Quality Assurance and Enhancement

Excellence in Quality

International Benchmarking

Quality Analytics

Multi-dimensional Benchmarking

OBASL

Qualifications Framework

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

This is an abridged version of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Manual. It contains the underlying policies and principles of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System in HKU SPACE.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this document is correct at the time of printing. HKU SPACE may make changes in its guidelines and procedures.

The electronic version of this document is available at the HKU SPACE website.

C O N T E N T S

Foreword

In fulfilling the University's mission in developing and extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community, HKU SPACE strives to be a world-class centre of excellence in professional and continuing education, not only in Hong Kong but also in the region. Since the formal establishment of the Quality Assurance (QA) System in 1999, the School has developed and refined a comprehensive Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System to ensure the quality and continuous enhancement of programmes offered by the School.

Over the years, the System has undergone various external audits and review exercises to demonstrate its capability and reaffirm its leading position in the provision of quality professional and continuing education in Hong Kong. These include Quality Audits by the University Grants Committee (UGC) Quality Assurance Council (QAC), University Reviews, as well as accreditation exercises by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications of various Non-local Learning Programmes. In the UGC QAC Audit 2023, the Audit Panel commended the School for its unwavering commitment to excellence in teaching and learning (T&L), robust QA processes, and systematic and constructive use of benchmarks in QA and quality enhancement (QE) processes. The School also engaged in international benchmarking through an International Quality Review (IQR) in 2021, based on the Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and supported by the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN). The IQR Panel concluded that the School has fulfilled all 10 ESG criteria of standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance, following which the School was awarded the ASIIN International Accreditation Seal. These highly positive external review outcomes confirm the recognition of our QAE System in successfully assuring academic quality.

The School has recently reviewed the QAE system with the accumulated experience of implementing QAE policies. Both quality assurance and quality enhancement are essential to the School's quality culture. This review has incorporated the School's latest developments and refinements of some procedural measures and workflows, and reinforced the guiding principles with quality analytics on collective data. The objective has been to facilitate quality improvement and enhancement, and to support future development directions with greater operational efficiency. This QAE Booklet provides a summary of the QAE processes.

The School welcomes feedback and suggestions from readers of this booklet to help inspire us to reach even higher standards of quality education.

Professor William KM Lee
Director

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1. The Purpose

The purpose of this Booklet is to provide a summary of a set of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement policies and measures that the School has in place to ensure that its academic programmes adhere to best practice in achieving the high quality standards expected by the University and the wider community.

2. HKU SPACE – Vision, Mission and Values

2.1 Vision

In fulfilling the mission of The University of Hong Kong in developing and extending lifelong learning opportunities for the community, HKU SPACE aspires to be a world-class centre of excellence for the provision of professional and continuing education in Hong Kong and the region.

2.2 Mission

- Collaborate with the University and other institutions locally and globally in expanding lifelong learning opportunities for personal development, academic progression and professional and career advancement.

- Engage with stakeholders to deliver high quality education and training programmes to meet the needs of society in Hong Kong and the region.

- Be a strong advocate of lifelong learning for all to realise an educated citizenry and quality of life.

- Excel in the provision of professional and continuing education in Hong Kong and the region.

- Foster strategic partnerships locally and globally to promote international outlook and opportunities.

2.3 Values

- *Supportive* of our learners, our staff and our partners

- *Pioneering* new initiatives and passionate for change

- *Accountable* to stakeholders with professionalism and integrity

- *Creative* and innovative in teaching and learning

- *Excellent* in the quality of what we do to serve our communities

The School's portfolio has traditionally included a very large number of short courses of general interest, and a wide range of basic introductory programmes in many fields. In the past decade, the School has responded to education needs by developing an extensive hierarchy of award-bearing programmes. Some programmes lead to awards of certificates and diplomas while others lead to higher levels including postgraduate diplomas. All award-bearing programmes lead to awards within the HKU system through HKU SPACE. Some other programmes are offered collaboratively with a cognate HKU Faculty while others involve collaboration with external partners such as professional bodies and non-local higher education institutions. These external partnerships lead to awards of the external bodies.

3. Objectives of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

The objectives of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) System in HKU SPACE are:

- To support the mission of HKU SPACE by ensuring the high quality of the programmes and teaching and learning support services that is comparable to the standards of recognised institutions in Hong Kong and the region;

- To facilitate and co-ordinate the continuous enhancement of the quality of programmes and teaching and learning support services;

- To ensure consistency and effectiveness in QAE activities;

- To establish the role for all parties concerned in QAE activities.

4. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Mechanisms and Manual

With a long established reputation for quality programmes, the School places significant emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the academic and professional standards of all programmes and teaching and learning support services offered by means of:

- strict validation and review of programme design and contents, adopting the Outcome-Based Approach to Student Learning (OBASL) and with reference to the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework;

- recruitment, development and retention of well-qualified staff and strict monitoring of teaching quality;

- arrangement of excellent facilities for teaching and learning;

- careful moderation of overall academic standard including graduation standard through the use of Academic Assessors, External Examiners and Boards of Examiners;

- regular monitoring of programmes by Academic Committees of relevant subject groups, who shall report to the respective College Boards for information or action;

- continuous review and enhance the programme quality by analysing collective feedback from stakeholders/ parties concerned;

- continuous review and enhancement of the QAE System with application of multidimensional benchmarking mechanisms, both by participation in external audits and reviews, and via other means such as international survey.

The development of the QAE Manual aims to provide a School-wide reference and understanding of the ways and means to carry out QAE activities. The procedures and activities in the Manual have all undergone consultation with colleagues and have been approved by the HKU SPACE Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) (formerly known as Quality Assurance Committee) and the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning. Whatever procedures are applied, the specific needs and circumstances of the programmes are always taken into account. In case of uncertainties about the implementation of the QAE procedures, the Programme Team should consult the Head of the academic unit concerned. The QAEC Chairman will be consulted if the Head is in doubt. The QAEC Chairman's decision will be final on such occasions.

The School also prepares this abridged version of the Manual to facilitate general understanding of the QAE System. When making reference to this document, the reader is invited to note that QAE is an evolving process. New procedures and guidelines will be approved and promulgated by the School from time to time, with a view to ensuring that they serve their purpose and are in line with development in the School. The HKU SPACE QAE Unit welcomes comments and feedback on the Manual, as this will contribute to the further refinement of our QAE System.

CHAPTER 2

The Structure of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

1. Introduction

To facilitate the smooth functioning of quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) activities, HKU SPACE has developed and formalised a QAE System. The System is built on the basis of existing good practices and has consolidated these into a hierarchy of actions and procedural guidelines. It deals with both award-bearing and professional programmes and short or general interest courses. Appendix A depicts the structure of the QAE System.

2. Activities and Procedures in the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

The QAE System is designed to cover the full process of planning, approving, delivering, modifying, reviewing and enhancing a programme of study. This includes the quality management and enhancement of programme design, programme operation and teaching quality, with application of multidimensional benchmarking mechanisms and analysis of feedback from stakeholders. The intention is to ensure high quality in all aspects of a programme such that the programme is conducted in accordance with the required standard of its award.

3. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)

The QAEC reports through the HKU SPACE Director to the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL). The Board is a committee of the HKU Senate for advising the Senate on policy issues relating to continuing and professional education and lifelong learning. The Board has the responsibility for the academic activities of the School, including approval of academic collaboration and new programmes.

The QAEC consists of the following **members**:

Chairman:	Director of HKU SPACE or a Deputy Director nominated by the Director
Members:	Director, HKU SPACE
	Deputy Directors, HKU SPACE
	Heads of Part-time Colleges at HKU SPACE
	Two senior HKU faculty academics invited by the Chairman of the Board for CPE&LL
	Co-opted members as necessary
Secretary:	Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, HKU SPACE

4. Responsibility of Colleges in regard to Quality Assurance and Enhancement

With the reorganisation of the School in late 2007, the formation of Colleges facilitates devolution of QAE responsibilities to the academic unit level. Colleges are expected to play an important role in different process in the QAE System. College Heads are responsible for all QAE in the colleges through their leadership role.

The College Board (CB) provides a forum for senior programme staff in each College to monitor and oversee the implementation of QAE activities governing development, management and enhancement of programmes and courses delivered by the College. The CB reports thereon to the QAEC and the School Academic and Management Board (SAMB) for consideration and approval. The SAMB is set up to consider and coordinate strategic academic development and directions, academic and management policies and regulations.

Each College Head shall nominate a person at Associate Head level for each College to be responsible for overseeing implementation of QAE policies and procedures. The College Affairs Secretariat will facilitate the communication between Programme Teams and the QAE Unit, on matters relating to implementation of QAE policies and procedures in each college. The Programme Teams shall be responsible for the adequacy, accuracy and consistency of all submission documents that are prepared in accordance with relevant QAE procedures, guidelines and policies, as well as to monitor the quality of programmes and implement further actions for programme enhancement. The QAE Unit provides necessary co-ordination for alignment of QAE practices across the colleges.

5. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Working Group (QAEWG)

While the QAEC takes charge of developing QAE policies and mechanisms, it has delegated to the QAEWG the work of initial design of relevant policies and mechanisms. The Working Group is chaired by the Deputy Director (Academic Services) appointed by the Director to be responsible for QAE and is made up of academic colleagues with rich experience in QAE and in programme management. The Working Group carries out vetting and consideration of draft QAE policies and procedures, consults colleagues on those issues before the issues are presented to the QAEC for consideration and approval and decides on operational QAE procedures.

6. Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit

The QAE Unit supports and co-ordinates QAE activities in HKU SPACE, reporting directly to the Deputy Director (Academic Services). It assists the QAEC in overseeing and monitoring the implementation of QAE policies and mechanisms. Working closely with academic colleagues, the QAE Unit serves as a facilitator to all QAE activities. Its work includes drafting policies and guidelines for incorporation into the QAE System, providing secretarial support to the QAEC, the QAEWG and all programme validation panels, as well as conducting student surveys (Learning Experience Survey, Programme Learning Outcomes Survey, Survey on Support Services) and assisting in external quality audits and accreditation.

In 2022, a Quality Analytics Team (QAT) was established and is housed in the QAE Unit to develop an efficient and user-friendly student survey platform and reporting system, and to carry out student data collection and analysis for QAE. These analysis findings will be vital references at programme, academic unit, and School levels to identify areas for improvement and enhancement.

The Structure of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee

- Promotes QAE culture
- Develops QAE policies
- Oversees & monitors QAE activities
- Reports QAE policies & activities to the Board for CPE&LL

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Working Group

- Designs and recommends QAE policies and mechanisms to QAEC
- Conducts consultation with HKU SPACE Staff

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit

- Coordinates & facilitates QAE activities
- Conducts student surveys and analyses survey data and other QAE records for quality enhancement
- Assists in preparing QAE policies & guidelines
- Provides secretarial support to QAEC & its Working Group
- Assists in external quality audits, reviews & accreditations

Colleges

- College Head nominates a person responsible for overseeing implementation of QAE policies & procedures
- College Board receives report from Academic Committees
- College Affairs Secretariat facilitates communication between Programme Teams and QAE Unit
- Programme Teams responsible for the adequacy, accuracy and consistency of all submission documents

External Audits, Reviews and Accreditation

Including Audits and Reviews by

- HKU
- UGC Quality Assurance Council
- Professional bodies
- Partner institutions
- Local and overseas QA Authorities

CHAPTER 3

Academic Collaboration

1. Introduction

HKU SPACE has established academic and non-academic collaboration partnerships with other academic units in The University of Hong Kong (HKU), as well as local and non-local universities and organisations.

Academic collaboration refers to partnership or joint efforts in the **development, management and/or delivery of programmes and courses** by HKU SPACE and its partners. Academic collaboration occurs in programmes and courses offered jointly by HKU SPACE and the partner in or outside Hong Kong, upon completion of which the student will be conferred an award within the HKU system, by the external partner or jointly conferred by both parties. The School Academic and Management Board (SAMB) has established a Partnership Strategy Committee (PSC) to oversee the School's strategy on partnership, including its overseas and mainland partnership links, and their development. Additionally, a Partnership Liaison Committee (PLC) is in place to review, establish, and approve the financial terms for academic collaborations.

Collaboration programmes include:

- programmes commissioned by, and/or recognised by, local or non-local organisations, government departments and professional bodies (Commissioned Programmes)

- programmes developed (or adapted) and delivered in collaboration with cognate academic units at HKU

- programmes developed (or adapted) and delivered in collaboration with local or non-local higher education institutions or organisations

- programmes offered by HKU SPACE and delivered with a partner outside Hong Kong

2. Academic Collaboration Partners

Partners that are academic units within HKU are regarded as **internal partners**, while those outside HKU are regarded as **external partners**, including:

- local and non-local universities and academic institutions;

- local and non-local professional bodies;

- departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government;

- other local and non-local organisations.

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External partners can be grouped into two categories:

(a) Strategic International Partners

The School has established strategic partnerships with a selected number of international partners, with whom the School works more closely and in greater depth than programme level collaborations, through signing a memorandum of understanding to facilitate communication at a senior level to develop a better understanding between the Strategic Partner and the School. It is intended that this will help widen and deepen the range of collaboration over time. For new programmes/ courses proposed to be offered with a Strategic Partner, approval for academic collaboration is NOT necessary.

(b) Academic Partners

Academic collaboration with different subject groups in an institution is taken as individual partnerships and is subjected to separate scrutiny. Hence an academic unit in an institution collaborating with HKU SPACE for the first time is considered as a **new academic partner**, regardless of existing collaborations with other academic units in the same institution. The quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) procedures are fully applied to new partners to ensure that the quality of the partnership is assured before HKU SPACE proceeding to consider the academic quality of new programmes proposed. Approval for academic collaboration is NOT necessary for new programmes/ courses proposed to be offered with a subject group/ academic unit of a partner institution under an existing partnership.

3. Guiding Principles for Academic Collaboration

The prime consideration for any academic collaboration is that the academic quality of HKU SPACE must be maintained. When setting up a partnership, HKU SPACE observes the following guiding principles:

- The academic collaboration is in line with the mission and academic activities of HKU and HKU SPACE.

- The policies and regulations of HKU and HKU SPACE in academic, financial and related aspects will be followed.

- There is clear commitment from both partners to the quality of the academic standards of the programme as expressed via QAE procedures.

- There is academic input from both HKU SPACE and the partner institution into the development and conduct of the programme.

- The academic collaboration brings about academic enhancement to HKU SPACE.

- The academic collaboration agreement is formulated in comprehensive and documented details.

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- The academic collaboration abides by the laws of Hong Kong, of the home country of the partner, and of the location where the programme is to be conducted.

4. Procedures for Setting up an Academic Partnership

Each academic partnership is individually negotiated and tailored. The proposed partnership should obtain support at the relevant College Board (CB) and approval by the SAMB. School staff are involved in different stages of the negotiation process with consultation from relevant Directorate members to ensure that the academic collaboration agreement will provide the most academically rewarding outcome.

At present, the main variables in the programmes under an academic partnership are the location of delivery and the awarding body. Some possible programme models include:

(1) A programme delivered in Hong Kong leading to an award conferred by the partner;

(2) A programme delivered in Hong Kong leading to an award within the HKU system;

(3) A programme delivered outside Hong Kong leading to an award within the HKU system.

To facilitate the differentiation of the awarding body, a programme leading to an award conferred by the partner is presented as "in collaboration" with the partner, while one leading to an award within the HKU system is presented as "in association" with the academic partner.

In proposing the appropriate partner and programme, the School staff concerned gather and examine relevant information, including the partner's mission, history, academic and professional standing, financial status, and quality assurance and enhancement arrangements. Before any formal partnership agreement, the intended academic collaboration should be first endorsed by the relevant CB and then be submitted to the SAMB for detailed scrutiny.

The Programme Team presents the proposed partnership with new academic partners to the relevant CB and then to the SAMB for approval. For programmes at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Level 1 to 3 and non-award bearing courses, upon approval-in-principle by the SAMB regarding the new partnership, the Programme Team may proceed with submitting the programme or course proposal for academic approval and reporting. For programmes at HKQF Level 4 to 7, upon approval-in-principle by the SAMB regarding both the new partnership and the collaborative programme, the Programme Team may proceed to the programme validation and approval process, and obtain final approval for the academic collaboration and programme proposal from the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL). (Details on programme development and approval are given in Chapter 4.) Appendix A depicts the procedures for setting up an Academic Partnership.

For collaboration with new academic partners involving HKU SPACE programmes and courses offered outside Hong Kong, the Programme Team presents the proposed

partnership to the relevant CB and then to the SAMB for approval. Upon approval-in-principle by the SAMB regarding the new partnership, an institutional review (IR) process should be undertaken for the academic collaboration. This process evaluates the potential partner's ability to collaborate with the School in managing and maintaining the academic standards and quality of the programme(s) or course(s) to be offered by the School outside Hong Kong. <u>Appendix B</u> shows the key steps of IR process.

With the implementation of the QAE System in HKU SPACE, HKU has endorsed approval for new programme proposals involving academic collaboration with non-local institutions leading to the awards of the latter be delegated to the Board for CPE&LL. At the end of an academic year, HKU SPACE will present an annual report on all the approved collaborative programmes with non-local institutions to the Board for CPE&LL for information.

5. Academic Collaboration, Programme Monitoring and Review

As with all award-bearing programmes offered by HKU SPACE, programmes offered in academic collaboration are subject to the programme monitoring and review procedures under the HKU SPACE QAE mechanisms. The academic collaboration arrangements are included in the programme review process. The review outcome serves to improve the quality of both the collaboration and the programme concerned.

6. Guidelines for Internal Communication for Potential Academic Collaboration

The following guidelines are adopted to facilitate internal communication for academic collaboration:

(1)   Informal communication is made at the commencement of the programme development process to explore and identify academic collaboration possibilities, sharing of academic expertise and resources.

(2)   Formal communication is made at the CB. Representative(s) of the cognate subject group or college/ academic unit relevant to collaboration will be invited to attend the CB meeting. This process is to provide a formal and structured forum for discussion among relevant programme staff from different colleges/ subject groups to allow opportunities for better exchange of views.

(3)   Formal communication should be recorded in the programme proposal to be submitted to the SAMB for information and consideration. The informal communication may also be recorded where appropriate or necessary.

