



Peer Reviewers Workshop Report



Cover: Prof. Victoria Presenting the material to the Peer Reviewers, during the Peer Reviewer Workshop held by HEDP

Duration:	30 th October 2016 – 2 nd November 2016
Location:	HEDP/MoHE, Kabul, Afghanistan
Language:	English translated to Dari
Facilitator:	Professor Victoria Lindsay PhD

Background

1. The workshop was held to support the revisions to the Higher Education Accreditation Framework used across Afghanistan, and the supporting accreditation process.
2. As part of the project, a range of documentation had been developed. This included:
 - a briefing note for those institutions involved in the pilot project
 - a summary of revisions to the Accreditation Framework
 - a summary of the revised scoring process
 - a summary of the revised accreditation process
 - the revised framework
 - a Self-Assessment report template
 - a Peer Reviewer report template
 - standard Peer Review Visit Agenda
 - Terms of Reference for Peer Reviewers
 - an Evidence Tracking Sheet to be used as part of the Peer Review Process
 - Two handouts (Report Writing and Asking Questions).

These documents were refined during the workshop and will be further revised into a Handbook for Institutions undergoing review and a Peer Reviewers Handbook.

3. The workshop aimed to:
 - a) Introduce the Quality Assurance Accreditation Directorate (QAAD) Board and other stakeholders to the revised framework and process
 - b) Support the pilot phase of the project by briefing the eight institutions involved in piloting the revised framework and processes.
 - c) Training the Peer Reviewer team who will be working with the revised framework and processes during the pilot stage.
4. The activity took place over 4 days (Sunday to Wednesday) commencing with a meeting with Professor Mohammad Osman Babury the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Professor Sayed Mujtaba Sadat from the National Commission on Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NCQAA).

Workshop Activity Pilot Institutions

5. Activity began with a short briefing session for the eight institutions involved in the pilot phase of the project. They were introduced to the revised framework and the new scoring system and provided with the timeline for activity during the pilot phase.

Workshop Activity QAAD Board

6. Professor Babury opened the workshop by welcoming participants. He expressed his full support for the project and encouraged attendees to participate as fully as possible so that maximum benefit might be obtained from the week.
7. The workshop began with an introduction to quality assurance. Accreditation, quality assurance, quality enhancement and a quality culture were defined. Participants were introduced to the quality cycle and the elements which support quality activity; this included a self-evaluation, peer reviewer visits, reports and action plans. The group discussed why quality is important and the challenges currently facing quality assurance and enhancement across Afghanistan. The opening session concluded with some information on international quality assurance agencies: the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), European Association of Quality Agencies (EAQA) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
8. The next session focused on the revisions to the Accreditation Framework. The group was reminded of the history of the existing framework and the quality assurance initiatives that had taken place across Afghanistan since the launch of the original framework. The rationale for the revisions was set out and the process and timeline for revising the framework were explored. The work completed to date was explained and the pilot phase discussed.
9. The group went on to consider the revised framework in detail. The revised criteria, sub-criteria and different sets of indicators were explained and the group discussed how this differed from the existing framework. Time was spent on the new scoring system and the new pass marks.

Workshop Activity Peer Reviewers

10. The part of the workshop dedicated to training the Peer Reviewers covered a wide range of topics. The sessions aimed to provide the Peer Reviewers with the knowledge and tools to carry out Peer Reviews during the pilot phase. Workshop content was informed by feedback on the existing Peer Review process.
11. This part of the workshop began by defining the role of the Peer Reviewer and the stages of the Peer Reviewer process. The group went on to explore the role of the Peer Reviewer in reviewing self-assessment reports and supporting documentation. A tracking sheet which can be used by Peer Reviewers to log documents and record their findings was introduced and the group discussed how it could be used before and during the visits to identify and agree on lines of inquiry.
12. The group reviewed the standard visit agenda and the terms of reference for institutions and Peer Reviewers. The group suggested several amendments to the Terms of

Reference to make them more appropriate to the Afghan context and these will be incorporated in the final version.

