three: Faculty**

The program faculty must have the appropriate academic and professional qualifications to pursue the program's mission and goals. They must collectively have the necessary competencies to cover all of the curricular areas of the program and must be sufficient to accommodate adequate levels of student-faculty interaction, student advising and counseling, and to fulfill other tasks assigned to them.

The competence of the faculty may be judged by factors such as educational background, research, teaching effectiveness, administrative experience, and general contribution and service to the DI.

Faculty will contribute to the program development through regular revision of program goals and learning outcomes as well as the implementation of a program of study that fosters the attainment of student learning outcomes.

### **Standard Four: Research**

The program, in line with DI status as a research-led institution, supports research and scholarly activities, and contributes to the creation, advancement, and application of knowledge in its field of study.

The program in its allocation of teaching duties ensures the load is calibrated to allow faculty a sufficient portion of their time for research and research-related activities relevant to the program and the DI

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<sup>5</sup> "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement." *Qaa.ac.uk*. Quality Assurance Agency, Sept. 2015. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>>.

<sup>6</sup> "The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland." *Qaa.ac.uk*. Quality Assurance Agency, Aug. 2008. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf>>.

research strategy. The program also utilizes available general DI and School-based research funds/grants and research support facilities.

In its research drive, the program is aware that while supporting research per se, it is also indirectly supporting student learning experience, as the best, state-of-the-art teaching can only be research-inspired. In this connection, the program encourages and supports students to conduct research and participate in conferences or to organize their own workshops, guest speaker lectures etc.

### **Standard Five: Facilities and Learning Resources**

Classrooms, offices, and IT services must be adequate to support attainment of the student learning outcomes and to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

The library services must be adequate to support the scholarly and professional activities of the students and faculty in the program.

### **Standard Six. Institutional Support**

Leadership and governance must be adequate to ensure the quality and continuity of the program.

Resources including institutional services, financial support, and staff provided to a program must be adequate to meet its needs.

The resources available to the program must be sufficient to attract, retain, and provide for the continued professional development of qualified faculty.

### **C. The Self-study**

Self-study is at the heart of the review and evaluation process. It is both a product and a process which serves a dual purpose: quality assurance and continuous improvement<sup>7</sup>. The self-study presents a concise picture of the program as an entity with a sense of its history, an understanding of its present, and a vision for its future. By clearly identifying its strengths and challenges, the program demonstrates its capacity for improvement.

Through the self-study, a program conducts a thorough examination of its components in light of its stated mission and goals and by referencing the standards above.

To support the programs in conducting the self-study, the OIE provides a self-study template for referencing (Appendix C).

### **D. Nomination, Selection, and Appointment of External Peer Reviewers**

An external reviewer is an independent academic expert working outside of DI and its affiliated entities in an academic institution in the same field of learning as the program to which he/she is invited to review.

The reviewer's academic and professional affiliation and accomplishments will attest to his/her likelihood of having the academic authority and qualifications necessary to command the respect of academic peers in the program and to fulfil the objectives of the periodic review as stated in the above section.

The procedure for the appointment of external peer reviewers is as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> Definition adapted from NEASC. "Self-Study Guide." *Cihe.neasc.org*. New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2013. Page 4. Web. <[https://cihe.neasc.org/downloads/PUBLICATIONS/self\\_study\\_guide\\_2013.pdf](https://cihe.neasc.org/downloads/PUBLICATIONS/self_study_guide_2013.pdf)>.

1. The head of the program, in consultation with other faculty members of the program, will nominate at least five (5) external reviewers to the respective Dean who selects two to three (2 to 3) names from the list of nominees, having regarded the requirements and objectives of periodic review, the need for independence, avoidance of conflicts of interest, as well as other conditions and guidelines as set in this document.
2. The nomination should be accompanied by CVs of the nominees.
3. External reviewers should be nominated from national and international higher education institutions and universities. Appointments should be drawn as far as possible from a wide variety of institutional contexts to ensure that programs benefit from cross-fertilization and scrutiny and in order to prevent academic isolation. The DI will seek to draw nominations from a variety of institutions, and within a single discipline should avoid multiple nominations from the same institution.
4. When nominating an external reviewer, the nominee's profile must demonstrate:
  - appropriate competence and experience, and continuing active involvement in the relevant field(s) of study. This will be indicated through relevant academic qualifications and publications at the level of Associate Professor or higher;
  - experience in managing and assuring academic standards and the quality of higher education provision at organizational and/or faculty or school level;
  - experience of participating as a chair, panel member, assessor or equivalent in the periodic review process of their own institution or of others;
  - experience of assessing the achievements of students on masters programs at their own institution;
  - familiarity with the level of award of the relevant program to be reviewed;
  - awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula;
  - good communication skills, and proficiency in Arabic and English;
  - ability to work effectively as part of a team;
  - ability to adhere to agreed protocols, procedures and deadlines.
5. No external reviewer shall be nominated or appointed in the following cases:
  - anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a faculty member or student involved with the program of study under review;
  - anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the program of study under review;
  - anyone significantly recently involved or currently holds substantive collaborative research activities with a faculty member involved in the delivery and management of the program under review.
6. Nominated reviewers will be asked to declare any conflict of interest regarding the above or any other points.
7. In nominating external reviewers, the head of program will take account of the requirements of the program, and discipline area, the need for independence, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and the rest of the conditions and guidelines set within this document.