Procedures for Setting up an Academic Collaboration

Step 1

Partner & Programme Selection

1a
- Examines the profile of the partner
- Considers the current programme portfolio in HKU SPACE
- Considers the demands of the market
- Considers mutual benefit in academic exchange

1b
- Reports to the Directorate for information on the partner identification (This step must be made prior to any negotiation with a potential partner institution for a new collaboration)

Step 2

Collaboration Approval

- Gains SAMB's approval-in-principle on the initial proposal for academic collaboration after CB's endorsement

Step 3

Programme Design & Development

- Works with the partner to design the programme including QAE mechanisms
- Introduces appropriate local elements
- Plans appropriate pathways for further studies
- Completes HKU SPACE QAE process for programme and collaboration approval (refer to the flowchart in Chapter 4 for relevant processes)
- For programmes offered outside HK, conducts an Institutional Review

Legal & Financial Consultation

- Follows appropriate local authorisation or registration procedures (e.g. for non-local programmes offered in HK, complies with the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance)
- Consults PLC, Deputy Director (Academic Services) and Director of Finance

Step 4

Agreement

- Consults Deputy Director (Academic Services) and prepares an Agreement
- HKU SPACE Director or his/her delegate(s) signs the Agreement when a collaboration agreement is reached

**Key Steps of Institutional Review Process for
Programmes/ Courses Offered outside Hong Kong**

Step 1	**College Board** *(College approval-in-principle)*	**Programme Team**
Step 2	**School Academic and Management Board** *(School approval for development)*	**Programme Team**
Step 3	**Institutional Review Panel Formation** *(8 weeks before the Review Meeting)*	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee Chairman**
Step 4	**Documents and Evidence submission** *(6 weeks before the Review Meeting)*	**Partner Institution**
Step 5	**Documents circulation to panel members** *(2 weeks before the Review Meeting)*	**Panel Officer**
Step 6	**Institutional Review Meeting**	**Panel Members & Stakeholders from the Partner Institution**
Step 7	**Submission of endorsed Review Report to the HKU Board for CPE&LL for final approval**	**Panel Officer**

CHAPTER 4

Programme Development and Approval

1. Introduction

The programme development and approval process covers both award-bearing programmes and non-award bearing courses. Before admitting any student, a programme must undergo a formal process of programme development and **academic approval** (often referred to as "validation"). The purpose is to ensure that the academic standards of the programme and the quality of student learning opportunities are comparable with similar programmes within the School, across Hong Kong and internationally. In recent years, the School has taken significant steps in e-Learning development which is integrated into new programme development plans and ongoing programme monitoring and reviews. The School also follows the HKU "Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Teaching and Learning" and has established the Academic Policy Statement in Relation to Generative AI in Teaching and Learning.

The validation process will also apply to a new programme which is developed from an "existing" programme, where over 25% of the programme content of the new programme differs from its "parent".

2. Qualifications

2.1 Qualifications Framework

The School adopts the Outcome-Based Approach to Student Learning (OBASL) as a policy direction of the QAE System and the guiding principle in programme design and delivery. Based on the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) introduced by the HKSAR Government, the School has developed an Internal Qualifications Framework (QF) System which provides a policy for programme design and guidelines for the rationalisation of the qualification awards. The QF is referenced to in the application of quality assurance (QA) processes, both in the cases of awards offered within the HKU system and of awards granted by partner institutions.

The definition of a qualification is made through stipulation of three critical factors:

award title + exit level + number of credits

2.2 Award Titles

With the introduction of the Award Titles Scheme and the Use of Credit under the HKQF by the Government in October 2012, the School adopted the HKQF Levels and

the hierarchy of titles. The aim is to standardise the use of titles and levels of programmes, and to facilitate the School in registering awards in the Qualifications Register (QR).

HKQF Level	Choice of Award Titles for Different Levels under the HKQF Award Titles Scheme							
7	Doctor							
6	Master	Postgraduate Diploma / Postgraduate Certificate	Professional Diploma/ Professional Certificate ↑↓	Advanced Diploma/ Advanced Certificate ↑↓	Diploma ↑↓	Certificate ↑↓		
5	Bachelor							
4	Associate	Higher Diploma/ Higher Certificate						
3								
2								Foundation Certificate ↑↓
1								

The hierarchy of award-bearing programmes in HKU SPACE ranges from doctoral degrees to foundation certificates with different categories of qualifications awarded according to different levels of academic achievement and intended learning outcomes.

2.3 Professional Awards

A programme may be prefixed as a professional award, such as a professional certificate, when there is recognition of the programme learning outcomes by professional bodies. Such professional recognition may be at different QF levels and normally leads to eligibility for membership registration or exemption from professional qualifying examinations.

2.4 Intermediate Awards

There are certain programmes designed with a hierarchy of awards where completion of an earlier part leads to an intermediate award and completion of the whole programme comprising two or more parts leads to a higher level award (the terminal award). Such programme structure design provides flexibility of entry and exit points. In all cases, double reward of credits leading to double awards should be avoided. An intermediate award must not be offered as an individual programme separate from its "parent" unless approval is given at the validation and approval process.
A maximum period of registration on the programme is specified such that a student holding an intermediate award may be allowed to continue with the later part of the programme to achieve the final award.

2.5 Certificate for Module Awards

A Continuing Education Fund (CEF) reimbursable course must be registered on the Hong Kong Qualifications Register and must carry a programme title and an award title. The Certificate for Module is a mechanism to provide a short course with a programme title and an award title, facilitating its uploading on the QR and eligibility for CEF.

2.6 Microcredentials

Microcredentials are small, credit bearing programmes which in themselves do not lead to a qualification but are "stackable" into a larger award-bearing qualification within the "validity period" of 5 years. They tend to be skills based and professionally oriented. The Certificates for Module can be offered as Microcredentials and they are "stackable" into a larger qualification, either as credit into a "parent" programme or as credit into a Certificate or Diploma in one of the two categories, Professional Practice or General Studies, depending on the nature of the Microcredential.

2.7 Awarding Body

For programmes developed and conducted entirely by HKU SPACE, the awards are awarded within the HKU system.

For programmes involving collaboration with an external partner, the award title and the awarding body are agreed by both parties in the programme development process and included in programme validation and approval.

As The University of Hong Kong is a self-accrediting institution in Hong Kong, programmes leading to HKU system awards are recognised under the HKQF.

For programmes leading to an external partner's awards to be recognised under the HKQF, they will have to undergo an optional accreditation process conducted by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) and obtain the accreditation status at a specified HKQF Level.

2.8 Conferment of Awards

Notwithstanding the versatility of continuing education, awards must only be conferred to students upon the students' successful fulfilment of all stipulated assessment and graduation requirements, as well as achievement of intended learning outcomes.

2.9 Certification and Award Documents

HKU SPACE adopts standard formats for its award documents. The standard format serves to provide an official and quality presentation of awards for HKU SPACE award-bearing programmes.

For programmes that do not have an academic award, HKU SPACE issues Statements of Attendance and Statements of Achievement.
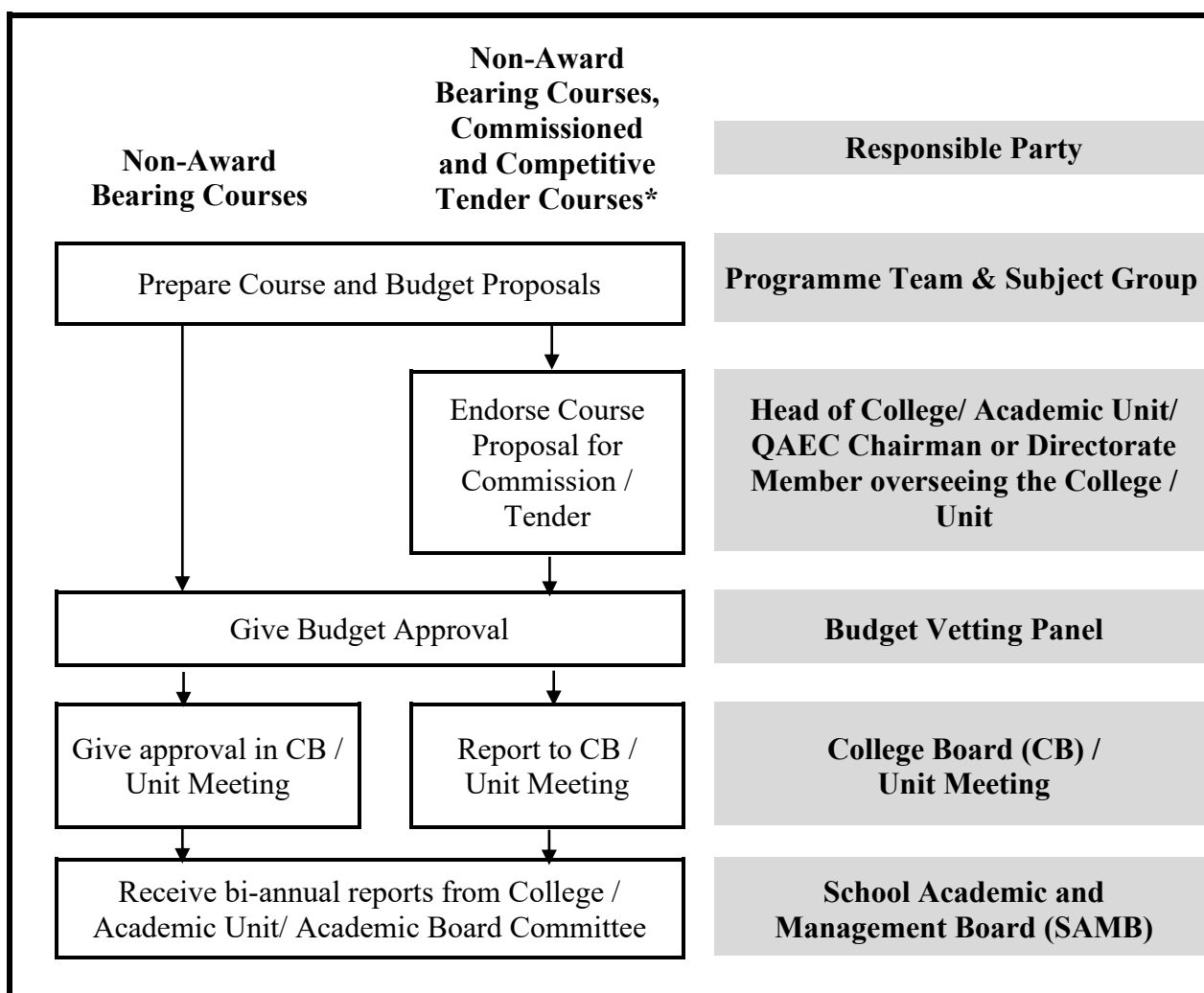
Where the awarding body is an external partner, students receive the partner's award documents.

2.10 Award Supplement

The Award Supplement is a certification providing additional information to support the recognition of academic qualifications of a graduate. The supplementary information on students' learning programmes will be useful for graduates to pursue further studies or employment internationally.

3. Programme Validation and Approval: Authorisation Routes

3.1 Non-Award Bearing Course Approval Procedures[#] (Figure 1)

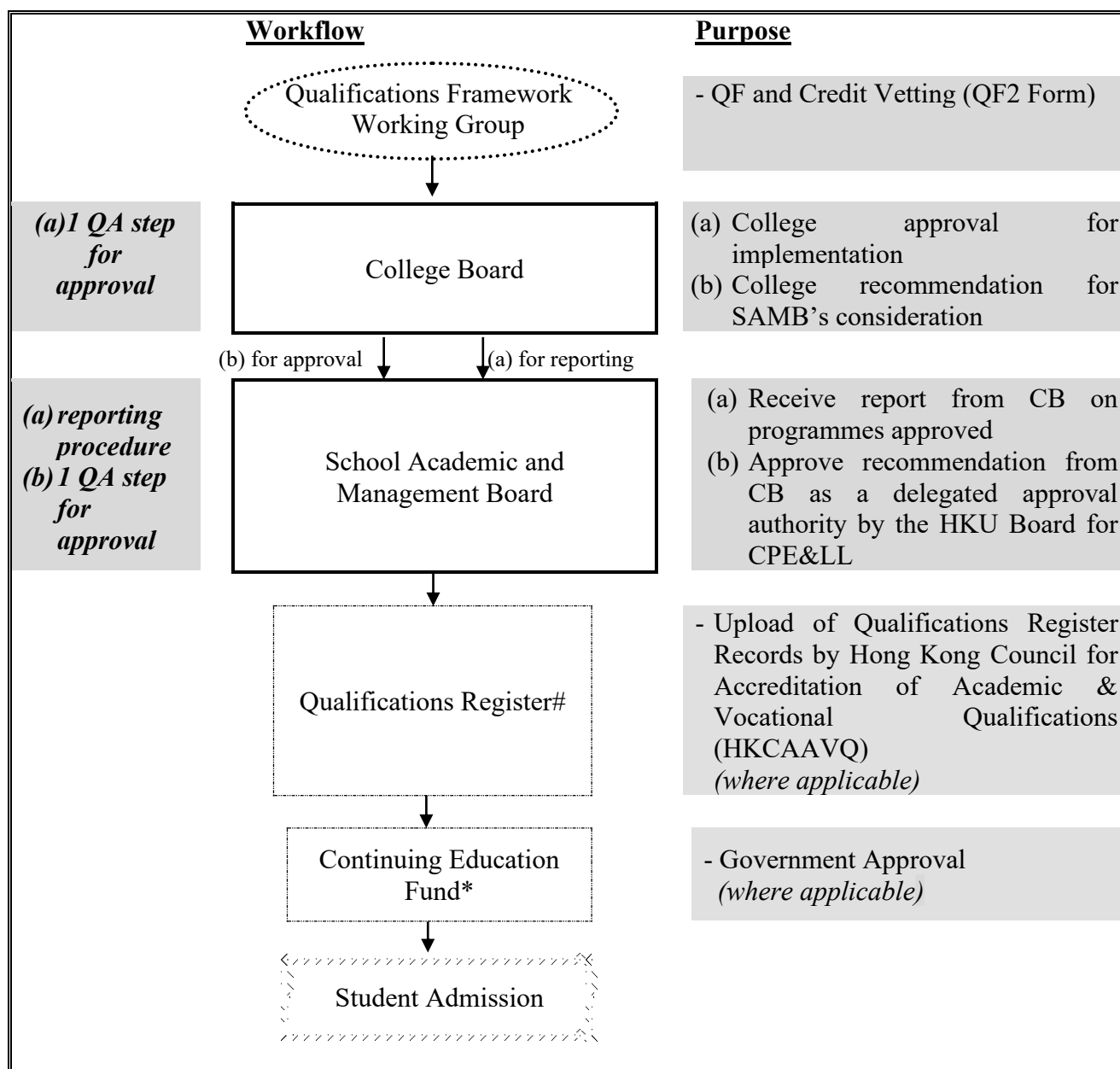| Non-Award Bearing Courses	Non-Award Bearing Courses, Commissioned and Competitive Tender Courses*	Responsible Party
Prepare Course and Budget Proposals		**Programme Team & Subject Group**
	Endorse Course Proposal for Commission / Tender	**Head of College/ Academic Unit/ QAEC Chairman or Directorate Member overseeing the College / Unit**
Give Budget Approval		**Budget Vetting Panel**
Give approval in CB / Unit Meeting	Report to CB / Unit Meeting	**College Board (CB) / Unit Meeting**
Receive bi-annual reports from College / Academic Unit/ Academic Board Committee		**School Academic and Management Board (SAMB)**

* Short courses proposed for competitive tender with a tender deadline can be endorsed by the Head of a College / Academic Unit for submission to tender, with retrospective reporting to the CB / Unit Meeting.

\# Short courses planned to be listed in the Qualifications Register for registering as CEF reimbursable courses should be developed as Certificate for Module programmes. Please refer to Figure 2 for the approval procedures.

3.2 Certificate for Module Programmes (Figure 2)

Integration of Quality Assurance and Government Regulatory Processes
for Certificate for Module Programmes
(a) at HKQF Level 3 and below
(b) at HKQF Level 4 and above

	Workflow	**Purpose**
	Qualifications Framework Working Group	- QF and Credit Vetting (QF2 Form)
(a)1 QA step for approval	College Board	(a) College approval for implementation (b) College recommendation for SAMB's consideration
	(b) for approval ↓ ↓ (a) for reporting	
(a) reporting procedure *(b) 1 QA step for approval*	School Academic and Management Board	(a) Receive report from CB on programmes approved (b) Approve recommendation from CB as a delegated approval authority by the HKU Board for CPE&LL
	Qualifications Register#	- Upload of Qualifications Register Records by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) *(where applicable)*
	Continuing Education Fund*	- Government Approval *(where applicable)*
	Student Admission	

In promotion and publicity of HKQF, the HKQF level, the QR registration number assigned by QR authority, and the validity period of the relevant QR entry should be accurately presented. The HKQF logo may also be used. (only applicable to qualifications which have entered into QR).

* Government policy requires uploading programmes on the Qualifications Register before registering as CEF reimbursable courses.

3.3 Award-Bearing Programmes Validation and Approval: Authorisation Routes (Figure 3)

Responsible Parties	HKU SPACE Programmes		Collaborative Award-Bearing Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and Above [Note 2]	
	Awards at HKQF Level 3 and Below [Note 1]	Awards at HKQF Level 4 and Above	Partnering with other academic units in HKU [Note 3]	Partnering with other institutions and organisations
Programme Team	⊕	⊕	⊕	⊕
College Board, or equivalent	⌘ ★	#	#	#
School Academic and Management Board	+	#	#	#
Programme Validation Panel		⌘	⌘	⌘
Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee	✧	✧	✧	✧
HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education & Lifelong Learning	✧	★	✧	★
HKU Senate/ Academic Board			★	✧

Key:
⊕ Proposal
⌘ Main scrutiny process
✧ Receiving annual reporting
+ Receiving reporting in the next meeting

\# Approval-in-Principle at CB/ Approval for development at SAMB
★ Authorisation

[Note 1] Including collaborative award-bearing programmes.
[Note 2] For collaborative award-bearing programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below, normally the authorisation routes for HKU SPACE programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below will be adopted.
[Note 3] Depending on the collaboration arrangement, alternatively may follow the necessary approval procedures governing the HKU partner unit.

3.4 Executive Programmes

Executive programmes (Executive Certificates/ Executive Diplomas/ Senior Executive Certificates/ Senior Executive Diplomas) in different subject areas are introduced to meet the increasing lifelong learning needs of executives and professionals. These programmes normally contain content of postgraduate level or very specialised contents. Programmes may be assigned at two levels namely executive or senior executive. Normally executive programmes are not aimed at academic recognition, do not carry credit value, and have only indicative HKQF levels.

For the authorisation routes of executive programmes, the programme proposal, ~~and~~ the completed Qualifications Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF3 Form) and the budget proposal can be approved by the College Board (CB). The CB's decision will be reported to the School Academic and Management Board (SAMB) for information.

4. Validation and Approval Procedures of Award-Bearing Programmes (excluding Certificate for Module programms)

4.1 Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below

An outline programme proposal is required to be submitted by the Programme Team to the relevant CB for consideration. The submission should include the Course Budget Proforma and the Qualifications Framework Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form), and the Programme Outcome Assessment (POA) Form (for programmes leading to HKU system awards). (More details on POA Form are provided in Chapter 5 "Programme Monitoring".) Before the CB meeting, the QF1 Form should be forwarded to the Qualifications Framework Working Group (QFWG) via the QAE Unit. After the vetting of QF1 Form by the QFWG, the POA Form should be vetted by the Maisy Ho Centre for Teaching and Learning (MHCTL).

If a new partner is involved, the outline proposal also gives information about the proposed partnership as approved by the SAMB.

After approval by the CB is obtained, the proposed programme may be launched. This is also subject to the budget approval by the Budget Vetting Panel (BVP). The college should report the approved programmes in the next nearest SAMB meeting. At the end of an academic year, the new programmes will be listed in a report to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL).

4.2 Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above

4.2.1 Preliminary Stage

The preliminary stage requires that the Programme Team submits an outline proposal to the relevant CB for consideration. The submission should include the Course Budget Proforma, and the QF1 Form (Parts 1 and 2 only) incorporating

preliminary comments from the QAE Unit. After gaining approval-in-principle at the college level, the submission of the outline programme proposal, budget proposal and QF1 Form should be submitted to SAMB for obtaining **"Approval-for-development"**.