13. The next part of the workshop considered how Peer Reviewers use evidence to make evidence-based judgments. The concept of Triangulation (using multiple data sets) was introduced and the group discussed the types of data which were acceptable to use during a review and those which were not suitable.
14. The following day began by recapping work from the previous day. The six core quality questions used during reviews were explained. The group then observed a Peer Review role play which demonstrated open and closed questioning techniques and also inappropriate and badly worded questions. Sample questions were further explored before the group broke into small teams; each team took a section of the criteria and developed their own questions. The sample questions will be developed into a question bank resource and included in the Peer Reviewer Handbook. Each small group tested their questions on another group in a role play. This allowed each participant to refine their questioning skills.
15. The group then explored how they might use the institutional tour during the Peer Review Visit to evidence some of the accreditation criteria and they developed their understanding of tools which can be used to direct their questions and manage group discussions. The differences in approach between reviewing public and private institutions were also explored.
16. The day concluded with a session on teamwork. The importance of teamwork within the Peer Reviewer process was explained, and the times during the Peer Review process when Peer Reviewers are required to work as a team were identified. The need to actively plan as a team was considered and the group discussed how they might support each other academically and personally during the visit.
17. The final day began with a revision of open and closed questions and the use of triangulation and evidence to make decisions. The revised scoring system was then introduced. The group spent time discussing how they might use qualitative and quantitative evidence to arrive at scores and the factors which might include scoring. This discussion developed a shared understanding of scoring.
18. The next part of the workshop focused on the crafting of the Peer Reviewer Visit Report. The purpose of the Peer Reviewer Visit Report was identified and the group spent time discussing the content of the Peer Reviewer Visit Report Template. Suggested revisions were incorporated in the template. An evidence-based way of report writing was explained and examples were used to demonstrate how a report can provide the reader with sufficient information to make an informed judgment regarding the robustness of Peer Reviewer decisions.

Workshop Activity Final Session for all participants (QAAD Board, Peer Reviewers and those institutions involved in the pilot project)

19. The final session began with a review of progress to date. This included a summary of the revisions to the Accreditation Framework and process and a summary of the Peer Reviewer training. The documents developed during the Peer Reviewer training were briefly introduced. This allowed those participants not involved in the Peer Reviewer training to gain some knowledge and understanding of the revised, more robust, Peer Reviewer process. The group spent time reviewing the Peer Reviewer Visit Report and the role of the QAAD Board in reviewing and approving these reports. The need for a change of role within the Accreditation Process was identified and the QAAD Board Members discussed and agreed how they would approach their revised role and the change in approach that this would require.
20. The workshop concluded by summarizing the pilot process so that all involved were aware of the next steps.

Closing

Professor Babury the Deputy Minister of Higher Education closed the workshop by thanking participants for their time and active participation. He expressed pleasure at the progress made and noted the how the work would bring significant positive impacts to the Afghan higher education sector.

Annex I: List of Participants

Table 1. Peer Review Workshop's List of Participants

No	Full Name	Organization	No	Full Name	Organization
1	Dr. Sayed Sher Shah Sadaat	Acting Director QAA	15	Mir Aqa Mihan	KPU
2	Victoria Lindsay	HEDP Consultant	16	M.Q Seddeqy	KPU
3	Mansoor Ahmadzai	HEDP	17	Paul Reverf	AUAF
4	Mahbob Shah Sultani	Herat University	18	Timor Sottary	AUAF
5	Mujtaba Manavi	Kandahar University	19	Ali Ahmad Yousefi	Kateb University
6	Abdul Tawab Balakarzai	Kandahar University	20	Lailuma Sharifi Yama	KEU
7	Shams urahman Adel	Nangarhar University	21	Ali Hussani	Khatam-ul-Nabiyen University
8	Habibullah Slimanzai	Khost University	22	Noor Mohammad	KEU
9	Said Mujtaba Sadat	Balkh University	23	Asadullah	KPU
10	Dr.M Zaher Sakha	Kabul University	24	Wahedullah Afghan	Kardan University
11	Khal Mohammad ahmadzai	Kabul University	25	Mohammad Nazem jafari	Kateb University
12	Mohammad Zaher Faimi	KEU	26	Ghulam Yahya Ahmadi	USWDP
13	Mohamad Omar Suliman	KEU	27	Jeff Armstrong	USWDP
14	Dr. Abdul Manan Paigham	KMU	28	H.M. Naim	KEU

Annex II: Workshop Report Gallery



Figure 1. Prof. Victoria presenting for the audience and peer reviewers



Figure 2. MoHE QAAD Director, presenting a topic during the workshop



Figure 3. The audience listening to the presentation being presented during the Workshop



Figure 4. MoHE Deputy Minister, thanking Prof. Victoria and handing her a gift from MoHE