8. The Dean of the School will choose a team leader from the selected external reviewers, and will send the names of the team of reviewers to the Provost who will issue an official appointment letter clarifying the details of the appointment, the program to be reviewed, the scope of work, and the remuneration details.
9. The team leader will coordinate the work of the reviewers, take lead on drafting and finalizing the report, and act as a link point to DI.
10. All expenses associated with the external review including reviewer remuneration, travel, site visits, any other incurred costs will be borne by DI.
11. The agreed-upon remuneration will be paid upon the completion and receipt of the external review report by the Provost.
12. The reviewers must agree and sign the appointment letter sent by the Provost including the “No Conflict of Interest” clause of the appointment letter before commencing with any work in relation to the review.

## **E. Evaluation Guidelines**

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the quality of the program, identify challenges and weaknesses, and recommend improvements to mitigate them. Generally, the evaluation serves the following objectives:

- assess the program against each of the standards set above;
- verify and analyze the program as presented in the self-study;
- report findings and recommendations for the program.

To conduct an effective evaluation, the external reviewers need to be aware of the following guidelines, which have been grouped, for the sake of convenience, into three chronological phases.

### **1. Before the Visit**

The external reviewers should:

- Examine and analyze the self-study and any related institutional and program materials thoroughly.
- Decide on issues for further exploration at the site visit.
- Identify any missing documents or further information to be reviewed during the site visit. Prepare a list of such missing materials and share the list with the Director of OIE at least one week before the date of the visit.
- Plan the visit ahead of time and identify to the OIE Director the points of interaction with various stakeholders, including faculty, students, administrators, and others.
- Agree with the OIE Director the date of the site visit and an agenda for the visit.
- Request any arrangements for interviews and meetings with stakeholders that are needed to clarify any concerns or issues in the self-study.

The external reviewers need to keep in mind the following questions when examining the self-study and when conducting the site visit:

- Has the program conducted a candid and complete self-study?
- Does the self-study contain the information and data needed in an organized and well-structured manner?
- Does the self-study address each of the standards of evaluation?

- Is the self-study sufficiently evaluative and self-critical rather than descriptive and complacent?
- What parts of the program, functions or operations require further attention?
- Does the self-study identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for the program, and contain an action plan to address them?

## **2. During the Visit**

Normally, the visit should be no less than two (2) full working days. An illustrative agenda has been provided in Appendix D and can be used at the discretion of the external reviewers.

During the visit, the external reviewers are responsible for the following:

- Verify and validate the information provided in the self-study.
- Further examine issues identified during the analysis of the self-study and identify new issues discovered during the visit.
- Seek and review additional documents/information if required.
- Conduct meetings and interviews with relevant stakeholders such as faculty, students, staff.
- Determine compliance with the standards set in section B above.
- Identify achievements and constraints, strengths and weaknesses of the program.
- Share suggestions for improvements or exchange of best practices.
- Conduct an exit meeting with the Provost to convey the findings of the site visit.

The OIE, in coordination with the head of the concerned program, is responsible for ensuring that the following requirements are met during the visit:

- Communicate to all stakeholders the external reviewers' remit and rights including that they are entitled to meet students of programs they are reviewing.
- Ensure that relevant specific reports, faculty meeting minutes if applicable, documents, and records are available in case the reviewers wish to review them.
- Faculty and administrative staff working for the program are available for interviews during the duration of the visit.
- Classes should be in session and students should be on campus.
- The visits should not take place during semester breaks, holidays or vacations.
- The visit should not coincide with special activities that may hinder the work of the external reviewers.
- A meeting room with necessary IT facilities should be put at the disposal of the external reviewers.
- Administrative and technical (IT) support for the external reviewers should be provided during the duration visit.

## **3. The Evaluation Report**

The external evaluation is a collaborative effort and results in one external evaluation report that is written and signed by all reviewers.

The external reviewers will remain an additional day during the site visit to prepare and agree a draft of their report in outline form, including their main recommendation as per the standards.

In any case, they will submit the final report to the Provost by no more than two weeks of the conclusion of the site visit.

The report should reflect the above decisions and agreements, in particular, the examination of the self-study, evidence gathered during the site-visit, and an evaluative judgment of how well the self-study addresses the standards and the adequacy of the improvement action plan proposed by the self-study.

The reports will be considered at all appropriate institutional levels. Actions arising from the report will be recorded and communicated, among others, to the head of the program and faculty members as appropriate.

The report's length is normally ten (10) to fifteen (15) pages, but could be longer if needed. For the sake of uniformity, the following report structure is suggested:

### **Section One: Introduction**

This section provides a summary of the scope of the evaluation and the review process, including activities conducted during the visit.

### **Section Two: Analysis of the Standards**

This section provides a detailed analysis of how the program fares against the standards including conclusions concerning conformity versus non-conformity towards them. In doing so, the report must address every subsection of the self-study template.

It may include discussions of any additional issues raised by the reviewers that are not related to the standards as long as they are important to the improvement of the program.

### **Section Three: Recommendations and Best Practices**

This section provides recommendations for strengthening the program within the context of the program's mission and goals, including suggestions for how to overcome challenges/ weaknesses that have been pointed out.

It may also include shared best practices that are relevant to the program and its improvement in addition to highlighting how the program compares to similar programs at the regional and international levels.

### **Section Four: Conclusion**

This section concludes the evaluation by summarizing major findings, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Discuss the adequacy and feasibility of the improvements suggested by the program and suggest any possible enhancements.

## **F. Time Frame**

### **Pre-Review Year – Spring Semester**

#### **Preparatory Stage (March – June: 4 months period)**

- The relevant Dean and the OIE Director, will meet with the program head and faculty members of the program under review to brief them on the review process, the contents and expectations of the self-study, and the timeframe.
- The nomination, selection, and appointment for the external reviewers for the program under review will be conducted and finalized.

### **Review Year – Fall Semester**

#### **Self-Study Stage (October – February: 5 months period)**

- The head of the program (or delegated faculty member(s)) will conduct the self-study, and will receive any data needed for the self-study from the OIE and other departments where requested.