To ensure good communication between the School and faculties in HKU, a **Joint Consultative Committee (JCC)** is formed by the Senate. The preliminary programme proposal after the SAMB support should be taken to the JCC for information exchange.

4.2.2 Detailed Validation Stage

4.2.2.1 HKU SPACE Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above

A Programme Validation Panel (PVP) meeting is convened to consider the detailed programme proposal and to discuss it with the Programme Team. If the PVP agrees to recommend the programme for further approval, the PVP Chairman representing the QAEC endorses approval and requests the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval.

4.2.2.2 New Programmes in Collaboration with an Academic Unit in The University of Hong Kong

The Programme Team (HKU SPACE and staff of the partnering unit) prepares a detailed programme proposal and notifies both the QAEC and the Faculty Board (FB) or a relevant committee for the unit. The School and the relevant HKU academic unit will agree on whether the School's programme validation process as given in 4.2.2.1 or the Faculty process is adopted. If the Faculty process is adopted, the ~~The~~ FB or relevant committee recommends approval (or conditional approval) to the HKU Academic Board and the Senate (may involve co-ordination with the FB or relevant committee on making a joint submission). The Academic Board/Senate considers recommendations of the FB or relevant committee, and authorises delivery. An annual reporting is made to the QAEC and the Board for CPE&LL.

4.2.2.3 Collaborative Provision by an External Partner

For a new partner, the PVP receives information on the approval-in-principle given by the SAMB on the proposed partnership. A PVP meeting (or a joint PVP meeting with the partner institution) is convened to consider the detailed proposal for the programme and discuss it with the Programme Team. If the PVP agrees to recommend the programme for further approval, the PVP Chairman representing the QAEC endorses approval and requests the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval of the new partnership and the introduction of the new programme.

4.3   Accelerated Approval Process

The accelerated process aims to facilitate prompt launching of new programmes to meet market demand.

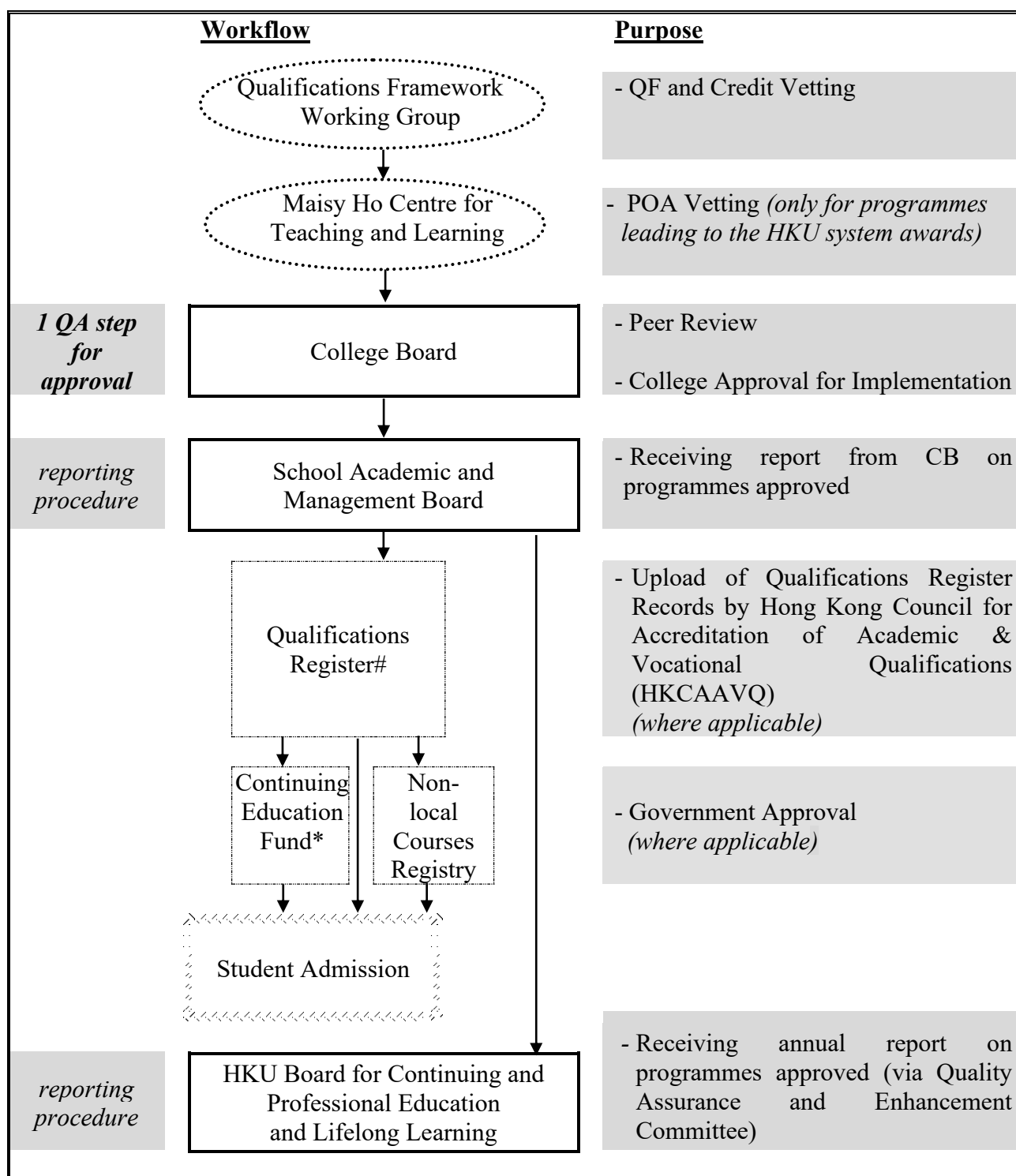#### 4.3.1 Award-bearing Programmes at HKQF L3 and below

The Programme Leader will submit the programme proposal including the QF1 Form and POA Form, and justification for adopting accelerated approval process to the College Head for consideration. Upon confirmation by the College Head that the proposal is "ready and adequate", the programme may then be launched. With the completion of the QF vetting and POA vetting processes, the Head will report the programme proposal to the next meeting of the CB for retrospective approval and then to the SAMB for information.

4.3.2 Award-bearing Programmes at HKQF L4 and above

The Programme Leader will submit the programme proposal including the QF1 Form and POA Form, and justification for adopting accelerated approval process, to the College Head for consideration and the QAE Unit for information. Upon confirmation by the College Head that the proposal is "ready and adequate", the Head will then report the programme proposal to the next meeting of the CB and SAMB for retrospective approval for development. Meanwhile the proposed programme follows the normal JCC circulation, QF and POA vetting, and PVP process, with final approval by the Board for CPE&LL.

A summary of the integration of quality assurance, communication and government regulatory processes is given in Figures 4 and 5.
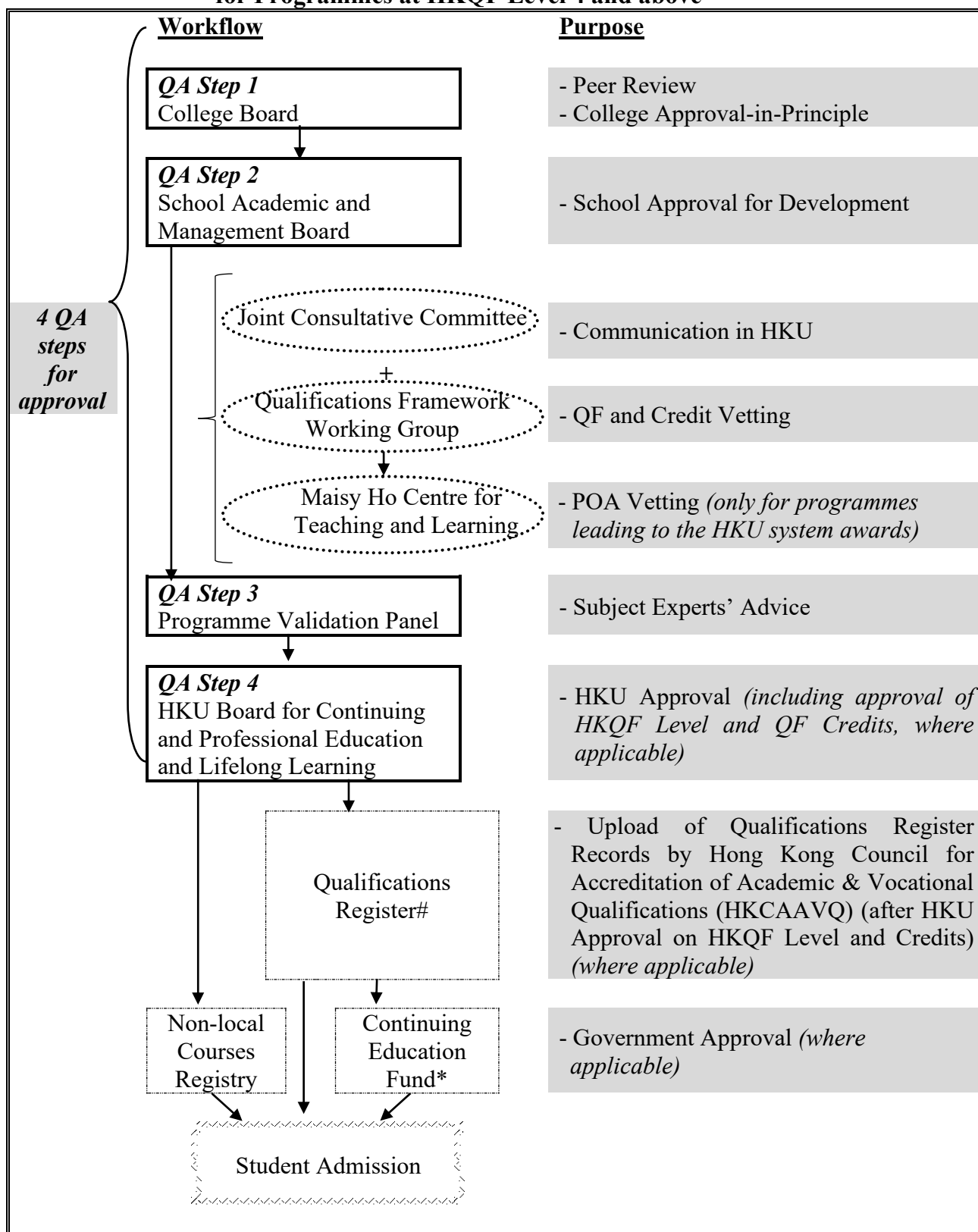
Figure 4
Integration of Quality Assurance, Communication and
Government Regulatory Processes
for Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below

Workflow	Purpose
Qualifications Framework Working Group	- QF and Credit Vetting
Maisy Ho Centre for Teaching and Learning	- POA Vetting *(only for programmes leading to the HKU system awards)*
1 QA step for approval — **College Board**	- Peer Review - College Approval for Implementation
reporting procedure — **School Academic and Management Board**	- Receiving report from CB on programmes approved
Qualifications Register#	- Upload of Qualifications Register Records by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) *(where applicable)*
Continuing Education Fund* — **Non-local Courses Registry**	- Government Approval *(where applicable)*
Student Admission	
reporting procedure — **HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning**	- Receiving annual report on programmes approved (via Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee)

In promotion and publicity of HKQF, the HKQF level, the QR registration number assigned by QR authority, and the validity period of the relevant QR entry should be accurately presented. The HKQF logo may also be used. (only applicable to qualifications which have entered into QR).

* Government policy requires uploading programmes on the Qualifications Register before registering as CEF reimbursable courses.

Figure 5
Integration of Quality Assurance, Communication and
Government Regulatory Processes
for Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above

Workflow	Purpose
QA Step 1 College Board	- Peer Review - College Approval-in-Principle
QA Step 2 School Academic and Management Board	- School Approval for Development
Joint Consultative Committee	- Communication in HKU
± Qualifications Framework Working Group	- QF and Credit Vetting
Maisy Ho Centre for Teaching and Learning	- POA Vetting *(only for programmes leading to the HKU system awards)*
QA Step 3 Programme Validation Panel	- Subject Experts' Advice
QA Step 4 HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning	- HKU Approval *(including approval of HKQF Level and QF Credits, where applicable)*
Qualifications Register#	- Upload of Qualifications Register Records by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic & Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) (after HKU Approval on HKQF Level and Credits) *(where applicable)*
Non-local Courses Registry / Continuing Education Fund*	- Government Approval *(where applicable)*
Student Admission	

4 QA steps for approval

In promotion and publicity of HKQF, the HKQF level, the QR registration number assigned by QR authority, and the validity period of the relevant QR entry should be accurately presented. The HKQF logo may also be used (only applicable to qualifications which have entered into QR).

* Government policy requires uploading programmes on the Qualifications Register before registering as CEF reimbursable courses.

5. Programme Validation Panel and Procedures (for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above)

5.1 Programme Validation Panel

The Panel is established by the QAEC. It normally consists of

(a) Chairman (QAEC Chairman or QAEC member)
(b) HKU SPACE academic (from a different College in the School)
(c) HKU faculty academic (from a cognate faculty or academic unit in HKU)
(d) Two external specialists (from HK or elsewhere, with academic and/or practitioner expertise)
(e) Panel Officer (QAEC Secretary or delegate)
(f) Assistant Panel Officer (from the QAE Unit)

External specialists should not be involved in the programme development and curriculum design of the programme concerned, and have no potential conflict of interest in regard to their participation in the PVP. The nomination of members for PVP is subject to the approval of the QAEC Chairman.

5.2 Programme Validation Document Contents

(a) Background
(b) The Partner (if applicable)
(c) Target Student Group
(d) Programme Details (attach vetted QF1 Form)
(e) Assessment (attach POA Form Sections 1 and 2 for programme leading to HKU system awards)
(f) Resources
(g) Management
(h) Staffing
(i) Quality Assurance and Enhancement
(j) Other Relevant Information (if applicable)

5.3 Panel Meeting Rundown

(a) Introductory briefing (by Panel Chairman)
(b) Meeting with Programme Team
(c) Panel private meeting
(d) Exit Meeting with Programme Team

The Panel will review and discuss the detailed programme proposal with the Programme Team. The Panel will consider whether the programme meets community demands, and whether the academic and professional standards of the programme are appropriate with reference to similar programmes locally and internationally. If the Panel agrees to recommend the programme for further approval, the Panel Chairman representing the QAEC will endorse approval and request the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval.

Should the Panel not agree to recommend the programme and requests for substantial revision, further meetings may be arranged for the Programme Team to re-submit the programme proposal or part of the proposal for the Panel's re-consideration.

5.4. Main Issues for Consideration by Validation Panels

	Main Issues for Consideration
All Programmes	a. rationale, aims and intended learning outcomes b. academic standard with reference to the HKQF c. minimum entry requirements d. structure and content of the curriculum, coverage on the proper and ethical use of AI, and the assignment of credits e. medium of instruction and/or assignment f. academic and administrative staffing arrangements g. teaching and learning approach, and learner support h. assessment strategy, with weighting of assignment tasks, and methods and timing of assessments i. alignment of assessment types with programme/ module's objectives and intended learning outcomes j. regulations for admission, progression and assessment k. library, IT and any specialist facilities, including AI tools for students' academic work l. management, monitoring and QAE arrangements
E-Learning/ Distance Learning Delivery	a. teaching and learning activities b. assessment c. tools and technology d. delivery mode e. staffing (teaching staff appointment and training) f. learner support systems g. provision of sample e-Learning/ distance learning materials and their adaptation/localisation (for non-local programmes) h. awareness of intellectual property rights
Collaborative Provision	a. adaptation of the curriculum (for non-local programmes) b. delivery approach c. medium of instruction and/or assessment d. division of labour and responsibilities between the partners e. special learning support to students from the partner and/or HKU SPACE f. formal liaison and communication channels between the partners g. QAE requirements of the partner

5.5 Programme Validation Report

The Panel Chairman issues to the Panel for consideration the Validation Report with the Programme Team's response to the conditions of approval and recommendations.

(a) Conditions form part of the validation determination, to be fulfilled by the Programme Team.

(b) Recommendations form part of the validation determination, which have continuous improvement purpose and are non-binding in nature. The Programme Team should explain clearly in the Report how the recommendations will be addressed with a timeframe for completion.

If the Panel considers the Report and the response of the Programme Team satisfactory, the Panel Chairman will endorse the report on behalf of the Panel and the QAEC. Upon endorsement of the Panel Chairman, the proposed programme will be submitted with the Report to the Board for CPE&LL for final academic approval.

5.6 Post-Validation Exercise

For programmes offered in Hong Kong in collaboration with non-local institutions leading to non-local qualifications, the programmes require approval of exemption from registration in accordance with the Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance before it is launched.

CHAPTER 5

Programme Monitoring

1. Introduction

Once a programme is offered to students, the Programme Team is required to systematically monitor the quality of programme delivery and the outcomes achieved by students. This entails a continuous process of reflection and review, taking account of feedback from various stakeholders with a view to building on strengths, addressing weaknesses, updating academic content and upgrading support for learners. The monitoring also aims to keep a close eye on the health of the programme, so as to maintain high standards of delivery and of outcomes, and to deal with problems swiftly and effectively.

Throughout the course of programme delivery, with various programme design and features, quality monitoring measures are implemented, where necessary with appropriate adaptation, to assure that QAE is conducted in a fit-for-purpose manner.

In addition to the School's internal QAE procedures in programme monitoring, there are external quality audits, reviews, accreditations and regulatory requirements which also supplement with input for reflection on the quality of their programmes and courses. These internal and external monitoring activities provide data that may be collected, selected and analysed so as to serve as useful reference in quality enhancement and benchmarking with local and international counterparts.

2. Monitoring Activities

A Programme Team is responsible for monitoring the quality of programme management, programme delivery and the student achievements.

Information about the on-going programme monitoring activities involves various reports and records containing substantial information including student enrolment, student assessment outcomes, graduation statistics, student survey findings, programme improvement and modification plans. Such information is kept in strict confidence and is handled with restricted access.

For a programme involving academic collaboration, normally the QAE requirements of both HKU SPACE and the partner institutions should be fulfilled, and where possible synchronisation of quality assurance and enhancement measures should be explored to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

The major monitoring activities are shown below.

2.1 Academic Committee

For each award-bearing programme at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Level 2 and above, an Academic Committee (AC), is set up for continuous monitoring of the academic quality of the programme. Award-bearing programmes in the same subject group may be overseen by one AC to enhance efficiency. It is a good practice for the AC of a programme or programmes in the same subject group to include short courses in its remit of programme monitoring. In such cases, a Subject AC may be formed. The Terms of Reference and compositions of an AC and a Subject AC are given in Appendices A1-A2.

2.2 Student Learning Experience

Student Feedback from various channels is considered as an indicator of academic and service quality. They are invited to share their learning experience with the School to facilitate QAE and improvement in despite of the programme delivery mode. The approach, in all cases, is that their feedback is not primarily an evaluation of teachers by students, and that student feedback should not affect assessment results.

For courses and programmes of longer duration, formative feedback from students provides the teacher with a better reference for preparing and conducting the later teaching sessions. It also provides an occasion for the students to reflect on their learning in the lesson and encourage them to raise queries on uncertainties. With the help of technology, instant student feedback may be solicited using digital tools.

