

National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment



Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs

2015

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Introduction

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment has been established by the Higher Council of Education in Saudi Arabia with responsibility to establish standards and accredit institutions and programs in post secondary education.

The system for quality assurance and accreditation is designed to support continuing quality improvement and to publicly recognize programs and institutions that meet required quality standards. The objective is to ensure good international standards in all post secondary institutions and in all programs offered in Saudi Arabia.

Students, employers, parents and members of the community should be able to have complete confidence that what has been learned by students, the research conducted, and the services provided are equivalent to good international practice. Accreditation of a program will give public recognition that these standards have been achieved. Saudi Arabian qualifications should be accepted without question anywhere in the world.

This document deals with standards for higher education programs. The standards apply to programs in all public and private universities and colleges, including those responsible to the Ministry of Higher Education and to any established or regulated by other ministries or agencies. The only exception is for military education which is administered under different arrangements.

There is considerable variation in the amount of experience that higher education institutions have had with quality assurance processes and the system of higher education is expanding rapidly. In recognition of this the system for accreditation will be introduced progressively over a transition period of several years. During this time programs may be considered for accreditation in institutions that are well advanced with the introduction of quality assurance systems, and others will be evaluated and accredited as their internal quality assurance systems are put in place.

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation & Assessment in Saudi Arabia has developed a set of standards for quality assurance and accreditation of higher education institutions and programs in eleven general areas of activity.

1. **Mission Goals and Objectives**
2. **Program Administration**
3. **Management of Program Quality Assurance**
4. **Learning and Teaching**
5. **Student Administration and Support Services**
6. **Learning Resources**
7. **Facilities and Equipment**
8. **Financial Planning and Management**
9. **Employment Processes**
10. **Research**
11. **Relationships With the Community**

These standards are based on what is generally considered good practice in higher education throughout the world and adapted to meet the particular circumstances of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The standards are described with several levels of detail. First, there are general descriptions for each of the eleven major areas of activity. Second, these are broken down into sub-standards dealing with requirements within each of the major areas. Third, within each of those sub-standards there are a number of good practices that are carried out in good quality institutions. To evaluate performance in relation to the standards, a college or department offering the program should investigate whether these good practices are carried out and how well this is done. A set of self evaluation scales has been prepared to assist in this process. (*Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*) In that document the groups carrying out the evaluation of the program are asked whether the particular practices are followed, and to rate the quality of these practices in the program on a five point rating scale. Their judgments of quality MUST be based to the greatest possible extent on appropriate evidence including at least some comparisons with other comparable programs in their own and other institutions on important items. The development of internal systems to provide that evidence is an essential requirement for an institution's quality assurance system. Unless adequate sources of evidence are available in an institution a program cannot be considered for accreditation.

To be granted accreditation it is necessary for evidence of good quality performance to be provided in relation to all the eleven general standards and with all of the subsections of those standards. There is one exception. A higher education college or university is expected to meet the standards for research (though the expectations for research are considerably higher for a university). However a community college offering only the first two years of higher education is not required to meet the research standards. It is not expected that a program will achieve a high rating for every "good practice" described within the sub-sections of the standards. They are not a simple check list, and are not equal in importance. Their importance will vary according to the mission and objectives of the program and the institution within which it is offered, and its stage of development. However it is desirable that all are met and some are essential. In the initial stages of the introduction of the quality assurance and accreditation system the Commission will indicate a number of items to which special attention will be given. The judgment about whether accreditation should be granted will be an overall assessment by an experienced peer review panel taking account of the mission, objectives and stage of development of the institution and the program and the priorities identified by the Commission.

A description of the eleven general standards as they apply to programs offered through distance education is provided in this document together with some comments on possible performance indicators and kinds of evidence that could be considered in determining quality of performance in relation to those standards. Further guidance on the use of the standards for monitoring performance and preparations for accreditation is given in *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia* prepared by the Commission.

Relationships Between Standards for Institutions and Standards for Programs

General standards have been developed for higher education institutions and programs. They cover the same general areas of activity but there are some differences that reflect a total institutional overview on the one hand and the perspective of just one specific program on the other. In addition, some general institutional functions are not considered in a program evaluation.

Activities relating to the standards fall into three categories.

- Those that are institutional and have no impact or only very indirect impact on programs. Examples include the management of extra curricular activities or the attractiveness of buildings and grounds. These are not considered in looking at the application of the standards to programs.
- Those that are general institutional activities with a major impact on programs. Examples would be the provision of learning resources through a library or the processes for employment and promotion of teaching staff. These should be considered in evaluating a program as they impact on the program concerned. For example whether the library provides

the services needed for the particular program being considered, or whether appropriately qualified and experienced faculty and staff are available to teach in the program. The quality of a program is affected by these things regardless of who is responsible for administering them. Evaluation of these functions in an institutional evaluation would be broader and consider the quality of management and services provided for the institution as a whole and how effectively they support all programs throughout the institution.