- The head of the program and relevant faculty members will receive support in terms of training and assistance by the OIE. The head of the program will track the progress of the self-study and may seek further assistance from the OIE.
- All program members will convene to review the draft self-study before submission to the Dean for review and endorsement.

### Review Year – Spring Semester

#### Evaluation Stage (March – June: 4 months period)

- Self-study will be sent to the Provost to be submitted to the appointed external reviewers.
- External reviewers will examine the self-study of the program under review before arrival to the DI.
- External reviewers are invited to ask for clarifications or request further material within four weeks of receiving the self-study. Response to their requests, if any, will be met through OIE as soon as practicably possible.
- External reviewers will visit the DI.
- External reviewers will send the external evaluation report to the Provost.
- The Dean, the representative of the IEQAC, the OIE director, and the head of program may meet to discuss the implementation of the action plan derived from the program review.
- The head of program will implement the approved action plan and the Dean will monitor the implementation process with required support from OIE.

The program periodic review for DI programs is set as follows:

School	Program	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
SOSH	Comparative Literature			
	History			
	Linguistics and Arabic Lexicography			
	Media and Cultural Studies			
	Philosophy			
	Politics and International Relations			
SPADE	Sociology and Anthropology			
	Development Economics			
	Public Administration and Policy			

**Table 2. Program Review Schedule**

## IV. Other Assessment Tools

In addition to the Student Course, the OIE will administer other surveys, outlined below, at the program level, administrative department level, and DI (institutional) level. More surveys may be developed according to DI needs, such as student exit surveys, employee satisfaction surveys, and alumni surveys.

The purpose of each of these surveys is to measure the quality and effectiveness of different aspects of the DI. The results of such surveys will be used to implement improvements aimed at increasing the quality and effectiveness of various aspects of the DI. The surveys will be developed and administered by the OIE in coordination with the relevant DI units.

### **Surveys for Students**

- Program Evaluation

This survey seeks to collect DI students' feedback on their overall chosen program, rather than at the course level which is the focus of the student course evaluation. The survey will include questions that relate but are not limited to the overall program performance, allowing the student to comment on the courses of the program, whether the goals of the program have been met, the knowledge and skills gained from the program, the impact of the program in preparing the student for his/her career, and suggested improvements to the program. This survey is administered before students' completion of their programs at DI (at the end of the second year of the program if it is a two-year program).

- Student Satisfaction Survey

DI students will be required to complete a Student Satisfaction Survey that aims to collect their feedback on their overall satisfaction at DI in terms of academics, services, and the campus. For example, the survey will include questions that relate but are not limited to academic advising, facilities, quality of student services such as services provided by the library, health, and career centers (where applicable).

- Exit Survey

This type of survey seeks to collect data from students on their views as students at DI and their future plans (career and/or further studies). This survey will usually be completed by students before graduation. One of the goals of this survey is to use feedback to assess and enhance the quality of graduate education at the DI. The exit survey will include questions that relate but are not limited to program outcomes, improvements to the program students completed, faculty, facilities, future plans, and general satisfaction at DI.

- Alumni Survey

This survey will be administered to DI alumni, periodically, with the purpose of following up on the accomplishments and career trajectories post-graduation. The survey seeks to ask DI graduates questions about their current employment (position and place of work) and/or further studies, future plans, continuing involvement with DI, and how their DI program has prepared them for the job market.

### **Survey for other Stakeholders**

- Employers Survey

This survey will be completed by the employers of DI alumni with the aim of determining the performance of DI alumni in their jobs, how well were they prepared for their jobs (in terms of knowledge and skills) by their program at DI, and related skills that still need to be developed by a DI program. This survey is important as it seeks external feedback (outside DI) from employers to comment on DI graduates whose responses can significantly help in identifying how successful DI programs are, and potential

improvement(s) that could be made to the programs in the future. (Note: This survey is not applicable to DI graduates who pursued further academic studies).

### Surveys for Faculty and Staff

- Faculty Satisfaction Survey and Staff Satisfaction Survey

The aim of this survey is to determine the level of satisfaction of faculty members and staff at the DI, and to collect their views on issues such as professional/career development, work environment (teaching for faculty), appointment and promotion processes for faculty, facilities, supervisor or head of program leadership qualities and administration.

## APPENDIX A: Annual Assessment Template

Unit Name:	
Head of Unit Name:	
Academic Year:	

<b>Mission</b>
<p><i>(state your Unit's mission statement)</i></p> <p><i>The mission of [UNIT NAME] is to [PRIMARY PURPOSE] by providing [YOUR PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OR ACTIVITIES] to [YOUR STAKEHOLDERS].” (Add additional clarifying statements)</i></p>

<b>Goals</b>
<p><i>(list your Unit's goals, usually between 3 to 5)</i></p> <p><i>Goal 1</i></p> <p><i>Goal 2</i></p> <p><i>...</i></p>

*For each of your Unit's goals stated above, use the table below and repeat as necessarily to complete all your goals.*

*Objectives; Assessment Methods; and Targets and Levels of Success are due at the beginning of the academic year. The Results and Analysis; Improvements; and Resource Impact are due at the end of the year.*

<b>Goal One: (state goal here)</b>		
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assessment Methods</b>	<b>Targets and Levels of Success</b>
<b>Results and Analysis</b>	<b>Conclusion and Improvements for the following year</b>	<b>Resource Impact on the following year</b>
<b>First Part Submission Date<sup>8</sup></b>		<b>Full Report Submission Date<sup>9</sup></b>
<b>Head of Unit Signature</b>		<b>Head of Unit Signature</b>

<b>Line Manager's Comments (if applicable)</b>

<sup>8</sup> Objectives; Assessment Methods; and Targets and Levels of Success parts of the annual assessment report are submitted at the beginning of the academic year (September – October).