End-of-module and end-of-programme surveys are the structured and systematic QAE activities adopted by the School, with prescribed implementation protocols including recording and reporting procedures. The findings are evidence of the quality improvement actions taken in the course of module delivery and as reference for improvement actions in the following cohorts.

2.2.1 Learning Experience Survey

The "Learning Experience Survey" (LES) is a student survey carried out by means of a standard online questionnaire near the end of each course. It offers a systematic measure of students' views on the quality of courses and teaching, and can draw attention to specific issues or problems. The data should be used with discretion and should not be taken as the sole source of feedback concerning a programme.

Relevant reports and summaries can be accessed by teachers, Programme Leaders and the senior management. The Programme Leader and relevant teachers should address the findings and comments and report to the AC and College Board (CB) in the form of Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The Quality Analytics Team (QAT) conducts both standard analytics and higher level analyses on various aspects at the School level. The findings and observations are reported to the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) and the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL).

For collaborative programmes, it is not appropriate to duplicate the student surveys if the partner institution has in place a similar arrangement. Nevertheless, the LES may be used to supplement those aspects not covered by the partner's survey.

2.2.2 Programme Learning Outcomes Survey

The Programme Learning Outcomes Survey (PLOS) is adopted for all award-bearing programmes leading to HKU system awards. It is a means of seeking feedback from graduating students on the quality of a programme as a whole. It aims to invite graduating students to assess the extent of their achievement of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) as well as their overall satisfaction with the programme and learning experiences. Findings of the PLOS make a significant contribution to the evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes and levels of student achievement.

Programme Teams will incorporate the PLOS results and their responses in the AMRs for submission to respective ACs and to CBs. The QAT will also submit a full yearly report for consideration by the QAEC, which will then be included in the annual report presenting the School's QAE activities to the Board for CPE&LL.

2.2.3 Survey on Support Services

The Survey on Support Services (SSS) aims to collect focused feedback on whether the teaching and learning support services meet the needs of students. Relevant administrative units are invited to respond to the SSS results for continuous improvement and enhancement and to take follow-up actions. Further details are given in Chapter 9 "Teaching and Learning Support".

2.2.4 Student Barometer

The Student Barometer (SB), conducted by an independent research organisation, is the world's largest student survey providing benchmarks for student satisfaction of the whole study experience in various aspects. The School undertakes the SB biennially as an ongoing international benchmarking mechanism. The survey findings are analysed and fed back to individual Colleges. The Colleges will draw up their action plans after each round of survey to address the issues identified, which are consolidated and reported to the QAEC.

2.2.5 Other Communication Channels

Qualitative feedback from students is less easy to document and analyse, but the data are vital to illuminate and amplify the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires. Useful sources of qualitative feedback may include:

(a) written comments given by students in the LES, PLOS, SSS and SB;
(b) student representatives on AC and Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC);
(c) on-line feedback via the HKU SPACE website and social media platforms;
(d) communication via the SOUL platform;
(e) in-class discussion sessions;

(f)   telephone surveys;
(g)   student gatherings at college, division or subject group level (face-to-face or online);
(h)   comments made via telephone, fax, mail, email and instant messaging platforms;
(i)   informal student-staff gatherings; and
(j)   focus group interviews.

2.2.6   Follow-up Actions

A Programme Leader should review all data, whether quantitative or qualitative, and take relevant actions. After follow-up action is taken, the Programme Leader gives feedback to students about the action taken in relation to student comments. This completes the feedback and communication loop, and assures students that the School is committed to continuous quality improvement and enhancement. Student feedback and actions planned and taken by the Programme Leader will be reported in the AMR.

2.3   Programme Outcome Assessment

HKU SPACE has successfully adopted OBASL in programme design and delivery. Programme Outcome Assessment (POA) is designed to measure how well a programme has facilitated the students to achieve the PILOs. Objective data is taken from student assessment results and measured against the stated PILOs of a programme. The POA is adopted for all award-bearing programmes leading to HKU system awards, except for intermediate exit awards, Certificate for Module, commissioned and Applied Learning programmes. The POA is incorporated into the programme design, validation, approval, review and monitoring processes.

In designing and delivering a programme, the Programme Team should develop and implement assessment methods to assess the students' abilities in achieving the PILOs. The Programme Team should map selected assessment items of modules with the PILOs, and specify the assessment rubrics for the different levels of achievements for the selected assessment items, to measure the student achievement of the PILOs. The Programme Team should undertake a review of students' achievement on the basis of the stated evidence.

The POA process provides for the mapping of assessment items and results with learning outcomes. After a new programme has been offered to the first cohort of students, the Programme Team should submit the completed POA Form to the Maisy Ho Centre for Teaching and Learning (MHCTL) for vetting before consideration by the AC. The AC will consider how the existing structure and content of the curriculum can support students in the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. After the AC's approval, the finalised POA Form should be submitted to the MHCTL for record.

2.4   Teaching Quality

The Programme Leader is responsible for the preparation, briefing and induction of teachers and for staff development of teachers as appropriate. Teachers are given all necessary information on a programme to enable appropriate preparation for teaching.

Meetings of all teachers in a programme facilitate communication and are organised by the Programme Leader prior to the commencement and during the delivery of a programme. The Programme Leader should also identify teachers' development needs and recommend appropriate training activities and resources to individual teachers, including those provided by the MHCTL.

Direct observation, on face-to-face teaching or e-Learning activity, by the Programme Leader or another senior colleague is a requirement for all new teachers during their first six months of teaching, and for a sample of existing teaching staff where time and resources allow. In the case of negative comments from students about teaching or other issues about a programme, the Programme Leader will conduct class visits and/ or telephone surveys with students for gathering more relevant information to help determine follow-up action.

The Programme Team is expected to provide feedback on teaching observation to the teachers. Summary of reports on teaching observation and relevant follow-up actions are reported to the AC and recorded in the AMR, as well as in the personnel record of the teachers concerned.

Further details on teaching quality are given in Chapter 9 "Teaching and Learning Support".

2.5 Other Programme Monitoring Mechanisms

HKU SPACE appoints External Examiners (EEs) and Academic Assessors (AAs) for all award-bearing programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above. As established independent academics or professionals in the subject, the EEs and AAs are invited to give academic advice on the programme or subject group, to comment on assessment methods and student performance, and to confirm that the standards achieved are comparable to those of similar programmes in other higher education institutions and are of the appropriate professional standards.

In addition to EEs and AAs, other programme monitoring mechanisms include the Board of Examiners (BoE) and SSCC. The BoE has the power and duty to assess and determine the performance outcomes of students. The SSCC provides a forum for students and staff of programme(s) to discuss suggestions and issues of concern.

Apart from student feedback, Programme Teams have to consider the feedback from teachers about the programme and related issues for the purpose of quality improvement and effective communication. The School provides a Teaching Experience Survey (TES) especially to facilitate part-time teachers to convey their feedback on different aspects at the end of a teaching period. The Online Feedback Form for Teachers in the Teacher Portal also provides an additional channel to facilitate the communication between the Programme Team and the teachers. The Programme Team may have to discuss with the teachers regarding their concerns and/or convey their comments to the relevant units of the School for information and follow-up action.

The School-wide Outstanding Teacher Award Scheme is conducted to honour distinguished teachers and their work, enhance teachers' professional identity and

promulgate the School's affirmation to quality teaching and learning. The awardees are invited to share their good teaching practices in teacher forums and/or other School events.

To maintain the quality of programme management, central records of Professional Accreditation and Recognition for all programmes is set up to monitor and maintain the validity of the accreditation and recognition status of individual programmes.

2.6 Handling of Complaints and Compliments

The School values complaints as a constructive feedback source to help future improvement. To ensure that due attention is given and necessary remedial actions are promptly taken in the handling of complaints on both academic and other issues, there are formalised handling procedures serving as internal guidelines for HKU SPACE colleagues.

In addition to complaints, students may also send their compliment messages to the School in appreciation of the teaching, support services and other issues. All complaints and compliments are handled in strict confidence and will not affect student assessment results.

An annual summary report on the complaints and compliments is made by QAE Unit to the QAEC and to the Board for CPE&LL.

3. Reporting on Programme Monitoring Activities

AMRs are essential records and documented evidence regarding the application of programme monitoring mechanisms. One AMR reports on one programme or a cluster of programmes in the same subject area. The Programme Leader has to present the AMR(s) for discussion and consideration by the AC, and then report them to the CB. Thereafter, reporting is made by the College to the School and the University, i.e. the QAEC and the Board for CPE&LL. The whole reporting process should be done within six months upon completion of each year of study. Figure 1 gives the reporting routes for award-bearing programmes and non-award-bearing courses.

For programmes in the year of the programme review, the programme monitoring activities conducted during the year of programme review will be summarised in the Programme Review Document. The submission of an AMR for the year of review will not be required. The Programme Team should inform the QAE Unit of the plan to prepare the Programme Review Documents in lieu of the AMR for the year before the start of annual monitoring exercise of that year. (Details on programme review are given in Chapter 7.)

3.1 Annual Monitoring Report Contents for Award-bearing Programmes

The following is a list of suggested relevant programme information to be presented in the AMR.

(a)   statistical information and student profile;

(b)   review of the current teaching team including appointment and induction of new staff, teacher feedback, and records of teaching observation;

(c)   summaries and analyses of student feedback;

(d)   summaries and analyses of teacher feedback;

(a)   staff development/ teacher management;

(b)   review and explanation of any significant changes in the programme;

(c)   EEs' and AAs' views;

(d)   Measuring the programme learning outcomes and student assessment outcomes at the programme level from analysis of professional recognition achieved, EEs' view of standards achieved, articulation to the other programmes/ institutions, and employers/ graduates' feedback, POA and PLOS;

(e)   good practices;

(f)   action(s) taken and its effectiveness in the reporting period; and

(g)   action plan(s) for quality improvement and enhancement, and development of the programme for the next reporting period, with method(s) to measure the effectiveness of the action(s).

3.2 Non-award Bearing Courses

As ACs are not generally arranged for non-award bearing courses, monitoring reports for these courses are presented to the CB for peer comment and discussion. If there are major issues requiring the attention of the CB and/or QAEC, these will be included in the Overview Report prepared by the CB for submission to the QAEC.
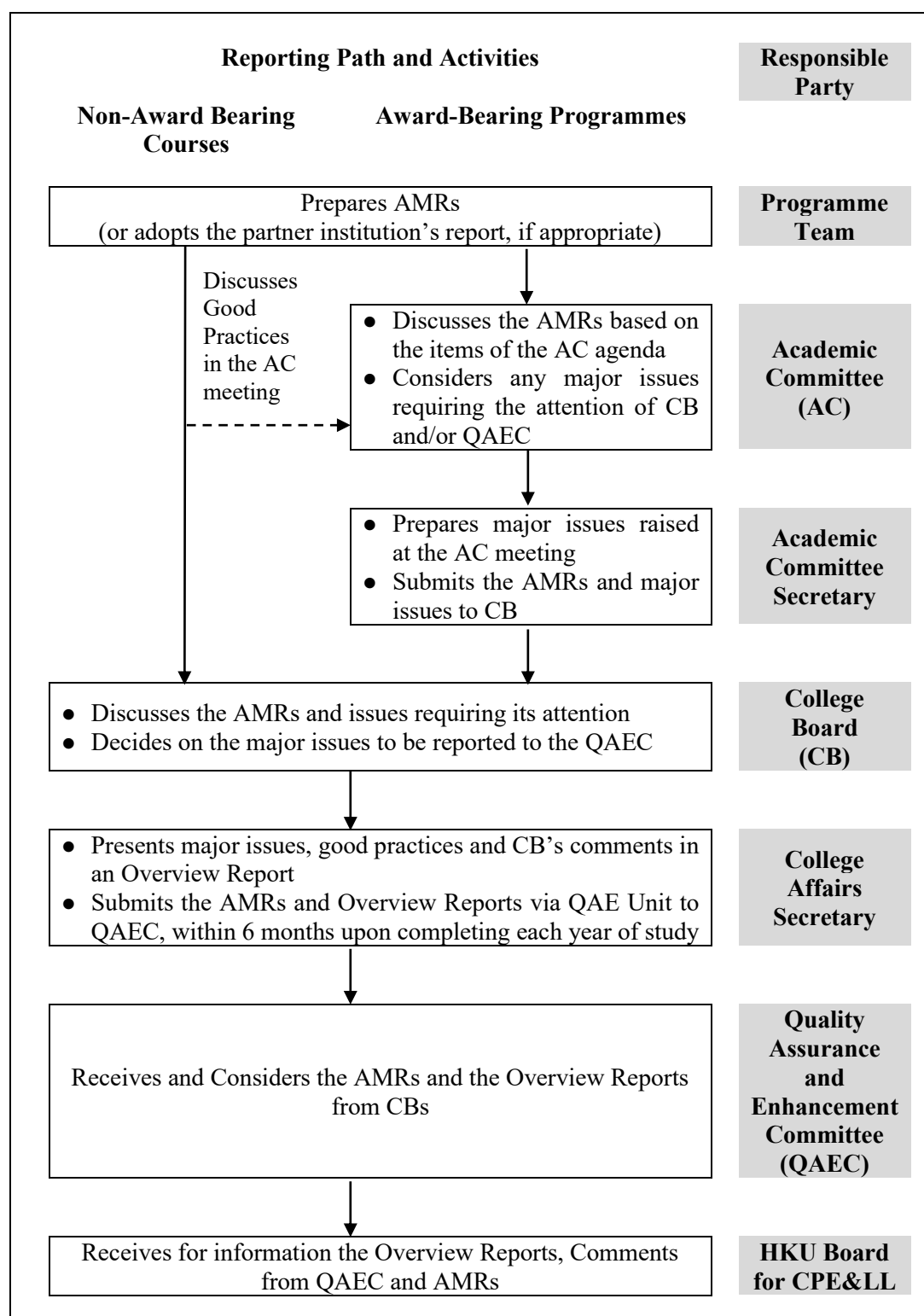
3.3 Certificate for Module Programmes

The Certificate for Module programmes can be offered as Microcredentials and they are "stackable" into a larger award-bearing qualification. Certificate for Module originating from an award-bearing programme will follow the "parent" programme when completing the AMR for reporting to the AC, CB and QAEC. For other Certificate for Module programmes, the AMR template for non-award bearing courses can be used for reporting to the CB. Any major issues requiring the attention of the CB and/or QAEC will be included in the Overview Report prepared by the CB for submission to the QAEC.

4. Programme Discontinuation and Teach-out Arrangements

Programme discontinuation is a process that is applied in terminating award-bearing programmes. The School has set up the internal guidelines for the approval of programme discontinuation to safeguard the interest of students enrolled on the programme and to provide a clear and accountable record for completing due academic responsibilities. Teach-out arrangements are considered when the Programme Leader proposes to discontinue a programme with existing students. This includes arrangements that best serve the interests of the existing students to ensure that all existing students can complete the course of study, and that the quality of the programme continues to meet the required standard.

Figure 1
Reporting Path for Monitoring of Programmes

Reporting Path and Activities	Responsible Party
Non-Award Bearing Courses / **Award-Bearing Programmes**	
Prepares AMRs (or adopts the partner institution's report, if appropriate)	**Programme Team**
Non-Award Bearing: Discusses Good Practices in the AC meeting / *Award-Bearing:* • Discusses the AMRs based on the items of the AC agenda • Considers any major issues requiring the attention of CB and/or QAEC	**Academic Committee (AC)**
• Prepares major issues raised at the AC meeting • Submits the AMRs and major issues to CB	**Academic Committee Secretary**
• Discusses the AMRs and issues requiring its attention • Decides on the major issues to be reported to the QAEC	**College Board (CB)**
• Presents major issues, good practices and CB's comments in an Overview Report • Submits the AMRs and Overview Reports via QAE Unit to QAEC, within 6 months upon completing each year of study	**College Affairs Secretary**
Receives and Considers the AMRs and the Overview Reports from CBs	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)**
Receives for information the Overview Reports, Comments from QAEC and AMRs	**HKU Board for CPE&LL**

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
HKU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Academic Committee for
(HKU SPACE Programme Name)

Terms of Reference

1. To ensure the maintenance of academic standards of the programme generally, and specifically, to review and give advice on the teaching and learning processes regularly with particular reference to the following aspects:

   - the admission criteria, procedures and the appointment of the Admission Committee or Admission Tutor(s);
   - the Programme Objectives, Programme Intended Learning Outcomes, programme structure, content (with appropriate assignments of HKQF Level and credits, as well as appropriate coverage on the proper and ethical use of AI for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above), delivery and assessment;
   - the criteria for appointment of teacher(s) on the programme;
   - the criteria for appointment of external examiner(s) and/or academic assessor(s) (for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above);
   - the student and teacher feedback on the programme quality and the teaching and learning processes;
   - the reporting on student achievement of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes via the Programme Outcome Assessment;
   - any other matters of academic concern.

2. To consider and to recommend for further approval where appropriate and appropriate new programme proposals which are developed from the programme monitored by this Committee, with changes in only a minor portion (no more than 25%) of the curriculum. This will include new programmes leading to a new award level and/or nomenclature.

3. To consider and give approval or otherwise for programme modification on subject-related issues.

4. To conduct annual review of HKQF levels and credits.

5. To discuss the monitoring activities on the programme for the past year of study for reporting via the CB to the QAEC. The following categories shall be standing items in the agenda:

   a. Student Enrolment
   b. Teachers and Teaching Quality
   c. Programme Structure and Curriculum
   d. Programme Management
   e. Student Assessment and Performance
   f. Learning Centres and Support Services
   g. Action(s) Taken

       h.   Action(s) Planned
       i.   Good Practices

6. To consider and recommend to the CB for approval of programme reviews for programmes at HKQF Level 3 and above.

7. To advise the CB, the QAEC and the Board for CPE&LL generally on any matters concerning the quality of the programme where appropriate.

8. To report to the appropriate parent bodies as required.

Membership
1.   College Head or his/her representative* (Chairman)
2.   HKU SPACE Programme Leader(s)
3.   Relevant Subject Group leader(s)
4.   Course Directors (if applicable)
5.   1-3 Teacher Representatives
6.   At least 1 representative from outside the School who is/are professionally qualified in the field
7.   External Examiner/ Academic Assessor^
8.   1-2 student representatives as determined by the Committee
9.   Co-opted members as determined by the Committee#

*The Academic Committee Chairman should normally be a staff at the level of Programme Director and above, and not be closely related to the programme concerned in any way to ensure impartiality.
^ Appointment of External Examiner/ Academic Assessor is required for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above only.
# Graduates can be invited as co-opted members.

For programmes jointly offered by two or more academic units of the School, the membership is as follows:
1.1   College Head or his/her representative (Chairman) (this is the College which hosts the programme)
1.2   College Head or his/her representative (Deputy Chairman) (the collaboration college(s))
Other members will be the same as above.

Periods of Office:
For categories 1-3 (and Deputy Chairman of joint programme(s)) with the office concerned
For categories 4-9 annual unless specified otherwise in the letter of appointment

Frequency of Meetings: as necessary but at least once per year.

A quorum of 4, including:
- one each from Categories 1, 2 and 5;
- one from either Category 6 or Category 7.

Note: If no student representative is able to participate in the meeting, their feedback and participation must be achieved by alternative means. These include student written comments or verbal comments as recorded by the Programme Team, or student feedback as documented in the minutes of Student-Staff Consultative Committee meeting. These have to be provided for consideration by other members present at the AC meeting.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
HKU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
Terms of Reference of Subject Academic Committee for
(HKU SPACE Subject Group/ Programme Names)

1. Programmes in the same or cognate subject discipline may be grouped in a Subject Academic Committee. The Committee serves as a forum. To consider and discuss the development of programmes under the subject discipline and the sharing of market information, resources and good practices among the programmes in the subject.

For each programme overseen by this Committee:

2. To ensure the maintenance of academic standards generally, and specifically, to review and give advice on the teaching and learning processes regularly with particular reference to the following aspects:

   - the admission criteria, procedures and the appointment of the Admission Committee or Admission Tutor(s);
   - the Programme Objectives, Programme Intended Learning Outcomes, programme structure, content (with appropriate assignments of HKQF Level and credits, as well as appropriate coverage on the proper and ethical use of AI for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above), delivery and assessment;
   - the criteria for appointment of teacher(s) on the programme;
   - the criteria for appointment of external examiner(s) and/or academic assessor(s) (for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above);
   - the student and teacher feedback on the programme quality and the teaching and learning processes;
   - the reporting on student achievement of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes via the Programme Outcome Assessment;
   - any other matters of academic concern.

3. To consider and to recommend for further approval where applicable and appropriate new programme proposals which are developed from the programme monitored by this Committee, with changes in only a minor portion (no more than 25%) of the curriculum. This will include new programmes leading to a new award level and/or nomenclature.

4. To consider and give approval or otherwise for programme modification on subject-related issues.

5. To conduct annual review of HKQF levels and credits.

6. To discuss the monitoring activities on the programme for the past year of study for reporting via the CB to the QAEC. The following categories shall be standing items in the agenda:
   a. Student Enrolment
   b. Teachers and Teaching Quality
   c. Programme Structure and Curriculum
   d. Programme Management
   e. Student Assessment and Performance
   f. Learning Centres and Support Services
   g. Action(s) Taken

h. Action(s) Planned
　　　　　i. Good Practices

7. To consider and recommend to the CB for approval of programme reviews for programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below.

8. To advise the CB, the QAEC and the Board for CPE&LL generally on any matters concerning the quality of the programme where appropriate.

9. To report to the appropriate parent bodies as required.

Membership:
1. College Head or his/her representative* (Chairman)
2. HKU SPACE Programme Leader(s)
3. Relevant Subject Group leader(s)
4. Course Directors (if applicable)
5. At least 1 teacher representative from each programme
6. At least 1 representative from outside the School who is/are professionally qualified in the field
7. External Examiner(s)/ Academic Assessor(s)^
8. At least 1 student representative from each programme as determined by the Committee
9. Co-opted members as determined by the Committee#

* The Subject Academic Committee Chairman should normally be a staff at the level of Programme Director and above, and not be closely related to the programmes concerned in any way to ensure impartiality.
^ Appointment of External Examiner/ Academic Assessor is required for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above only.
# Graduates can be invited as co-opted members.

For programmes jointly offered by two or more academic units of the School, the membership is as follows:
1.1 College Head or his/her representative (Chairman) (this is the College which hosts the programmes)
1.2 College Head or his/her representative (Deputy Chairman) (the collaboration college(s))
Other members will be the same as above.

Periods of Office:
For categories 1-3 (and Deputy Chairman of joint programme(s)) with the office concerned
For categories 4-9 annual unless specified otherwise in the letter of appointment

Frequency of Meetings: as necessary but at least once per year.

A quorum of 5, including:
- one each from Categories 1, 2, 3 and 5;
- one from either Category 6 or Category 7.

Note: If no student representative is able to participate in the meeting, their feedback and participation must be achieved by alternative means. These include student written comments or verbal comments as recorded by the Programme Team, or student feedback as documented in the minutes of Student-Staff Consultative Committee meeting. These have to be provided for consideration by other members present at the Subject AC meeting.

CHAPTER 6

Programme Modification

1. Introduction

The approval for offering a new programme is normally given for a period of five years. During this period, certain parts of the programme require change or updating in the light of advancement in technologies, enactment of new policies, and/or new School developments and policies. Procedures have been devised for making modifications to programmes so that the academic quality of the programmes established at the validation stage will not be unduly affected by the modifications.

Changes of more than 25% of Existing Programme Credits

If modifications to syllabus involve more than 25% of the total number of existing programme credits, the programme will be considered as a "new" programme. For programmes at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF) Level 3 and below, the modifications should be approved by the College Board (CB), and reported to the School Academic and Management Board (SAMB) for information. For programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above, it will undergo either a validation process or a programme review process. The purpose is to ensure that if the modification affects the academic value and integrity of the programme, the revised programme as a whole would be scrutinised again. In cases of doubt, the Programme Team shall consult the Quality Assurance Enhancement and Committee Chairman via the QAE Unit.

2. Types of Programme Modifications

In all cases of programme modification, the changes must not affect the academic quality of a programme, as commensurate with the award level of the programme.

Modification not involving more than 25% of Existing Programme Credits

Modifications are categorised into three types which involve different approval procedures. The following are samples of programme modifications but it is not an exhaustive list.

Types of Modification

Type I
    a. Programme and/or award title(s) (terminal/ intermediate award);
    b. HKQF level of programme;
    c. Programme restructuring, which affects the awarding criteria of terminal/ intermediate award(s);
    d. Programme streams with new programme and award titles;
    e. Mode of study in terms of full-time mode/ part-time mode.

Type II
a. Programme objectives;
b. Programme intended learning outcomes;
c. Programme streams without changes in the existing programme and award titles;
d. Mode of study in terms of face-to-face/ distance learning/ e-Learning/ blended learning;
e. Medium of instruction [Note];
f. Normal/ Minimum/ Maximum duration;
g. Number of credits of programme;
h. Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of the existing programme credits);
i. Minimum entry requirements.

Type III
a. Module titles;
b. Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of the existing programme credits);
c. Assessment methods and weightings;
d. HKQF level and/ or credits of modules;
e. Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules.

When a new programme is developed by modification from an existing programme with less than 25% change of the total number of the existing programme credits, it will follow the approval period of the existing programme. The new programme will be reviewed when the existing programme is due for next review, even if the new programme does not yet have a graduated cohort.

3. **The Modification Process**

3.1 **Timing**

To ensure that modifications to a programme are approved in time for implementation, it is advisable to make proposals for programme modification well in advance. Modifications should normally be approved at least three months before implementation. There is however flexibility in the timing for some cases, such as sudden changes in government policies.

3.2 **Proposal Document**

The Programme Team prepares a proposal document for consideration of the AC. For programmes requiring modifications before programme launch, the CB shall consider such changes. The Programme Team may propose more than one item for changes in one document with reasons, proposed timing, resources requirements and relevant information to facilitate approval.

[Note] Should follow the School's Academic Policies and Regulations

3.3 Approving Criteria

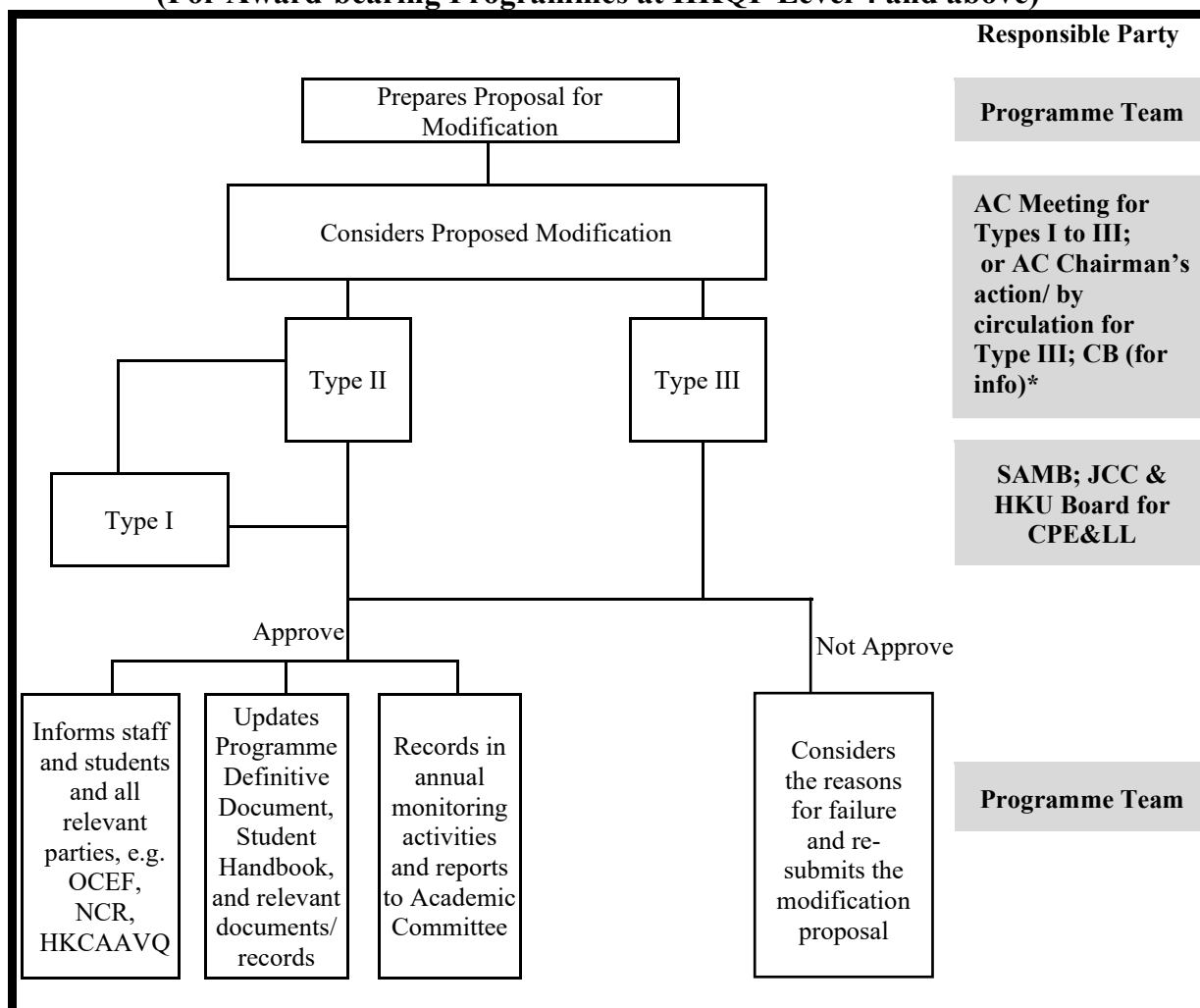The criteria used by the AC for considering modification proposals include:

(a) Academic validity of programme after modification
(b) Feasibility of timing of implementation
(c) Effects on the current students and/or graduates, if applicable
(d) Effects on cognate programmes offered in HKU SPACE
(e) Alignment of QF Level and Intended Learning Outcomes
(f) Effects on the future development of the programme

The guiding principle is that the current students shall not be disadvantaged as a result of programme modification.

3.4 Approving Procedures
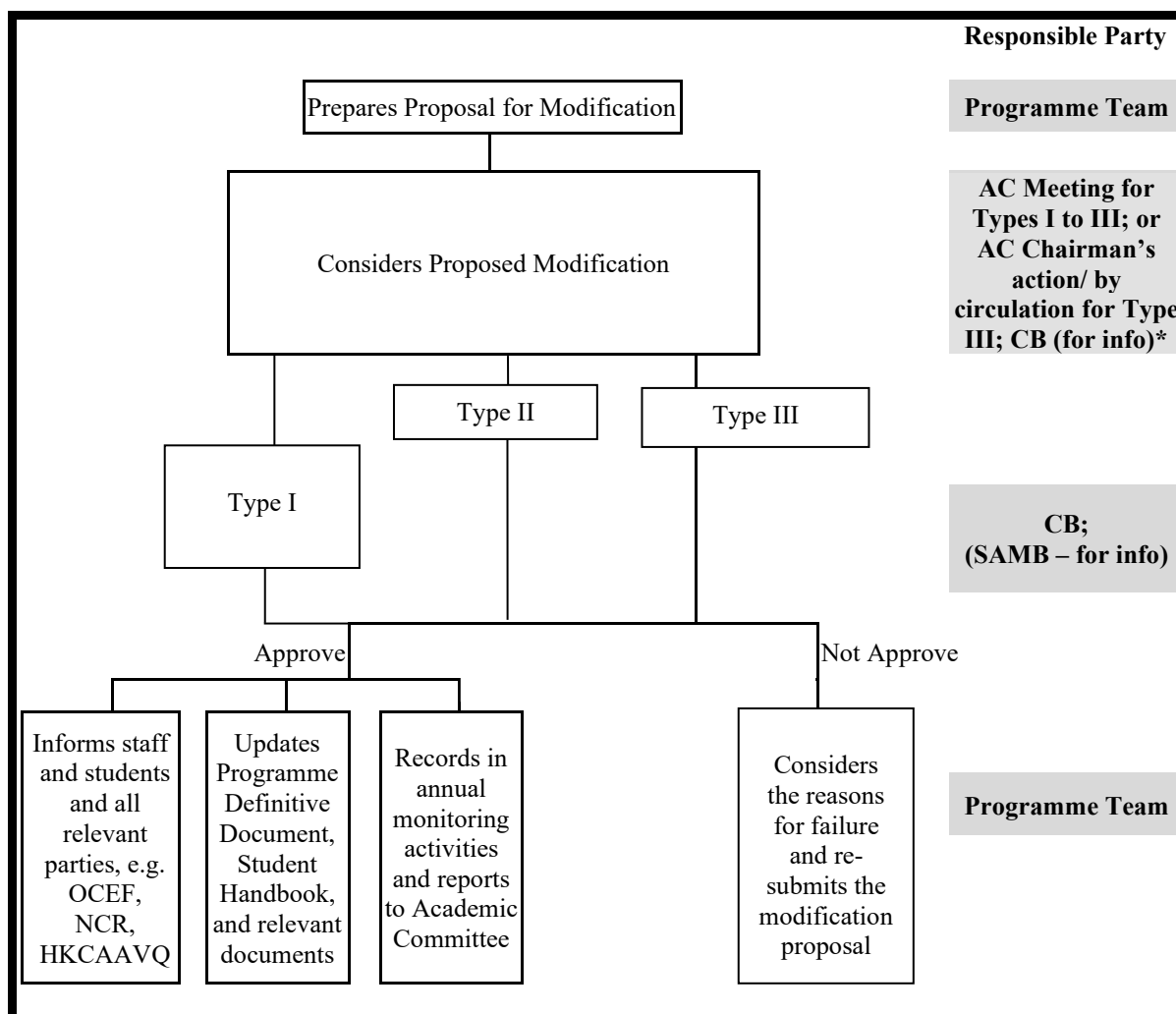
3.4.1   For Programmes leading to HKU System Awards

Figure 1
Approval procedures on programme modifications
(For Award-bearing Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above)

Responsible Party
Programme Team
AC Meeting for Types I to III; or AC Chairman's action/ by circulation for Type III; CB (for info)*
SAMB; JCC & HKU Board for CPE&LL
Programme Team

Type I	Type II	Type III
a. Programme and/or award title(s) (terminal/ intermediate award);	a. Programme objectives;	a. Module titles;
b. HKQF level of programme;	b. Programme intended learning outcomes;	b. Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of the existing programme credits);
c. Programme restructuring, which affects the awarding criteria of terminal/ intermediate award(s);	c. Programme streams without changes in the existing programme and award titles;	c. Assessment methods and weightings;
d. Programme streams with new programme and award titles;	d. Mode of study in terms of face-to-face/ distance learning/ e-Learning/ blended learning;	d. HKQF level and/ or credits of modules;
e. Mode of study in terms of full-time mode/ part-time mode.	e. Medium of instruction;	e. Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules
	f. Duration;	
	g. Number of credits of programme;	* If the AC Chairman deems that the changes involve policy or resource implications, it will be reported to the CB for consideration.
	h. Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of the existing programme credits);	
	i. Minimum entry requirements	
	* If the CB Chairman deems that the changes involve policy or resource implications, it will be reported to the SAMB for consideration.	

Figure 2
Approval procedures on programme modifications
(For Award-bearing Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below)

	Responsible Party
Prepares Proposal for Modification	**Programme Team**
Considers Proposed Modification	**AC Meeting for Types I to III; or AC Chairman's action/ by circulation for Type III; CB (for info)***
Type I / Type II / Type III	**CB; (SAMB – for info)**
Approve → Informs staff and students and all relevant parties, e.g. OCEF, NCR, HKCAAVQ / Updates Programme Definitive Document, Student Handbook, and relevant documents / Records in annual monitoring activities and reports to Academic Committee. Not Approve → Considers the reasons for failure and re-submits the modification proposal	**Programme Team**

Type I	Type II	Type III
a. Programme and/or award title(s) (terminal/ intermediate award); b. HKQF level of programme; c. Programme restructuring, which affects the awarding criteria of terminal/ intermediate award(s); d. Programme streams with new programme and award titles; e. Mode of study in terms of full-time mode/ part-time mode.	a. Programme objectives; b. Programme intended learning outcomes; c. Programme streams without changes in the existing programme and award titles; d. Mode of study in terms of face-to-face/ distance learning/ e-Learning/ blended learning; e. Medium of instruction; f. Duration; g. Number of credits of programme; h. Syllabus (10% - 25% of total number of the existing programme credits); i. Minimum entry requirements * If the CB Chairman deems that the changes involve policy or resource implications, it will be reported to the SAMB for consideration.	a. Module titles; b. Syllabus (less than 10% of the total number of the existing programme credits); c. Assessment methods and weightings; d. HKQF level and/ or credits of modules; e. Objectives and intended learning outcomes of modules * If the AC Chairman deems that the changes involve policy or resource implications, it will be reported to the CB for consideration.

3.4.2   For Transnational Education (TNE) Programmes

Type I: follow the procedures stated in Figures 1 or 2 according to the QF Level of the programme.

Types II and III: AC Chairman to consider if a discussion at AC is necessary. If there is no concern, the changes could be circulated to the AC for information only.

If the AC Chairman deems that the changes involve policy or resource implications, it will be reported to the CB for consideration.

3.4.3   Procedures for Modifications of Certificate for Module Programmes

Certificate for Module programmes originating from an award-bearing programme

Modifications should be considered by the AC together with corresponding modifications in the parent programme.
a.   Type I modifications of programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above: recommendation by the AC and the CB, approval by the SAMB
b.   Type I modifications of programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below: recommendation by the AC, approval by the CB, reporting to the SAMB
c.   Types II and III modifications of programmes at all HKQF Levels: approval by the AC

Standalone Certificate for Module programmes
a.   Type I modifications of programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above: recommendation by the CB, approval by the SAMB
b.   Type I modifications of programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below: approval by the CB, reporting to the SAMB
c.   Types II and III modifications of programmes at all HKQF Levels: approval by the CB

If the Certificate for Module programme is offered under the School's Microcredentials Scheme, the Programme Team should inform the Registry Affairs Unit as the Administrator of Microcredentials for necessary arrangements.