<sup>9</sup> Results and Analysis, Improvements, and Resource Impact are submitted at the end of the academic year (July-August).

Line Manager's Signoff:	
Signoff Date:	

<b>Office of Institutional Effectiveness Feedback</b>	
OIE Director Signature:	
Signature Date:	

## **APPENDIX B: Student Course Evaluation Survey**

Thank you for completing the Doha Institute (DI) Student Course Evaluation for the Fall Semester 2015-2016. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) is conducting this survey to receive your feedback on the quality of your completed course and to better understand your learning needs inside and outside the classroom. Student feedback is vital for course improvement and for providing better student learning experiences. Therefore, we encourage you to be honest and constructive in your answers.

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The answers you provide are strictly confidential. The course instructor will have access to the anonymous results of this survey. or the course. Please note that after submitting this survey, you will not be able to review your answers or make changes.

1. Which program are you currently enrolled in?

- Public Administration and Policy
- Development Economics
- Philosophy
- History
- Sociology and Anthropology
- Politics and International Relations
- Linguistics and Arabic Lexicography
- Comparative Literature (Arabic - Western)
- Media and Cultural Studies

2. Is this a core or an elective course?

- Core
- Elective

3. Do you benefit from a DI scholarship?

- Yes, full-scholarship
- Yes, partial-scholarship
- No

**Part 1. Course Syllabus**

4. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement (5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree”):

**The course syllabus (outline) clearly explained the following elements:**

	<b>5 (Strongly Agree)</b>	<b>4 (Agree)</b>	<b>3 (Neutral)</b>	<b>2 (Disagree)</b>	<b>1 (Strongly Disagree)</b>
Course intended learning outcomes					
Assessment items*					
Weekly syllabus plan (including required and recommended readings)					

\* Assessment items are graded tasks given by the instructors such as papers, research papers, examinations, etc.

Please expand your answer(s) (Optional):

**Part 2: Assessment Items**

5. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree”):

	<b>5 (Strongly Agree)</b>	<b>4 (Agree)</b>	<b>3 (Neutral)</b>	<b>2 (Disagree)</b>	<b>1 (Strongly Disagree)</b>
The grading weight used for each assessment item (such as examination, paper, etc.) was fair.					

The number of assessment items was fair.					
The distribution of the student assessment items across the semester was fair.					
The assigned readings helped me understand the course's key concepts.					
The course assessment items contributed to meeting the course's learning outcomes.					

Please expand your answer(s) (Optional):

**Part 3: Content Delivery and Student-Instructor Engagement**

6. Please rate your level of agreement with the below statements (5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree”):

	5 (Strongly Agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neutral)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)
The course instructor clearly explained the course content with examples and related course topics to one another.					
The course material was delivered at an appropriate pace/speed.					
The instructor appropriately responded to students’					

concerns or questions.					
The instructor encouraged student participation in class.					
It was easy to meet (face-to-face) with the instructor during office hours.					

Please expand your answer(s) (Optional):

**Part 4. Instructor Feedback**

7. Please rate your level of agreement with the below statements (5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree”):

	5 (Strongly Agree)	4 (Agree)	3 (Neutral)	2 (Disagree)	1 (Strongly Disagree)
The feedback provided on assessment item(s) was helpful.					
Assessment item(s) were returned to me in a timely manner.					
The instructor graded submitted work in a fair manner.					
The type of assessment item(s) required was appropriate for the course.					

Please expand your answer(s) (Optional):

**Part 5. Learning Environment**

8. Did you experience difficulties obtaining access to library resources (e.g. reading materials) for your course from the Doha Institute library?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

If “Yes”, please expand your answer:

9. Were the library resources available at the DI library sufficient and adequate for your course content?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

If “No”, please expand your answer:

10. Were the IT resources and services in the classroom adequate to support the delivery of the course content?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

If “No”, please expand your answer:

11. Was the language of instruction used by the instructor clear to you?

- Yes

No

If "No", please expand your answer:

12. Was the DI environment inside and outside class conducive to your learning?

Yes

No

If "No", please expand your answer:

**Part 6. Student Self-Evaluation**

13. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (5 being "Strongly Agree" and 1 being "Strongly Disagree"):

	<b>5 (Strongly Agree)</b>	<b>4 (Agree)</b>	<b>3 (Neutral)</b>	<b>2 (Disagree)</b>	<b>1 (Strongly Disagree)</b>
The course materials enhanced my interest in the course.					
The course materials enhanced my interest in my program.					
I worked hard in this course.					
I learned a great deal in this course.					

Please expand your answer(s) (Optional):

**Part 7. Overall Course Evaluation**

14. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (5 being “Strongly Agree” and 1 being “Strongly Disagree”):

	<b>5 (Strongly Agree)</b>	<b>4 (Agree)</b>	<b>3 (Neutral)</b>	<b>2 (Disagree)</b>	<b>1 (Strongly Disagree)</b>
Overall, I was satisfied with the course.					
Overall, I was satisfied with the instructor’s teaching.					

15. Please outline any improvement(s) you would suggest for the course.

16. Do you have any comments for the instructor that may improve your learning experience?

17. Do you have any other comments, concerns, or challenges you may be facing in terms of your learning which you would like to share? Student may wish to address issues outside of their course in relation to the program and/or DI as a whole.

## APPENDIX C: Program Self-Study Template<sup>10</sup>

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. Institutional Overview

A summary of the DI's mission and goals.

#### B. Overview of the Self-Study

Provide a brief description of the self-study introducing the program to the reviewers and previewing the major themes and accomplishments of the self-study. Highlight how the process was conducted and summarize the findings of the self-study.

#### C. Program Overview and History

Information about the program including the year it started, its organization, and the date of the last periodic review (if applicable).

#### D. Options

List and describe any concentrations included in the program if applicable.

#### E. Program Delivery Modes

Describe the teaching and delivery modes used by this program.

#### F. Public Disclosure

Provide information concerning all the places where the program goals, educational objectives/Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), program structure and curriculum, study plans, relevant policies and guidelines, etc. are available. If this information is posted to the Web, please provide the URLs.

#### G. Program Improvements, Changes, and Pending Concerns From the Previous Periodic Review

Summarize major program changes with an emphasis on improvements occurring since the last periodic review.

Summarize the weaknesses and concerns remaining from the most recent periodic review. Describe the actions taken to address them, including effective dates of actions, if applicable.

### II. ACADEMIC PROGRAM (Standard One)

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<sup>10</sup> Template adapted from ABET of Applied Science Accreditation Commission (R002 8-18-15).

#### **A. Mission Statement**

Provide the DI mission statement and the program mission statement.

#### **B. Program Goals**

List the program goals and state where these can be found. Describe how the program goals are consistent with the mission of the program and the DI.

#### **C. Program Constituencies**

List the program constituencies. Describe how the program goals meet the needs of these constituencies.

#### **D. Process for Review of Program Goals**

Describe the process that periodically reviews the program goals including how the program's various constituencies are involved in this process.

Describe how this process is systematically utilized to ensure that the program's goals remain consistent with the DI mission and the program constituents' needs.

#### **E. Student Learning Outcomes**

Describe the process used for establishing and revising student learning outcomes.

List the student learning outcomes, and indicate where the student learning outcomes are documented.

Describe how student learning outcomes prepare graduates to attain the program goals.

#### **F. Program Curriculum**

- Include the plan of study for students in this program.
- Describe how the curriculum aligns with the program goals.
- Describe how the curriculum and its associated prerequisite structures support the attainment of student learning outcomes.
- State how your program curriculum integrates an interdisciplinary component and how it helps attain the student learning outcomes.
- If your program has a capstone or thesis for students, please describe how this capstone or thesis is based upon the cumulative knowledge and skills acquired in earlier course work.
- Include a syllabus for each course.
- Describe the materials (sample student work such as exams, papers, etc.) that will be available for review during external reviewers' visit to demonstrate the extent of the program curriculum's attainment of each student learning outcome.

#### **G. Continuous Improvement**

Document your processes for regularly assessing and evaluating the extent to which the student learning outcomes are being attained in addition to the extent to which the student learning outcomes are being attained. It should also describe how the results of these processes are utilized to affect continuous improvement of the program.

## **1. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes**

- A listing and description of the assessment processes used to gather the data upon which the evaluation of student learning outcome is based. Examples of data collection processes may include, but are not limited to, specific exam questions, essay questions or other processes that are relevant and appropriate to the program.
- The frequency with which these assessment processes are carried out.
- The expected level of attainment for each of the student learning outcomes.
- Summaries of the results of the evaluation process and an analysis illustrating the extent to which student learning outcomes are being attained.
- An explanation of how results are documented and archived.

## **2. Demonstrating Improvement<sup>11</sup>**

Describe how the results of the evaluation processes for the student learning outcomes and any other available information have been systematically used as input in the continuous improvement of the program. Describe the results of any changes (whether or not effective) in those cases where re-assessment of the results has been completed.

## **H. Conformance to Qualifications Framework**

Include the Program Specification document (Appendix E) that ensures conformance of the program to the QAA's "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement" and the "Framework for Higher Education Qualifications" as the descriptor for qualification at the master's degree level.

## **III. STUDENTS (Standard Two)**

For the sections below, attach any written policies that apply.

### **A. Student Recruitment, Admissions, and Enrollment Criteria and Practices**

Summarize the requirements and process for recruiting, accepting new students into the program, and any enrollment criteria and practices specific to the program.

### **B. Evaluating Student Performance**

Summarize the process by which student performance is evaluated (assessment) and student progress is monitored. Include information on how the program ensures and documents that students are meeting prerequisites and how it handles the situation when a prerequisite has not been met.

### **C. Transfer Students and Transfer Courses**

Summarize the requirements and process for accepting transfer students and transfer credit.

### **D. Academic Advising and Career Guidance**

Summarize the process for academic student advising and career guidance to students. Include information on how often students are advised and who provides the advising.

### **E. Graduation Requirements**

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<sup>11</sup>Copies of assessment materials used as evidence to demonstrate improvement in section (1) above must be available for review at the time of the visit.

Summarize graduation requirements for the program and the process for ensuring and documenting that graduates complete all graduation requirements for the program.

**F. Dissertations and Transcripts of Recent Graduates**

Provide dissertations and grade transcripts for some of the most recent graduates to the peer review team.

Also, provide sample copies of the same students' undergraduate academic transcripts that were used to make an admission decision.

**G. Student Diversity**

Summarize the process by which the program subscribes to promoting diversity and a climate of inclusiveness through its recruitment, admissions, and student support in line with DI policy.

**IV. FACULTY (Standard Three)**

**A. Faculty Qualifications**

Describe the qualifications of the faculty and how they are adequate to cover all curricular areas of the program and also meet any applicable program criteria. This description should include the composition, size, credentials, and experience of the faculty. Provide full C.Vs of faculty in the appendices of the self-study.

**B. Faculty Workload**

Provide a summary of faculty workload and describe this information in terms of workload expectations or requirements for the current academic year.

**C. Faculty Size**

Discuss the adequacy of the size of the faculty and describe the extent and quality of faculty involvement in interactions with students, student advising, and oversight of the program.