CHAPTER 7

Programme Review

1. Introduction

As with other stages in the programme quality cycle, the Outcome-Based Approach to Student Learning (OBASL) and the School's Qualifications Framework System provide the policy direction for programme review. Programme review provides an opportunity for consolidation of issues and changes about a programme. An overview is made possible through programme review to assess the effectiveness of programme monitoring, as well as to conduct a full-scale evaluation of a programme for further development and quality improvement and enhancement. A review mechanism is implemented to ensure and enhance the quality of a programme.

2. Categorisation of Programmes for Programme Review

HKU SPACE offers both award bearing programmes and non-award bearing courses. For non-award bearing courses, the monitoring and reporting process will suffice for maintaining the quality of the courses.

For the purpose of facilitating programme review, award-bearing programmes are divided into **two categories according to the level of the programmes in the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF)**. The two categories are

(a)   Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above;

(b)   Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below.

If a programme is offered through a collaboration agreement with another institution, and the partner has in place a comprehensive programme review system, HKU SPACE may consider synchronising the programme review processes of the two institutions or adopting the partner's programme review. The School should ensure that the purpose, scope, rigor and transparency of the programme reviews are comparable to that of the School's review. There should be adequate focus on how the programme meets local needs. If local needs are not covered in the partner's review process, a local feedback session should be supplemented. The School should fully involve itself in the programme reviews.

If a programme has been subject to academic or professional accreditation and the accredited status is subject to periodical review by the accreditation authority or professional body concerned, the accreditation/ re-accreditation process or professional review may also be synchronised with the HKU SPACE programme review or be considered as fulfilling the HKU SPACE programme review requirement. If any review aspects are not covered in the accreditation/ re-accreditation process, the School may

supplement additional processes as appropriate. The School should involve itself as much as possible in the process.

3. Review of Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above

3.1 Timing of Programme Review

New programmes will be reviewed in five years after programme launch. Subsequently, a 6-year review cycle applies to all programmes, except for doctoral degrees, unless an approval period has been stipulated for a programme during validation. For a new programme developed by modification from an existing programme with less than 25% change of the total number of credits or of the existing programme curriculum, its first review should follow the approval period of the existing programme, and thereafter at a 6-year interval for subsequent reviews.

The process for programme review should begin one year before the end of the 6-year cycle or the end date of the approval period, whichever is earlier. The submission of the review report to the HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL) should be made at least 6 months before the end of the review cycle. This is to ensure that there is sufficient time for any programme modification to take place before the student intake subsequent to the programme review. The Academic Committee (AC) Chairman can consult the College Head and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) Chairman if required for marginal cases.

If a programme cannot complete the programme review process before the approval period expires, the Programme Team may apply for rescheduling of the review to one year later. Such an application with written justifications is made by the Programme Team to the College Head who will assess the circumstances, before the application is considered by the College Board (CB) for support, and then to the School Academic and Management Board (SAMB) for approval. With the SAMB's approval, the Programme Team can continue with new student intake for one year, while preparing for programme review. The review should normally be completed and submitted to the Board for CPE&LL at least 6 months before the end of the rescheduled period. A programme may normally be considered for rescheduling of programme review once only.

Any programmes with the approval period lapsing but without completing a new round of programme review process to seek for programme continuation, nor having obtained SAMB's approval for rescheduling of the programme review, is automatically discontinued. (Details on programme discontinuation and teach-out arrangements are given in Chapter 5.)

3.2 Programme Review Procedures

The procedures are similar to those for programme validation. Figure 1 depicts the programme review procedures.

At different stages of the programme review process, changes may be initiated by the Programme Team, or made in response to the Panel's advice. The Programme Team should make corresponding changes in the revised Qualification Frameworks Level and Credit Assignment Form (QF1 Form) and the revised Programme Outcome Assessment (POA) Form.

If the Programme Team proposes changes of more than 25% in credits, re-titling or other changes to be made at the time of programme review, the AC members shall be invited to give comments by circulation of papers prior to the programme review meeting. All the comments received shall be conveyed to the Programme Review Panel (PRP) for discussion, and the results are reported back to the AC for further action.

For changes involving programme and/or award title(s) (terminal/ intermediate award), programme QF level, mode of study in terms of full-time or part-time mode, or programme restructuring which affects the awarding criteria of terminal/ intermediate award(s), the Programme Team should submit a proposal of the proposed changes via the CB to the SAMB and the Joint Consultative Committee, prior to the submission to the Board for CPE&LL together with the outcomes of the programme review for final approval. (Details on programme modifications are given in Chapter 6.)

3.2.1 Programme Review Document Contents

(a)   an overall evaluation and highlights of the academic and professional value and merits for the period of review;

(b)   an appraisal of all the changes for the period of review;

(c)   a concrete, time-bound development plan for further quality enhancement including proposals for modifications (including development plan in e-Learning and use of AI tools);

(d)   other documents to be attached, including:

  (i)   brief information on the last validation/ review of the programme;
  (ii)   the existing Programme Definitive Document;
  (iii)   existing QF1 Form (and a vetted QF1 Form with changes proposed by the Programme Team for the next approval period);
  (iv)   any other relevant information for the PRP's reference; and
  (v)   for programme leading to HKU system awards, the vetted POA Form of the latest completed cohort for the Panel's consideration and endorsement.

(e)   other supporting documents to be made available for the PRP and the QAE Unit, as and when necessary, including:

  (i)   Annual Monitoring Report (AMR);
  (ii)   External Examiner/ Academic Assessor Reports;

(iii) Statistics from Learning Experience Survey, Programme Learning Outcomes Survey and Teaching Experience Survey; and

(iv) Any other related documents and information, such as Validation Reports, Student-Staff Consultative Committee Minutes, feedback from students, graduates and employers, and complaints and compliments record, if any.

3.2.2 Programme Review Panel

The Panel is established by the QAEC. It normally consists of

- Chairman (AC Chairman)
- Two external specialists (academics and/or professionals in the subject specialism of the programme)
- External Examiner/Academic Assessor
- Panel Officer (AC Secretary)

To ensure an impartial review, members of the Panel are those not involved in the design and delivery of the programme. The Nomination Form shall be submitted to the QAEC Chairman for endorsement. In case of doubt about the appropriateness of the membership nomination, the Programme Team should consult the College Head and, if necessary, the QAEC Chairman.

3.2.3 Programme Review Meeting

The PRP will review and discuss the Programme Review Document with the Programme Team, teachers, students and, if possible, graduates will be invited to meet with the Panel to provide feedback.

3.2.4 Decision of the PRP

At the end of the meeting, the PRP will normally recommend one of the following:

(a) the continuous monitoring and annual reporting have been effective and the programme may continue, with implementation of the development plans; or

(b) further improvement and enhancement is necessary to ascertain the quality of the programme before the programme may be permitted to continue; or

(c) the programme should be discontinued, namely to have no new intake and to phase out.

The 6-year cycle of reviews applies if an approval period is not specified. If the Panel specifies an approval period, another review will be required before the period ends.

3.3 Post-Programme Review Meeting Action

The Panel Officer shall prepare the PRP Report, recording the Panel's discussions and the recommendations and incorporating the Programme Team's response, or obtain via the Programme Team equivalent documentation if the outcomes of an external review/ accreditation are adopted. The CB will receive the Report or equivalent document for information and consideration on policy and resources issues. The same Report or equivalent together with a recommendation paper prepared by the Panel Officer shall be submitted via the QAE Unit to the Board for CPE&LL for approval.

Upon approval by the Board for CPE&LL of the PRP's recommendation to continue the programme, the Programme Team shall proceed to prepare for student admission. Any changes to the programme as an outcome of the programme review should be reflected in a new Programme Definitive Document and a new Student Handbook.

The existing cohort of students shall normally not be affected by the changes of the programme review unless recommended by the PRP and approved by the Board for CPE&LL, and as recorded in the Programme Review Report.

All programme review activities, including adoption of external review/ accreditation process, shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis to the QAEC for information and for monitoring the QAE process. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL.

4. Review of Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below

4.1 Timing of Programme Review

The timing for the review will be within 6 months after the end of a year of study. Programme reviews will be listed for the information of the QAEC and Board for CPE&LL at the end of an academic year.

4.2 Procedures of Programme Review

The programme review is conducted via the annual monitoring process as presented in Figure 2. The Programme Team will prepare a report in the form of AMR template, containing the vetted POA Form, and submit to the AC and CB for consideration.

If the programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below form part(s) of a cluster of programmes at higher HKQF levels, the Programme Team can opt to apply the programme review process at HKQF Level 4 and above to also cover these programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below.

4.3 Post-Programme Review Action

Upon CB's approval, the Programme Team shall proceed to prepare for student admission. Any changes to the programme should be reflected in a new Programme Definitive Document, including the revised QF1 Form and POA Form, where
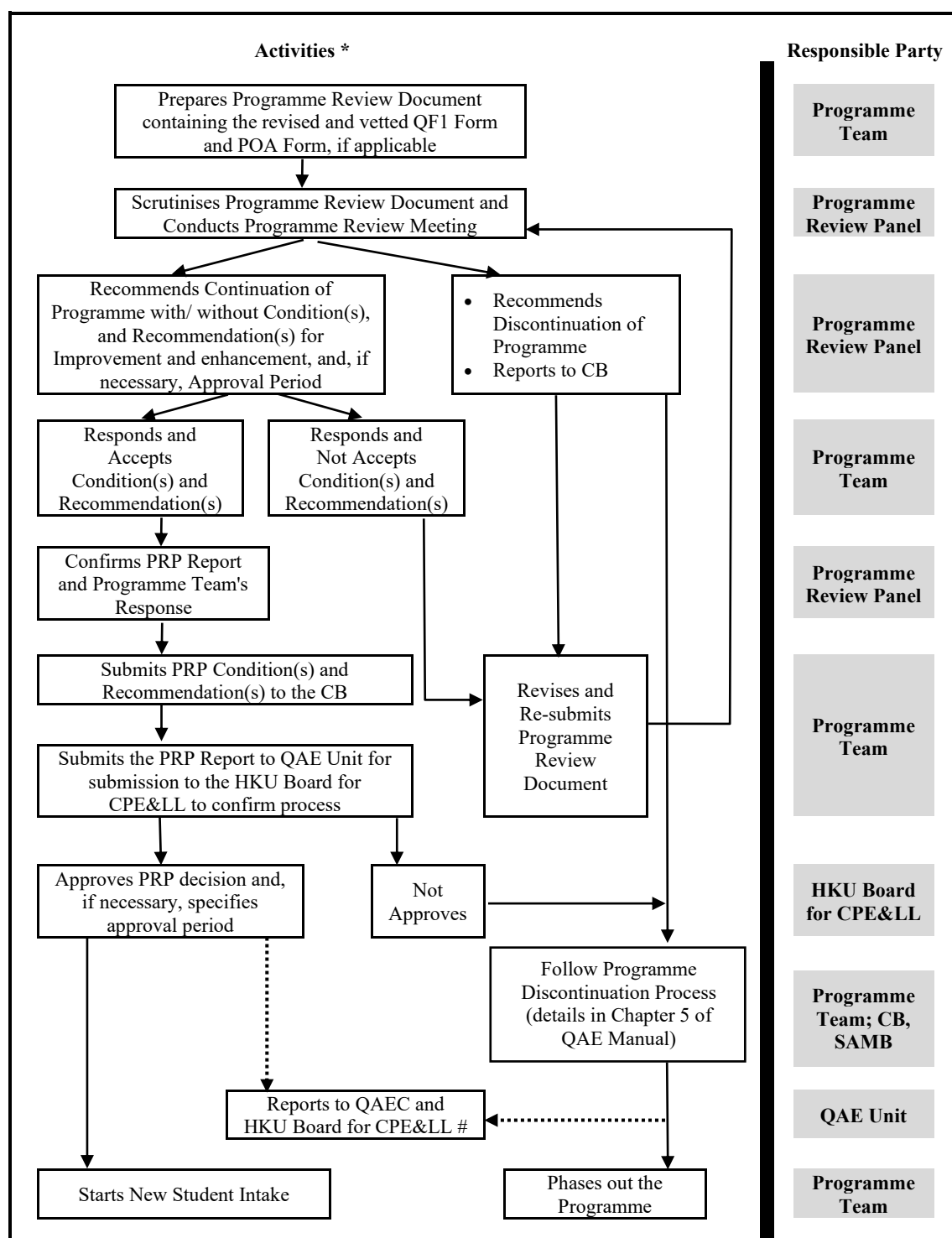
applicable, and a new Student Handbook. The Programme Team should submit the revised QF1 Form and POA Form for record.

In the case that the CB recommends discontinuation of the programme, the Programme Team may propose a new programme which will be subject to the programme approval process. The existing cohort of students shall normally not be affected unless recommended by the AC and approved by the CB, and as recorded in the report.

All programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis to the QAEC for information and for monitoring the QAE process. The same will be reported to the Board for CPE&LL.

Figure 1
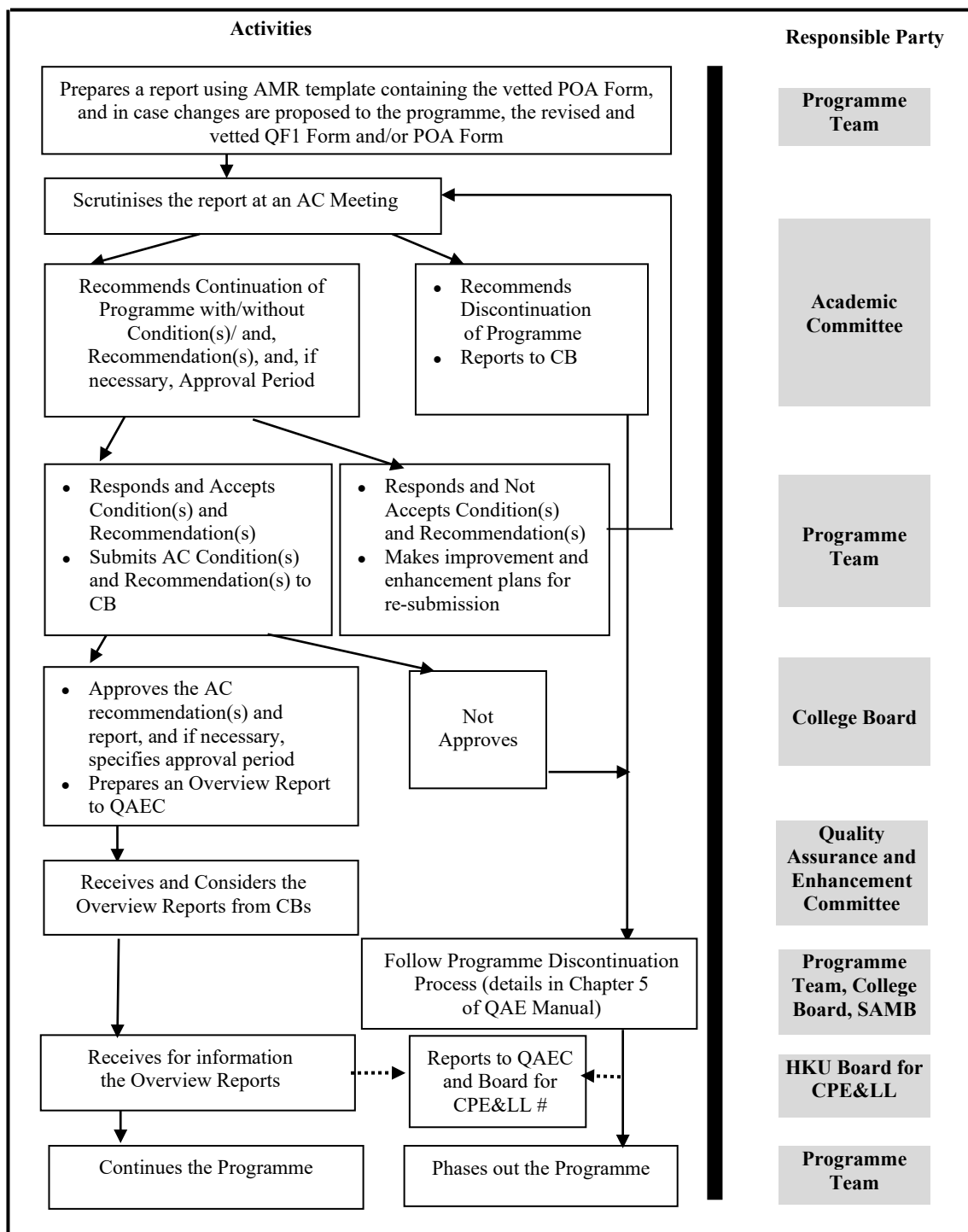**Review Process for Programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above**

Activities *	Responsible Party

Prepares Programme Review Document containing the revised and vetted QF1 Form and POA Form, if applicable — **Programme Team**

Scrutinises Programme Review Document and Conducts Programme Review Meeting — **Programme Review Panel**

Recommends Continuation of Programme with/ without Condition(s), and Recommendation(s) for Improvement and enhancement, and, if necessary, Approval Period

- Recommends Discontinuation of Programme
- Reports to CB

— **Programme Review Panel**

Responds and Accepts Condition(s) and Recommendation(s)

Responds and Not Accepts Condition(s) and Recommendation(s)

— **Programme Team**

Confirms PRP Report and Programme Team's Response — **Programme Review Panel**

Submits PRP Condition(s) and Recommendation(s) to the CB

Revises and Re-submits Programme Review Document

Submits the PRP Report to QAE Unit for submission to the HKU Board for CPE&LL to confirm process

— **Programme Team**

Approves PRP decision and, if necessary, specifies approval period

Not Approves

— **HKU Board for CPE&LL**

Follow Programme Discontinuation Process (details in Chapter 5 of QAE Manual) — **Programme Team; CB, SAMB**

Reports to QAEC and HKU Board for CPE&LL # — **QAE Unit**

Starts New Student Intake

Phases out the Programme

— **Programme Team**

····▶ reporting for information

* For programmes for which an approval period has not been stipulated, a 6-year cycle of reviews applies. For programmes with an approval period, the process for programme review should begin one year before the end date of the approval period.

\# Programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis to the QAEC for information and monitoring of the QAE process. This reporting may be done prior to or after the new student intake, depending on the timing of the review and the QAEC meeting schedule. The same will be reported to the HKU Board for CPE&LL.

Figure 2
Review Process for Programmes at HKQF Level 3 and below

Activities	Responsible Party
Prepares a report using AMR template containing the vetted POA Form, and in case changes are proposed to the programme, the revised and vetted QF1 Form and/or POA Form	**Programme Team**
Scrutinises the report at an AC Meeting	**Academic Committee**
Recommends Continuation of Programme with/without Condition(s)/ and, Recommendation(s), and, if necessary, Approval Period	
• Recommends Discontinuation of Programme • Reports to CB	
• Responds and Accepts Condition(s) and Recommendation(s) • Submits AC Condition(s) and Recommendation(s) to CB	**Programme Team**
• Responds and Not Accepts Condition(s) and Recommendation(s) • Makes improvement and enhancement plans for re-submission	
• Approves the AC recommendation(s) and report, and if necessary, specifies approval period • Prepares an Overview Report to QAEC	**College Board**
Not Approves	
Receives and Considers the Overview Reports from CBs	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee**
Follow Programme Discontinuation Process (details in Chapter 5 of QAE Manual)	**Programme Team, College Board, SAMB**
Receives for information the Overview Reports	**HKU Board for CPE&LL**
Reports to QAEC and Board for CPE&LL #	
Continues the Programme	**Programme Team**
Phases out the Programme	

···▶ reporting for information

\#   Programme review activities shall be listed for reporting on an annual basis to the QAEC for information and monitoring of the QAE process. This reporting may be done prior to or after the new student intake, depending on the timing of the review and the QAEC meeting schedule. The same will be reported to the HKU Board for CPE&LL

CHAPTER 8

Quality Process Review

1. Introduction

The Quality Process Review is established to foster the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement (QAE) policy and process in all areas of work of the School and to ensure that such activities are congruent with the School's mission and direction of development.