**D. Professional Development**

Provide descriptions of professional development activities for faculty and how the DI supports such activities.

**E. Authority and Responsibility of Faculty**

Describe the role played by the faculty with respect to course creation, modification and evaluation, their role in the definition and revision of program goals and student learning outcomes, and their role in the attainment of the student learning outcomes. Describe the roles of others on campus, e.g., dean or provost, with respect to these areas.

**V. RESEARCH (Standard Four)**

**A. Contribution of the Program**

Describe the contributions of the program in relation to advancing knowledge, research, and practice in its discipline.

**B. Research Areas**

Identify the research expectations of the faculty.

Provide evidence of all the research areas that the program is involved in, emphasizing their relevance to the program and to the DI research strategy.

Highlight research activities undertaken by faculty and students where appropriate.

#### **C. Grants**

Describe any grant, external or internal, obtained by the program and include the research output (e.g. a journal article, a chapter, or conference paper) of each research activity relevant to the program.

#### **D. Other**

##### ***Research Support***

Discuss the overall institutional DI Research Support Policy and the implications of that policy for research and scholarship associated with the program.

Describe the physical, fiscal, technological and administrative resources available to support the program's research activities.

##### ***Cooperative Arrangements***

Provide evidence and discuss any cooperative arrangement for research that has a bearing on the program.

### **VI. FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES (Standard Five)**

#### **A. Offices and Classrooms**

Summarize each of the program's facilities in terms of their ability to support the attainment of the student learning outcomes and program goals, and to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning.

- Offices (such as administrative, faculty, clerical, and teaching assistants) and any associated equipment that is typically available there.
- Classrooms and associated equipment that are typically available where the program courses are taught.

#### **B. Library Services**

Describe and evaluate the capability of the library to serve the program including the adequacy of the library's collection relative to the needs of the program and the faculty, the adequacy of the process by which faculty or students order books or subscriptions, the library's systems for locating and obtaining electronic information, and any other library services relevant to the needs of the program.

#### **C. IT Services**

Describe and evaluate the adequacy of information systems and IT service to serve the program and support the attainment of student learning outcomes.

### **VII. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (Standard Six)**

#### **A. Leadership and Governance**

Describe the leadership and governance of the program and discuss its adequacy to ensure the quality and continuity of the program and how the leadership is involved in decisions that affect the program.

#### **B. Program Budget and Financial Support**

- Describe the process used to establish the program's budget and provide evidence of continuity of institutional support for the program. Explain the sources of financial support including both recurring and non-recurring funds.
- Describe how teaching is supported by the institution in terms of graders, teaching assistants, teaching workshops, etc.
- To the extent not described above, describe how resources are provided to acquire, maintain, and upgrade the infrastructures, facilities, and equipment used in the program.
- Assess the adequacy of the resources described in this section with respect to the students in the program being able to attain the student learning outcomes.

#### **C. Staffing**

Describe the adequacy of the staff (instructional and administrative) and institutional services provided to the program. Discuss methods used to retain and train staff.

#### **D. Faculty Hiring and Retention**

- Describe the process for hiring new faculty.
- Describe strategies used to retain current qualified faculty.

#### **E. Support of Faculty Professional Development**

Describe the adequacy of support for faculty professional development, and how such activities such as sabbaticals, travel, workshops, and seminars, etc. are planned and supported.

### **VIII. SELF-STUDY RESULTS**

Describe the findings of the self-study, including a description and analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges for the program.

Describe how the results of the self-study will be used to make enhancements to the program including its curriculum, the delivery thereof, and the overall level of student learning and program effectiveness.

Include an action plan for the following year(s) describing how these enhancements will be implemented.

## APPENDIX D: Illustrative Site Visit Agenda<sup>12</sup>

### **Day I: First Day On Campus**

8:30 am	Welcome and briefing by OIE Director
9:00 am	Meeting with the head of program and relevant faculty
10:00 am	Meeting with the Dean
10:30 am	Meetings with faculty individually or in groups
12:30 pm	Lunch with faculty
2:00 pm	Reviewers conduct on-site review of documentation
4:30 pm	Meetings with students, alumni, and other stakeholders
6:00 pm	External reviewers meet, review information already covered, sum-up their findings, and set priorities for gathering further information

### **Day II: Second Day on Campus**

8:30 am	Meeting with the head of program to facilitate any further arrangements
9:00 am	Visit to the Library
9:30 am	Visit to other DI facilities including classes, student support departments, etc.
10:30 am	Finish reviewing documentation, including exams, and/or assignments and papers from the student sample reported in the self-study
12:30 am	Lunch with faculty
2:00 pm	Further interviews with faculty
3:30 pm	Final meeting with the head of the program
4:00 pm	Final meeting with the Dean
5:00 pm	Site visit is completed

### **Day 3: Discussing the Report**

8:00 am	Reviewers meet to discuss and agree on the findings and the way to finalize the report
4:00 pm	Exit meeting with the Provost where external reviewers give an oral presentation of the major findings

### **Illustrative Agenda**

<sup>12</sup> This agenda is tentative and can be modified by the external review team as they deem fit.

## APPENDIX E: Program Specification Template and Guidelines

Please ensure that a complete and updated copy of this document is submitted to the Dean's Office and that any updates on this document are communicated before the beginning of each semester. This document serves to record and maintain the design specification, structure and content of the programs in the School. It also serves in assessment and improvement activities of the programs especially in external periodic reviews and accreditation.

This document references and conforms to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the United Kingdom program design specifications, which include the "Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland,"<sup>13</sup> "Master's Degree Characteristics Statement,"<sup>14</sup> and "Guidelines for preparing programme specifications."<sup>15</sup> Programs must conform to these specifications, and in this regard, we ask you to refer to these documents, as they are helpful resources and provide additional details for the sections below. For section 3 "Educational Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes, Teaching, and Assessment Methods," please refer to Annex A at the bottom of this document for important information.

You will find descriptive and guiding notes in red between brackets [] for each section of this document. For any inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the Dean's Office.

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<sup>13</sup>"The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland." *Qaa.ac.uk*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Aug, 2008. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Framework-Higher-Education-Qualifications-08.pdf>>.

<sup>14</sup>"Characteristics Statement: Master's Degree." *Qaa.ac.uk*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Sept, 2015. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf>>.

<sup>15</sup>"Guidelines for Preparing Programme Specifications." *Qaa.ac.uk*. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006. Web. <<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Guidelines-for-preparing-programme-specifications.pdf>>. *Now replaced by Expectation A2.2 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards.*

## 1. Program Details

Program Name:	
Head of Program Name:	
Last revision date:	

## 2. Program Mission and Goals

[Please complete the elements below]

A. Program's Mission:

[The mission that defines the overall purpose(s) the program aims to achieve]

B. Program Goals:

[They are general goals that help achieve the program's mission. Goals provide the scope and priorities of the program's academic activities and functions, and set the basis of defining the program's objectives/student learning outcomes]

C. The constituency the program intends to serve (e.g. students, employers, professionals, and/or others) and how the program goals meet the needs of the constituency:

D. The contributions of the program in relation to advancing knowledge, research, and/or practice in its discipline(s):

E. Relation of the program's mission and goals to the School's and DI's mission:

## 3. Educational Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes, Teaching, and Assessment Methods

[Please list all of your **program's** Educational Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), the teaching, and the assessment methods using the **SLO Rubric Table** below.

**SLOs** are clear and specific statements that are derived from the program's goals (each goal may have more than one outcome). They identify what students will have gained as a result of their educational experience, and are directly linked to the *knowledge and understanding, and skills* students will have gained after completing a program. Consider what it is that a successful student is expected to know and understand, and the skills that they should be able to demonstrate upon completion of their program. **The teaching methods** are what will enable students to achieve student learning outcomes and the **assessment methods** are what will be used to demonstrate these outcomes' achievement.

When developing your program's SLOs, teaching, and assessment methods, please refer to the description below extracted from the QAA's "Guidelines for preparing programme specifications" for examples of teaching and assessment methods suitable for the following different types of student learning outcomes:

- *“**knowledge and understanding** of a subject is often developed through lectures and seminars. Such direct teaching methods are usually supported by directed study of textbooks and journal articles and by assignment or project work. Knowledge and understanding is often assessed through written examinations, but most if not all assessment methods will require some demonstration of knowledge and understanding.*
- ***intellectual skills** such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and problem solving may be practiced and demonstrated through more active learning processes involving assignments or projects, group-learning activity such as a seminar or tutorial, workshop, or field-based activity. Assessment of intellectual skills can utilise written examinations or problem-based exercises. Independent project work or research dissertations are typically used to demonstrate capability in a range of intellectual skills linked to specialist knowledge, understanding and practical skills.*
- ***practical skills** need to be developed through opportunities to practise the activity in an appropriate learning context (eg field, or workplace placement). Workbooks or guidance manuals may also be used to support learning. Assessment of competence in exercising a practical skill must involve practical demonstration of it.*
- ***transferable/key skills** that are readily transferable to employment and other contexts, such as communication, teamwork etc can be developed through naturally arising opportunities within the curriculum. For example, written communication skills can be developed and assessed through essays or dissertations; oral communication skills through presentations in seminars; or team working skills through collaborative projects. Skills may be developed also through extra-curricular activities including work experience, student representative work, and social and cultural activities.”]*

**SLO Rubric Table**

<b>Type of Student Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)</b>  On successfully completing this program, the student will be able to:	<b>Teaching Methods</b>  ...facilitated by the following teaching activities (in/out of class):	<b>Assessment Methods</b>  ..and evidenced by the following assessment methods:
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	SLO 1:		
	SLO 2:		
	SLO 3:		
<i>Intellectual Skills</i>	SLO 4:		
<i>Practical Skills</i>	SLO 5:		

<i>Transferrable/key skills</i>	SLO 6:		
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#### 4. Program Structure

All programs total to 30 credits and follow the structure below:

##### A. School Core Compulsory Courses (6 credits)

- Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities I
- Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities II

##### B. Program Requirements (18 credits)

###### a. Program Core Compulsory Courses:

*Please list each course with its title, numbers of credits, and short description (1-2 sentences)*

###### b. Concentration Tracks (if applicable):

*For each concentration track offered please, provide the following:*

- *Concentration Track Title*
- *Concentration Track Description (1-2 sentences)*
- *Course Title*
- *Course Description (1-2 sentences)*
- *Number of credits required*

###### c. Special Topics:

*List the possible special topics courses that will be offered. Include course title and description (1-2 sentences). Also, include how many credits and classes are required as a special topic.*

##### C. Thesis (6 credits)

*Please explain any specific requirements for the thesis including word length, methodology and the means of supervision.*

#### 5. Minimum Entry Requirements for the Program

*[Please list any specific entry requirements (apart from the requirements needed at the DI level) for this program, if applicable. e.g. if students are expected to come from a particular background or have some relevant experience]*

#### 6. Career Destinations

*[Please explain how students can use the knowledge and skills, etc. acquired during their study towards future career avenues (1-2 paragraphs)]*

## 7. Relation of Program Structure to Mission and Goals

[Please include a general description in 1 or 2 paragraphs of how the program's structure relate to the mission and goals of the program]