2. Purpose

The Review is conducted under the auspices of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC). It is meant to be a collegial process conducted as a shared responsibility of all colleagues in the School beneficial to the growth of quality culture. The purpose of the Review is to confirm the implementation and monitoring of the QAE process in programmes and teaching and learning support services offered by HKU SPACE. The Review is conducted to ascertain that all QAE processes have been appropriately carried out.

The Review provides an opportunity for

- evaluation of prevailing QAE procedures;
- consideration of solutions to difficulties identified by the evaluation;
- upholding and sharing of good and effective practice;
- clarification of ambiguities; and
- identification of areas for further improvement, enhancement and development.

The Review may share similar aims and purposes as external audits and reviews that the School will encounter. The School may accept such external exercises as having met its Quality Process Review requirements. Accepting these exercises enhances the credibility of the Quality Process Review beyond internally initiated processes and the credibility of the review process in terms of benchmarking. These external audits and reviews demonstrate that the School's quality standards are comparable to those of other institutions.

External audits and reviews include the review of the School by the University, the Audits conducted by the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Committee (UGC) for programmes at the levels of sub-degree, degree and above, and the International Quality Review (IQR) engaged by the School itself. Overseas quality assurance agencies also carry out audits on the quality of off-shore programmes conducted by overseas institutions in partnership with institutions in Hong Kong.

The QAEC of the School will be informed of such external audits and reviews and will decide whether the requirements of the Quality Process Review have been adequately met,

and may decide to supplement aspects not covered by the external audits and reviews by internal review processes if necessary.

3. Procedures for Quality Process Review

The Quality Process Review is on the implementation of QAE process across programmes that may be clustered under cognate subject groups as decided by the QAEC. The procedures are given in Appendix A.

The subject groups are required to prepare a Self-Evaluation Document (SED). The SED is submitted to the Quality Process Review Panel, together with relevant background information documents including a list of programmes, enrolment statistics, Minutes of Academic Committees that record the programme monitoring activities, chronological record of relevant committee meetings. The Panel may consider meeting various parties, such as senior staff, full-time and part-time teachers, students and graduate representatives and external stakeholders, in case of relevant issues. The issues contained in the SED may be considered by the Panel during the Review.

4. Quality Process Review Panel

The Panel is established by the QAEC. It normally consists of

- One QAEC member (Chairman of the Panel)
- One HKU faculty academic
- One external person, academic or professional, from outside the School
- One HKU SPACE academic from outside the subject groups concerned in the Review
- Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (Panel Officer)

The Panel will be charged with the responsibilities of

- reading the SED and related documents;
- meeting with the staff of the subject groups concerned, and the Directorate, students and representatives, and external stakeholders where relevant;
- confirmation of the QAE activities and their implementation;
- endorsement of the Review Report; and
- consideration of the response from subject groups.

5. Quality Process Review Report

The Report compiled by the Panel Officer is a summary of:

- the review proceedings;
- the discussions between various parties in the review;
- the observations and comments made by the Quality Process Review Panel; and
- the recommendations made by the Panel.

The Report and the response from the participating subject groups will be submitted to the QAEC for consideration and endorsement.

6. Post-Review Activities

With the endorsement of the QAEC on the Report and the response of the subject groups, the subject groups proceed to take appropriate follow-up action(s). These activities will be reported at the Academic Committee meeting as evidence of programme monitoring.

7. External Reviews and Audits

The School from time to time undergoes external reviews and audits of either the whole or parts of the QAE activities of the School. These external QAE activities also contribute to informing internal quality enhancement measures.

HKU Review

The University's latest Review to HKU SPACE in December 2019 focused on the objectives proposed by the UGC QAC Audit Panel in 2018 (see below for details of the 2018 Audit). The Panel considered the School's self-evaluation documents reflecting on its works, strengths, weaknesses, and relationship with the University, conducted a Site Visit to meet different parties. The Panel commended the School for leading the continuing and professional education sector within Hong Kong. It also confirmed that the School delivers robust teaching and learning and is supported by an established governance structure and hallmark quality assurance mechanism that ensures the quality and excellence of its programme. The Panel also made a number of recommendations to further strengthen the School's position, and that the University will adopt a five-yearly review cycle for the School as for the Faculties.

Quality Audits by the UGC QAC

As part of the University, the School involved itself in serval quality audits conducted by the UGC QAC in the past decade for different levels of programmes with different perspectives.

In 2018, the UGC QAC conducted a Quality Audit of the sub-degree operations of the University, focusing on the quality of student learning and ongoing enhancement of student learning. As the main sub-degree provider in the University, the School was highly commended by the Audit Panel for its excellent policies and procedures, comprehensive documentation, and the commitment of its teaching staff in both full-time and part-time sub-degree programmes. The Panel also affirmed the School's high level of commitment to quality assurance processes.

In December 2023, the University underwent the third QAC audit cycle, which covered all programmes at the levels of sub-degree, first degree and above including programmes offered outside Hong Kong, however funded, leading to a qualification wholly or partly awarded by the University. This cycle focused particularly on quality enhancement (QE), and the collection, analysis and usage of data. The Panel concluded that quality

enhancement is promoted through well-defined QA frameworks for programmes offered by the School on behalf of the University. It commended that the School's programme development, approval, monitoring, and review policies and procedures are comprehensive. It also confirmed that the School makes systematic and constructive use of benchmarks for data collection and analysis in the QA and QE processes, in which the Quality Analytics Team plays an important role.
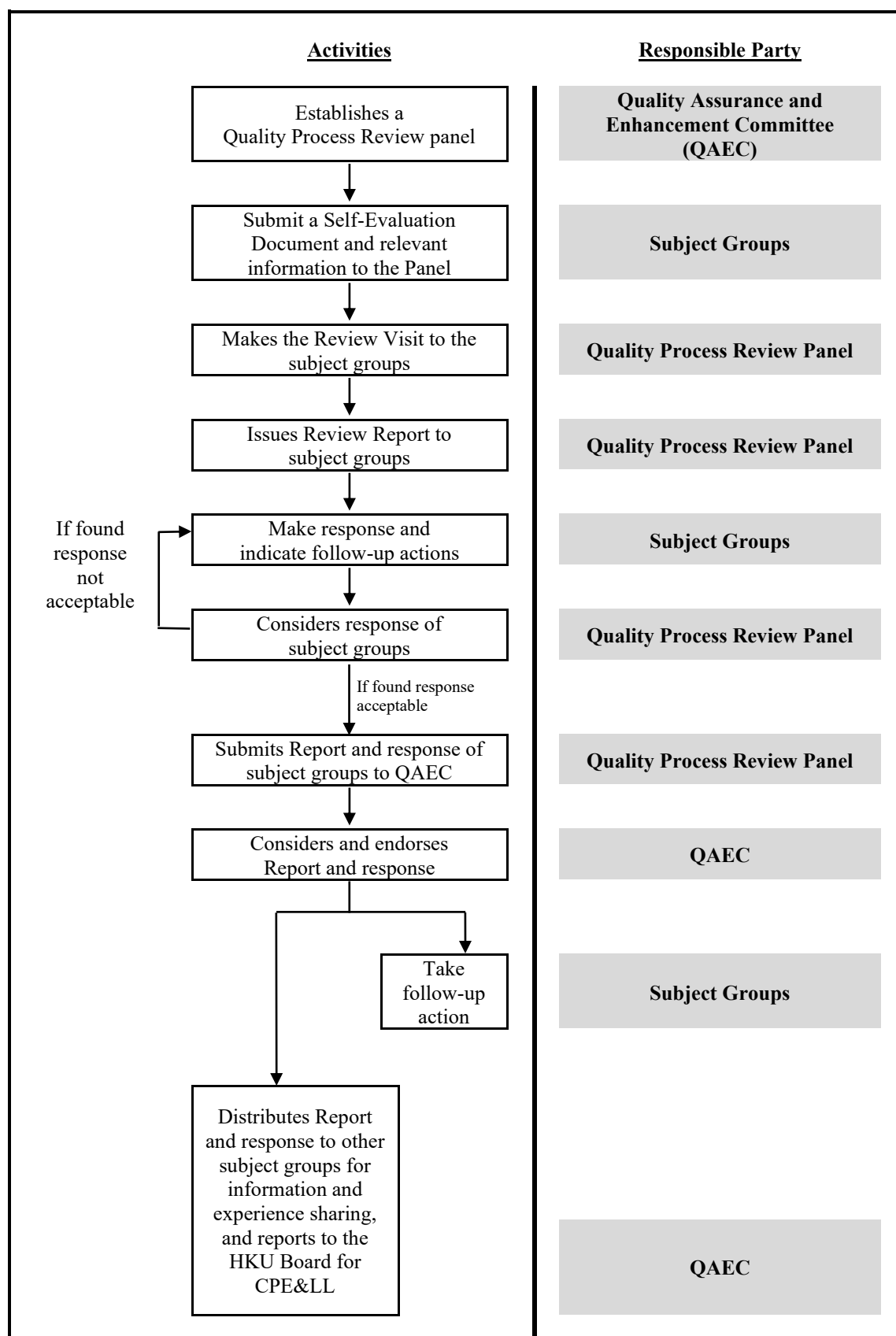
International Quality Review

As a follow-up of the UGC QAC Audit Report published in 2019, the School underwent international benchmarking through an International Quality Review in October 2021. A Panel of international experts was formed and supported by a German agency, the Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN). The Panel assessed and reviewed the School against the Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), and concluded that the School has fulfilled the 10 ESG criteria of standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance.

The Panel also concluded that HKU SPACE has a strong base to build on and promising potential of further developing into a World Class Centre of Excellence in Continuing Education, Lifelong Learning and Transnational Education.

Other External Reviews and Audits

There are other similar review activities, such as the Internal Audits of the HKU. These activities take on a similar purpose as the Quality Process Review. Apart from reviews at the School level, there are also some external reviews and audits conducted at the subject group level or for clusters of programmes, such as the quality reviews carried out by the partner institutions, and the quality audits of non-local programmes carried out by the regulator of the home country. For programmes leading to an external partner's awards and aiming at recognition under the HKQF, they will have to be accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to obtain the accreditation status at a specified HKQF Level.

Quality Process Review Procedures

Activities	Responsible Party
Establishes a Quality Process Review panel	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)**
Submit a Self-Evaluation Document and relevant information to the Panel	**Subject Groups**
Makes the Review Visit to the subject groups	**Quality Process Review Panel**
Issues Review Report to subject groups	**Quality Process Review Panel**
Make response and indicate follow-up actions	**Subject Groups**
Considers response of subject groups	**Quality Process Review Panel**
Submits Report and response of subject groups to QAEC	**Quality Process Review Panel**
Considers and endorses Report and response	**QAEC**
Take follow-up action	**Subject Groups**
Distributes Report and response to other subject groups for information and experience sharing, and reports to the HKU Board for CPE&LL	**QAEC**

If found response not acceptable

If found response acceptable

CHAPTER 9

Teaching and Learning Support

1. Introduction

Quality teaching and learning support complements the academic quality of the programmes and is conducive to effective programme delivery. Additional support from partner institutions may also be provided for individual programmes offered in collaboration with partner institutions.

2. Service Quality Improvement Working Group

The Service Quality Improvement Working Group (SQIWG) is convened by the Deputy Director (Administration and Resources) and its membership includes representatives from academic and administrative units. The SQIWG reviews the quality of services provided by the School, oversees and monitors the Survey on Support Services (SSS), collects and assesses feedback on the students' expectations and level of satisfaction with the services, identifies areas of improvement and enhancement and proposes follow-up actions. It serves to strengthen and promote School-wide service culture. It reports and makes recommendations on any matters concerning the quality of the School's services.

3. Key Teaching and Learning Support Facilities and Services

3.1 Learning Centres and Facilities

All HKU SPACE learning centres are equipped with appropriate furniture and audio-visual equipment to support teaching and learning activities. The School is continuously developing new learning centres, upgrading the facilities of existing centres and providing purpose-built facilities, such as laboratories, studios, and mock-up stadium, to support programmes of specific subject areas. In supporting the e-Learning and blended learning mode, the School enhances the teaching and learning facilities by upgrading necessary hardware and software support to conduct online lectures.

3.2 Online Learning Management System – <u>S</u>PACE <u>O</u>nline <u>U</u>niversal <u>L</u>earning (SOUL) Platform

SOUL is the School's online learning management system that aims to facilitate blended teaching and learning for students, teachers and programme management staff in the School, serving as an interactive access point for teaching and learning activities. Students in collaborative programmes may be provided with the partners' e-learning platforms.

3.3 The HKU SPACE AI Hub

The HKU SPACE AI Hub is a centralised platform that brings together cutting-edge AI solutions and Big Data analytics for students, teachers and programme management staff. Teachers and students will benefit from AI solutions that enhance their teaching and learning experiences. The Hub seeks to foster innovation and creativity, inspiring fresh ideas and real-world problem solving.

3.4 Library Access

For award-bearing and professional programme, teaching staff and students are normally provided with access to HKU Libraries to enjoy various benefits like on-site use of library resources and borrowing privileges. Teachers and students with borrowing privileges may also access electronic forms of information via the SOUL platform as a portal to web-based electronic library resources. Students of collaborative programmes may also access the partner institutions' e-libraries.

3.5 HKU SPACE ALUMNI

The HKU SPACE ALUMNI has built up an active relationship between its large membership and HKU SPACE to promote lifelong learning and community service. It strengthens the connections with alumni and the School via organising different events. Donations from alumni will contribute to student support and fundings. It also supports the development of the School, including the enhancement of the teaching and learning facilities and promoting whole-person development among students.

3.6 Career SPACE

The Career SPACE is a one stop online career guide, designed to facilitate students in preparing for their first career or changing their present career. It provides various interactive features, including the preparation of CVs and cover letters, interview practice and the provision of mock aptitude and psychological tests for exploring their options. It equips students with advice on workplace skills, latest news from career experts and job search engine.

4. Teaching Quality and Support

The Teacher Support Team (TST) under the Registry Affairs Unit coordinates the services and organise support for the School's part-time teachers. It is responsible for maintaining a part-time teacher database, providing relevant management information, and coordinating various events and activities in support of services development related to part-time teachers.

The Maisy Ho Centre for Teaching and Learning (MHCTL) aims to enhance the pedagogical skills of all teachers through training and professional activities. It promotes good teaching and learning practices at HKU SPACE by reinforcing and enhancing its current quality assurance framework and processes by organising conferences, seminars, workshops and a variety of talks. It is responsible for supporting the Programme Outcome

Assessment (POA), Outstanding Teacher Award (OTA) and the Teaching Fellowship Scheme.

4.1 Teacher Recruitment

Assurance of teaching quality starts from the recruitment of teaching staff who have the appropriate academic and/ or professional qualifications and experience, and who conform with the required standard in teaching and related responsibilities. The HKU SPACE recruitment procedures cover the application, interview and appointment processes.

4.2 Teacher Induction

The Programme Leader is responsible for the pre-programme induction of all teaching staff. The induction covers information in relation to the programme and the teaching responsibilities, guidance on Outcome-based Approaches to Student Learning (OBASL), and resources available to teachers.

4.3 Materials for Teachers

(a) Guidebook for Part-time Teachers

It contains information on the School as a whole, including its vision, mission and values, Quality Assurance and Enhancement (QAE) policies, personnel and financial matters, communication channels, IT facilities and services, information on teaching and learning facilities available, and some helpful tips for new teachers.

(b) Handbook on Effective Teaching

The Handbook provides comprehensive guidance for teaching adults. It outlines the major characteristics of adult learners, strategies for handling difficult participants, and the "Do's" and "Don'ts" of teaching adults. It suggests teaching techniques and the effective use of teaching equipment and technologies. It also introduces the concept of the OBASL.

4.4 Observation of Teaching

The Programme Leader is responsible for carrying out observations of teaching to ensure teaching quality and for collegial sharing. Feedback on the observation is provided to the teachers with a view to identifying possible actions for improvement and enhancement or encouraging good teaching.

4.5 Reflection of Teaching Quality

Comments on teaching quality can be gathered from students through various useful sources. The Programme Team is responsible for discussing the findings with individual teaching staff concerned. Teacher meetings should be conducted regularly. Commendations serve to encourage further enhancement, while reviews and reflections are needed in cases where student feedback reflects below-standard

teaching. The reports and observations are summarised and presented to the AC as a record of teaching quality monitoring. The findings are also used for reference in cases of promotion and/or re-appointment of individual teachers.

4.6   Teaching Experience and Self-Reflection

Teachers are encouraged to conduct a self-reflection of teaching quality at the end of each teaching year. The self-reflection should identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process in the past year, as well as plans for improvement and enhancement. The teacher may discuss the self-reflection conclusions with the Programme Leader to reaffirm good teaching and to consider development needs.

At the same time, the teacher is encouraged to complete the Teaching Experience Survey together with the Part-time Teacher Work Report at the end of a teaching period. The Programme Leader considers the teacher's feedback, as complementary to the feedback from students, for the purpose of quality improvement and enhancement.

The POA Form helps teachers on evaluating their teaching approaches in relation to students' achievement of the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), and identifying areas for improvement in teaching strategies, programme delivery and assessment design by analysing the students' achievement results.

4.7   Professional Development and Recognition of Teachers

The MHCTL and Human Resources (HR) Unit organised different types of staff development for different groups of staff. Some training sessions regarding e-Learning, technologies and software may be co-organised by the Information Technology Services (ITS) Unit, Research and E-Learning Unit (REU) and external service providers. The HR Unit arranges induction activities so that new teachers are given appropriate support and guidance. A structured and regular briefing is organised to both new staff and existing programme management staff on relevant topics as to help them refresh their knowledge in their roles.

The School also offers support schemes, granting eligible full-time staff members and part-time teachers with financial sponsorship for continuing education, and for contribution in their teaching to students as a teacher. This initiative encourages professional development and promotes the School's culture of lifelong learning.

On the basis of the teaching quality monitoring process, the Programme Team and the relevant teaching staff will identify areas of strength and/ or development needs. The Training and Staff Development Committee (TSDC), in collaboration with the Programme Team, regularly and systematically organises a range of workshops and seminars for professional development.

Some recognition schemes are implemented to compliment and recognise teachers for their efforts in continuous dedication to teaching. These recognised teachers are expected to contribute further by sharing their teaching skills with peer colleagues and maintaining good performance in their classes.

4.7.1 Continuing Personal/ Professional Development Scheme

The TSDC initiated the Continuing Personal/ Professional Development (CPD) Scheme to recognise staff effort in enhancing their professional knowledge and skills, and encourage personal development. Full-time teachers and programme management staff at specific grades are required to participate in the Mandatory CPD Scheme.