### Annex A

Programs in SOSH must be consistent with the requirements and characteristics set within the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Therefore, please ensure that your program's SLOs in section 3 of this document are consistent and conform to the qualification references of a master's degree at Level 7 (quoted below) which are outlined in the aforementioned framework (p. 20-23) and which are built on the elements of knowledge and understanding, and skills:

***"Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:***

- *a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice*
- *a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship*
- *originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline*
- *conceptual understanding that enables the student:*
  - *to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline*
  - *to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.*

***Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:***

- *deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences*
- *demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level*
- *continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.*

***And holders will have:***

- *the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:*
  - *the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility*
  - *decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations*
  - *the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development."*

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## Glossary

**Assessment:** is the process of identifying, collecting, and analyzing data for evaluation and improvement.

**Annual Assessment:** is an internal process that aims to determine whether academic and administrative units are meeting the goals they have established for themselves to fulfill their institution's mission. Units conduct an annual assessment using an *Annual Assessment Template* (see definition) and using the assessment results to develop plans for improvement.

**Annual Assessment Template:** a template for the annual assessment report that includes the major components of the annual assessment process that administrative and academic units complete when conducting their annual assessment activities.

**Assessment Methods:** are tools that will measure how well a unit achieves its stated objectives/outcomes. The measures can be direct or indirect and can describe short-term and long-term objectives/outcomes. Examples of direct measures include standardized exams, or data collection on certain operations such as number of visits to a website. Examples of indirect measures include student course evaluations, or satisfaction surveys. Indirect measures usually strengthen the interpretations one makes from direct measures as they provide more insight. Methods of assessment can be also qualitative or quantitative.

**Continuous Improvement:** the process of continuously using an assessment cycle to assess objectives and outcomes, analyze results, and make improvements based on those results.

**Evaluation:** is the process of interpreting data and evidence collected through assessment processes. Evaluation results in developing plans for improvement.

**External Academic Periodic Review:** the periodic review of academic programs is an evaluation activity based on a reflective self-study (see *Self-Study*) prepared by the program being evaluated and reviewed by external peer reviewers. The purpose of the periodic review is to verify that an academic program meets international standards of academic excellence.

**External Evaluation Report:** this is a report that external peer reviewers prepare and submit after the external evaluation of an academic program. The report reflects the examination of a program's self-study, evidence gathered during the external reviewers' site-visit of the program under review, an evaluative judgment of how well a program's self-study addresses its standards, and the adequacy of the improvement action plan proposed by the self-study.

**External Peer Reviewer:** an external reviewer is an independent academic expert who conducts an evaluation of an academic program under review and works outside of the institution of the program he/she is invited to review.

**Goal:** is a statement that provides the scope and priorities of a unit's academic or administrative activities and functions, helps achieve its mission, and sets the basis of defining the unit's objectives and outcomes.

**IE&QA Framework:** is an overarching system of procedures and activities aimed at ensuring that DI attains its mission (institutional effectiveness) and assures and enhances the quality of its academic provision (quality assurance).

**Institutional Effectiveness (IE):** is the systematic process of measuring and assessing the performance of an institution in relation to its mission. Effectiveness is demonstrated through assessment activities conducted at the level of academic and administrative units on an annual and periodic basis, and the results of these assessment activities are used to inform programmatic and administrative decisions, strategic planning, budget requests, and resource allocations.

**Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Committee (IEQAC):** the IEQAC is an institution-wide committee that has oversight of the annual assessments of academic programs and their periodic reviews, and the annual assessments of administrative departments, including the appraisal of assessment results and actions plans.

**Mission Statement:** is a statement that defines the overall purpose(s) a unit, whether an academic program or administrative department, aims to achieve.

**Non-Learning Program Outcome:** is used to measure the effectiveness of the program itself rather than the actual student learning and can include admission rates, student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, graduation and retention rates.

**Objective/Outcome:** is a clear and specific statement, with measurable actionable verbs and specific content, that is derived from a unit's goal(s) and that will determine how well the unit is achieving its goal(s). For an academic program, there are two types of objectives/outcomes, Student Learning Outcomes (see *Student Learning Outcome*) and non-learning outcomes (see *Non-Learning Program Outcome*). For an administrative department, the objectives/outcomes describe operational and administrative targets that the unit intends to accomplish.

**Plan of Study:** a plan used by an academic program to enumerate the courses a student should take every semester for the whole duration of the program.

**Program specification guidelines:** is a concise description of an academic program's structure and content including its student learning outcomes.

**Quality Assurance (QA):** is a system used to ensure that an institution's academic standards are well defined, verified and consistent with similar standards locally and internationally, and that the quality level of learning, research and community involvement are adequate and meet stakeholders' expectations.

**Self-Study:** this is when an academic program conducts a thorough examination of its operations in light of its stated mission and goals and prepares the self-study in reference to particular standards that establish criteria and guidelines for academic quality and function.

**Standards:** they are criteria and guidelines for academic quality and function and serve as a guiding framework for program self-evaluation and improvement.

**Student Learning Outcome (SLO):** is a clear and specific statement that identifies the knowledge and skills expected of students as a consequence of their educational experiences.

**Target and level of success:** a target is the desired or expected result from the measurement of an objective/outcome. It specifies the level of success or effectiveness needed to determine whether an outcome or a goal has been achieved.

**Unit:** this is either an academic program or administrative department.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ABET</b>	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
<b>CAA</b>	Commission for Academic Accreditation (United Arab Emirates)
<b>DI</b>	Doha Institute for Graduate Studies
<b>IEQAC</b>	Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance Committee
<b>NASPAA</b>	Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration
<b>NEASC</b>	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
<b>OIE</b>	Office of Institutional Effectiveness
<b>QAA</b>	Quality Assurance Agency in the United Kingdom
<b>SEC</b>	Supreme Education Council (Qatar)