4.7.2 Outstanding Teaching Award

The OTA is designed to recognise teachers who demonstrate excellence and devotion in teaching and have high impact in the advancement in student learning. The MHCTL organises the OTA Teacher Forum to provide a discussion platform for OTA awardees to share their experiences on perceiving and developing their pedagogical approaches which have resulted in positive student feedback and learning experience.

4.7.3 Appointment of Adjunct Lecturers

The School has established a procedure for appointing Adjunct Lecturers in recognition of the long-standing and good service of part-time teachers. These honorary appointments can be renewed subject to established and good teaching records, good LES scores and a minimum yearly teaching load.

4.7.4 HKU SPACE Teaching Fellowship Scheme

The HKU SPACE Teaching Fellowship Scheme is a form of staff development which helps teaching staff gaining formal recognition for quality of teaching. Upon successful application, they will be awarded the Advance HE Fellowship.

4.8 Teacher Portal

The Teacher Portal was set up to facilitate the building of online communication between the School and teachers, and among the teachers. The Portal also provides useful resources and references and to facilitate teaching preparation.

5. Key Learning Support

5.1 Learner Portal

The Learner Portal provides a user-friendly "one-stop" information portal for students as a tool for and a window to learning, and is a gateway to access online resources, and other e-services provided or referred by the School.

5.2 Non-Classroom Activities

Non-Classroom activities mostly aim to supplement lectures and tutorials, and may be structured formally in a programme. The type of activities may vary according to

individual programmes depending on the subject area, the academic level and the professional requirements.

5.3   Information Seminars/ Induction Sessions

Information seminars and induction meetings are normally conducted at the commencement of award-bearing and professional programmes. The teachers follow the OBASL guidelines, and introduce the PILOs and Module Intended Learning Outcomes (MILOs) to students and how the teaching and learning activities are developed to support the learning outcomes. Guidance in regard to study skills, academic writing skills and examination conduct is also given to students. Induction meetings for a collaborative programme are normally conducted together with the partner institutions.

5.4   Student Handbooks

The Student Handbook for Part-time Programmes provides basic information about the School, the key regulations, policies and procedures, and services and facilities available that students need to refer during their course of study. Programme handbook which is directly related to individual academic programmes would also be provided to students. For a collaborative programme, the School and the non-local partner institution usually provide tailored handbooks to students.

6.   Communication and Feedback

HKU SPACE places great importance on effective communication with students and on gauging student feedback by through various formal and informal communication channels. The purpose is to ensure that students will be able to get adequate teaching and learning support.

6.1   Communication Channels

At the start of their studies, students of individual programmes are notified of the contact details of relevant Programme Leader, teaching staff and programme support staff. The School website, General Enquiry, the SOUL platform, Teacher Portal and Learner Portal also facilitate their communication with the School. Students are invited to convey their comments via formal surveys like LES and SSS.

Similarly, there is an arrangement for adequate and convenient contacts between Programme Leader and teaching staff. Communication channels are made known to all teaching staff at the commencement of the programme by means of the appointment letters, teacher inductions, and other circulars.

Examples of other communication channels include student and teacher representatives on the AC, Online Feedback Forms for students and teachers, class visits, informal meetings and discussions via email and social media.

6.2 Survey on Support Services

The SSS aims at collecting focused feedback on whether the teaching and learning support services meet the needs of students. The Survey is normally conducted twice each year for part-time students and annually for full-time students.

The questionnaire obtains feedback in 4 areas, namely 1) Learning Support, 2) Enquiry Services, 3) e-Learning and IT Support Services, and 4) Career and Future Studies Support. Respondents are invited to provide suggestions on improvement and enhancement in particular service areas. The quantitative data gathered through the Survey are compiled as statistical reports, together with the qualitative comments. The full report covering the SSS results, the response from respective units, the summary reports and observations, and recommendations for future implementation is submitted for consideration by the SQIWG, the SAMB, and the QAEC.

ANNEX

Glossary of Terms

The Glossary provides a brief definition of the key terms used in quality assurance and enhancement processes in HKU SPACE.

Academic Approval
A process of quality assurance to scrutinise and evaluate new and existing programmes to ensure that their academic standards and quality are appropriate for the level of the award. *(Chapters 3 and 4)*

Academic Assessor (AA)
An independent academic or professional expert, with considerable and recent experience in tertiary and/ or professional education, who advises on the examination and assessment process with special reference to the course(s) of an award-bearing programme at HKQF Level 4 and above. *(Chapters 1, 4 and 5)*

Academic Board of the University
A committee of the Senate with the power and duty to set up and review the academic objectives and policies of the University of Hong Kong, and their continuing validity in the context of proposals for its academic development and growth in student numbers. It also reviews proposals for new academic programmes or services. *(Chapter 4)*

Academic Collaboration
Partnership or joint efforts in the development, management and/or delivery of programmes by HKU SPACE and a partner institution, in which there is academic input from HKU SPACE as well as the partner institution. It occurs in programmes offered jointly by HKU SPACE and the partner in or outside Hong Kong. Upon completion of the programme, a student will be conferred an award through HKU SPACE, by the external partner or jointly conferred by both parties. *(Chapters 2, 3 and 5)*

Academic Committee (AC)
A committee for each programme or a group of programmes for monitoring academic standards, reviewing teaching and learning processes, and advising the management on any matters concerning the quality of the programmes. The AC is also responsible for approving programme changes under its remit. *(Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9)*

Academic Year
A period that covers teaching and examination. Broadly speaking, the School adopts the academic year being July to June. The School financial year also follows the University's which runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. *(Chapters 3, 4 and 7)*

Boards of Examiners (BoE)
The committee for each programme or a group of programmes with the power and duty to assess and determine the performance outcome of students. *(Chapters 1 and 5)*

Certificate for Module Programmes

The programme is offered under a mechanism to provide a short course with a programme title and an award title, facilitating its uploading on the Qualifications Register and eligibility for the Continuing Education Fund. *(Chapters 4, 5 and 6)*

College

A college is an academic entity established with various subject groups under the School's strategic direction for programme delivery. It is responsible for all aspects of programme management and development works, administrative matters and budgetary control of programmes under its remit. *(Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5)*

College Board (CB)

A forum for senior academic staff in each College to advise the Director on College academic issues and the implementation of College Annual Development Plan, and to monitor and oversee the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement activities governing the development and management of programmes and courses. *(Chapters 1 to 7)*

Conditions of Approval

The requirements stated by a Programme Validation Panel (in case of a new programme) or a Programme Review Panel (in case of an existing programme) which must be fulfilled by the Programme Team in order to obtain approval to recommend the new programme to the Board for CPE&LL, or continue to offer a programme. *(Chapter 4)*

Course

The term is used in two senses:
(a) a unit within a curriculum;
(b) a curriculum or a structured grouping of courses or units which form a coherent whole.

In HKU SPACE a course is usually regarded as a unit or a course within a curriculum or a structured curriculum not leading to an academic award. On the other hand, a coherent grouping of courses or units the completion of which often leads to an academic award is referred to as a programme. Some partner institutions use "course" to carry the same meaning as "programme". In part-time programmes, the term "module" is usually used in place of "course". In LES, the term "course" is used to refer to both "course" and "module". (Chapters 2, 3, *4 and 5*)

Course Coordinator/ Course Director

A person with considerable academic and/or professional standing appointed by HKU SPACE to coordinate the academic and related issues of a programme. The appointment is often on a part-time or honorary basis. *(Chapter 5)*

Credit(s)

Credits means the weight assigned to each course relative to the total study load of a programme. The value of one credit is considered as ten notional student hours which may include time for class contact, for self-study and for student workload associated with the programme. Students who satisfactorily complete courses earn the credits assigned to the courses. *(Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7)*

Directorate
A term to describe the senior management team in HKU SPACE, comprising the Director, and Deputy Director(s). *(Chapters 3, 4 and 8)*

Executive Programmes
These programmes normally contain contents of postgraduate level or very specialised contents. They may be assigned at two levels namely executive or senior executive. These programmes normally do not carry credit value, and have only indicative Hong Kong Qualifications Framework levels. *(Chapter 4)*

External Examiner (EE)
An independent academic or professional expert, with considerable and recent experience in tertiary education teaching, appointed by HKU SPACE to give general academic advice on a programme, and its development, at HKQF Level 4 and above; to provide specific comment or advice on the examination and assessment process but not normally to the extent of vetting the marking of individual scripts. *(Chapters 1, 5, 7 and 9)*

Faculty Board
A statutory committee responsible to the Senate for the teaching of the subjects assigned to the Faculty and reporting thereon to the Senate from time to time. It also advises the Senate on matters relating to the work of the Faculty. *(Chapter 4)*

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ)
The HKCAAVQ takes on responsibility for the vocational and professional education and training sector and statutory roles as the Accreditation Authority and Qualifications Register Authority under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (Chapter 592). *(Chapters 4, 6 and 8)*

HKU Board for Continuing and Professional Education and Lifelong Learning (Board for CPE&LL)
A committee of the Senate for advising the Senate on policy issues relating to continuing and professional education and lifelong learning. It has the responsibility for the academic activities of the School, including approval of academic collaboration and new programmes. *(Chapters 1 to 8)*

HKU SPACE Online Universal Learning (SOUL)
An online learning management system which is available to all HKU SPACE learners and teachers for collaboration in various online learning activities such as forums, interactive exercises and AI services such as ChatGPT. Users can acquire or share course materials, perform discussions, and interact with each other. *(Chapters 5 and 9)*

Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (HKQF)
The HKQF is a seven-level hierarchy of qualifications covering the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors, which was launched by the HK Government in May 2008. The School adopted the HKQF Levels and a hierarchy of titles. The aim is to standardise the use of titles and levels of programmes, and to facilitate the School in registering awards in the Qualifications Register. *(Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)*

Intake
A unit that reflects the sequential order of a group of students enrolled to a programme within an academic year. There may be one intake per year or several intakes within a year. *(Chapter 7)*

International Quality Review (IQR)
An external review conducted in 2021 to assess and review the School against the Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). *(Chapters 2 and 8)*

Institutional Review (IR)
A process which evaluates the potential partner's ability to manage and maintain the academic standards and quality of HKU SPACE programmes to be offered outside Hong Kong. *(Chapter 3)*

Joint Consultative Committee of HKU SPACE and Faculties (JCC)
A committee set up by the Senate to facilitate communication and collaboration between HKU SPACE and faculties in the University, in relation to academic development and other issues relating to lifelong learning. *(Chapters 4 and 6)*

Learning Experience Survey (LES)
The LES, using a standard student questionnaire and primarily conducted online, offers a systematic measure of students' views on the quality of the School's courses and teaching, and can draw attention to specific issues or problems. *(Chapters 2, 5, 7 and 9)*

Microcredentials
Microcredentials are small, credit bearing programmes which in themselves do not lead to a qualification but are "stackable" into a larger award-bearing qualification within the "validity period" of 5 years. They tend to be skills based and professionally oriented. *(Chapter 4, 5 and 6)*

Non-academic Collaboration
Non-academic partnerships refer to collaborations in respect of teaching venues and facilities, and other administrative services. Such collaborations should be in consultation with the Directorate, the Deputy Director (Academic Services), the Partnership Liaison Committee, and the Director of Finance. *(Chapter 3)*

Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance (NLHPE Ordinance)
The ordinance provides for regulation of non-local higher and professional education programmes and courses conducted in Hong Kong through a registration or an exemption from registration operated by the Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government. Programmes and courses within the scope of the Ordinance are those leading to awards of non-local higher academic or professional qualifications. *(Chapters 3 and 4)*

Non-local Programme
A programme, leading to a non-local higher academic and/or professional qualification, which has been conducted in the home country of that institution and is conducted in collaboration with HKU SPACE in Hong Kong. *(Chapters 3, 4, and 8)*

Partner

An institution or organisation that has entered into an academic collaboration agreement with HKU SPACE. Such partners may include local and non-local academic and professional institutions, and academic departments in the University of Hong Kong. *(Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9)*

Partnership Liaison Committee (PLC)

A committee set up by the School Academic and Management Board to review, establish and approve the financial terms proposed by College Boards or equivalent for award-bearing programmes in collaboration with non-local partners or to be offered outside Hong Kong. *(Chapter 3)*

Partnership Strategy Committee (PSC)

A committee set up by the School Academic and Management Board on the School's strategy on partnership, including its overseas and mainland partnership links, and their development. *(Chapter 3)*

Professional Recognition

The award of a programme being accepted by professional institutions as fulfilling requirements for registration, attainment of professional qualifications, exemption from professional examinations and/or fulfilment of continuing professional development requirements. *(Chapters 4 and 5)*

Programme

A programme normally refers to a curriculum or a structured grouping of courses or units which form a coherent whole. An academic award is usually issued to students who successfully complete a programme. In some partnerships, a "course" is used by the partner institution to carry the same meaning as a "programme". *(Chapters 1 to 9)*

Programme Discontinuation

A process that is applied in terminating award-bearing programmes as to safeguard the interest of students enrolled on the programme and to provide a clear and accountable record for completing due academic responsibilities. *(Chapters 5 and 7)*

Programme Definitive Document

A reference text for staff and teachers which describes the programme as it is approved for introduction. The text contains information about the programme including aims and objectives, award title, admission requirements, curriculum, delivery mode, assessment regulations and quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms. Relevant sections of the Document may be used to compile the Student Handbook. *(Chapters 6 and 7)*

Programme Leader

An academic staff member in HKU SPACE who leads a Programme Team and is responsible for the overall development and management of a programme or a group of programmes. He/She is a member of the Admissions Committee, AC and the BoE for the programme(s). *(Chapters 4, 5 and 9)*

Programme Learning Outcomes Survey (PLOS)
The survey invites graduating students to assess the extent of their achievement of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs), and their overall satisfaction with the programme and learning experiences. The findings of PLOS will facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of programmes and levels of student achievement. *(Chapters 2, 5 and 7)*

Programme Monitoring Activities
The Programme Team is responsible for monitoring the quality of programme management, programme delivery and the student achievements throughout the year of study. The Team summarises and analyses the information on the monitoring activities including students' statistics, students and teachers' views, EEs and AAs' feedback (for programmes at HKQF Level 4 and above), and classroom teaching observation for presentation to the AC after a year of study. *(Chapter 5)*

Programme Outcomes Assessment (POA)
The POA is designed to measure how well a programme has facilitated the students to achieve the PILOs. Objective data is taken from student assessment results and measured against the stated PILOs of a programme. *(Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 9)*

Programme Proposal
A written document with detailed information of a proposed programme's aims and objectives, contents, structure, minimum entry requirements, assessment regulations and other programme management and quality assurance enhancement issues. The document is used as the reference text in the academic approval process. *(Chapters 3, 4 and 5)*

Programme Review
A process to scrutinise and evaluate a programme that has been conducted for a period of time to ensure that its academic standards and quality continue to be appropriate for the level of the award. All aspects of the programme will be scrutinised, including the syllabus, teachers' and students' feedback, and market demand for the purpose of considering the continuation or discontinuation of the programme. *(Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7)*

Programme Review Panel (PRP)
A group of academics and professionals with appropriate expertise invited by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to consider the Programme Review Document, in particular the development plan prepared by the Programme Team. The PRP makes recommendation via the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit to the Board for CPE&LL to continue the programme or otherwise. *(Chapter 7)*

Programme Team
A group of academic and support staff involved in developing, launching and administering a programme. The Team is led by a Programme Leader. *(Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9)*

Programme Validation
A process to scrutinise and evaluate a new programme to ensure that its academic standards and quality are appropriate for the level of award. Same as academic validation, the validation process is conducted before a programme is approved for introduction. *(Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 7)*

Programme Validation Panel (PVP)
A group of academics and professionals with appropriate expertise invited by the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to consider a proposed programme with respect to its academic standard and related aspects, and to make a recommendation via the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee to the Board for CPE&LL to introduce the programme. *(Chapters 2 and 4)*

HKU SPACE Qualifications Framework (QF)
The School has an internal Qualifications Framework System, a policy for programme design and fundamental guidelines for rationalising the qualifications awarded through the School, with reference to the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework. Award title, exit level and credits are the three critical factors of defining a qualification in the School under this system. The School has standard QF forms to record the programme structure and design. *(Chapter 4)*

Qualifications Register (QR)
QR is a register of qualifications established by the Secretary for Education of the HKSAR under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance. QR provides information on qualifications recognised under the HKQF, including the learning programmes leading to these qualifications and the relevant operators. It also provides information on qualifications which may be awarded by assessment agencies appointed for conducting recognition of prior learning. *(Chapter 4)*

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)
Reporting through the Director of HKU SPACE and advising to the Board for CPE&LL, the Committee is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of quality assurance and enhancement policies and mechanisms, developing QAE policies and promoting a culture of quality assurance and continuous enhancement in academic activities in HKU SPACE. *(Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9)*

Quality Assurance Council
The Quality Assurance Council is one of the councils established by the University Grants Committee (UGC) to assure that the quality of educational experience in all first degree level programmes and above, however funded, offered in UGC-funded institutions is sustained and improved, and is at an internationally competitive level; and to encourage institutions to excel in this area of activity. *(Chapters 2 and 8)*

Quality Assurance and Enhancement System
A system to maintain and enhance the academic and professional standards of all programmes and courses offered by the School. The system comprises various academic and administrative processes including programme validation, review and monitoring. *(Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4)*

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Unit (QAE Unit)
A team of staff assigned with the responsibility to facilitate the implementation of the HKU SPACE Quality Assurance and Enhancement System. The Team also supports the work of the QAEC and the QAEWG. *(Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7)*

Quality Analytics Team (QAT)
A team of staff housed in the QAE Unit to develop an efficient and user-friendly student survey platform and reporting system, and to carry out student data collection and analysis for quality assurance and enhancement. *(Chapters 2, 5 and 8)*

School Academic and Management Board (SAMB)
A committee set up by the HKU SPACE Director to consider and coordinate strategic academic development directions, academic and management policies and regulations. *(Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9)*

Senate
Subject to the provisions of the University Ordinance and the statutes, and to the financial control of the Council, the Senate has the regulation of all matters relating to education in the University. It is the parent body of the Boards of Faculties and Boards of Studies which have the powers to make awards and, on the recommendation of the Boards of Faculties and Academic Development Committee, it establishes degree curricula. *(Chapters 2 and 4)*

Stream
A stream is a specialist study focus within a programme. Studying the core courses plus a number of courses in a defined stream leads towards an award with the indication of the specific stream. *(Chapter 6)*

Student Barometer (SB)
The Student Barometer, which is conducted by an independent research organisation, is the world's largest student survey providing benchmarks for student satisfaction of the whole study experience in various aspects. The School considers the SB as an ongoing international benchmarking mechanism. *(Chapter 5)*

Subject Group
Means a group of programmes and courses administratively grouped together according to the academic discipline. *(Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8)*

Subject Group Leader
There is one Subject Group Leader for each Subject Group to assist the College Head in managing the academic matters and staff of the Subject Group. Some Subject Groups have co-Subject Group Leaders. *(Chapter 5)*

Survey on Support Services (SSS)
The SSS is conducted to collect focused feedback on whether the teaching and learning support services meet the needs of students. The feedback will be essential for the continuous enhancement of the services provided by the School. *(Chapters 2, 5 and 9)*

The University Grants Committee (UGC)
The University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong is a non-statutory advisory committee responsible for advising the Government of the HKSAR on the development and funding needs of the publicly funded higher education institutions in the HKSAR. *(Chapters 2 and 8)*