- Those that relate directly to the planning and delivery of programs. Examples would be the appropriateness of intended learning outcomes for students and the quality of teaching in the program. For an institutional evaluation these things should be looked at within all programs, and then a judgment made about strengths and weaknesses in the institution's programs as a whole. This would normally be done by getting a profile of performance at the level of departments or colleges, and then preparing a report identifying similarities and differences and overall performance for programs in general.

In this document a selection has been made of the things that should be considered in relation to evaluation of programs. They include the matters described in the second and third categories above.

Special Requirements for Particular Fields of Study

These standards are expressed in general terms and apply to all programs in higher education. In addition it is necessary for programs to meet any special requirements that apply to specific fields of study. This is particularly relevant to professional programs that must prepare students to practice as skilled professionals in their chosen field. For example, a program in medicine must develop all the knowledge and skill required of a medical practitioner, and a program in civil engineering must develop the abilities required of a civil engineer.

The general standards include a requirement that plans for a program be developed after considering relevant academic and professional advice. Consequently for a judgment to be made about the accreditation of individual programs it is also necessary to consider any special requirements that are applicable to particular fields of study.

This can include consideration of what is done at other good institutions offering similar programs or advice from senior staff at such institutions. For a professional program it should also include consultations with experienced professionals in the field of activity familiar with any special requirements for working in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Specific field of study requirements are being developed by the Commission but are not yet available. However an important additional source of advice is the standards set out by relevant international specialist accreditors in a number of different professional fields.

Notes on What Constitutes a Program

A program is regarded as an integrated package of courses and activities in an academic or professional field leading to a qualification. However organizational arrangements in institutions differ and there are sometimes questions about what should be considered as a program.

A program includes all of the courses a student is required to take, including courses that are required by an institution or a college as well as those required by a department, and including any general education courses as well as those in a professional or academic field. It includes courses that may be offered as service courses by another department or college.

A program offered on both men's and women's campuses is a single program and should be evaluated as such. However since there may be significant differences in facilities, resources, experience of faculty, employment of graduates or other matters evidence should be obtained about what happens on each campus and any differences noted and considered in planning what should be done in response. Program reports should show both the evaluations for each campus and a combined result.

A program offered on a remote as well as on an institution's main campus should be dealt with in the same way, that is, information should be obtained about the program in each location and then combined in a single report that identifies any significant variations.

The same principle applies to a program offered either on-campus or through distance education. That is, information should be collected for programs in each mode of delivery, and reported in a way that shows clearly any differences found. There are also a number of additional matters that relate to distance education and the distance education portion of the program must be considered using the standards for distance education that have been developed by the Commission.

If a program on a remote campus or one offered by distance education is specifically designed as a different program from one on an institution's main campus or is offered through distance education processes an institution may request that it be treated as a different program and evaluated separately for accreditation. The Commission may agree to this being done, but will normally require that the academic award granted have a different title, and that all elements of the program have been formally considered and approved by the institutions senior academic committee as a separate program. If this requirement is met and the Commission agrees to consider it as a separate program it will require that all the processes for preparation and review be carried out separately and the decision on accreditation will make clear which program they apply to. In this situation any misrepresentation that a non-accredited program of this sort has been accredited will be regarded as a serious offence.

A program may have an early exit point, for example it may be possible for students to complete two years of study and receive a diploma or to continue for several more years and complete a bachelor degree. If this is done it is essential that the diploma be planned so that it provides a complete and useful qualification in its own right. For example it might include significantly more practical and applied work in the field than students would normally undertake in the first two years of a bachelor degree program. It is not acceptable for such an award to be granted simply because students fail or drop out after the early parts of a longer program.

The distinction between what is regarded as a single program or a cluster of related programs is difficult to define and may be best explained through examples.

A bachelors degree program to prepare a student as a civil engineer would be regarded as a different program from one to prepare a mechanical engineer, even though there may be some courses that are common to both. Similarly, if a student had completed the bachelors degree program and wished to take a post graduate program leading to a masters degree or a doctorate in the same general field, that would be regarded as a separate program. The test in these examples relates to there being a qualification that is regarded as being complete in itself, and in the case of a professional program, qualifying the person who has taken the program for professional practice in the field. The distinction does not necessarily relate to organization of an institution or college into departments. In the particular example given it is likely that a civil engineering department would offer both the undergraduate and the postgraduate programs. It would also be possible if an institution wished to organize itself in that way for a single department to offer programs in both civil and mechanical engineering.

The title of an academic award is not necessarily a useful guide to what should be regarded as a program. For example general titles such as Bachelor of Arts, or Business, or Science, could include many different programs. In an Arts degree there could be programs in history and or social sciences, in psychology, in social work, or many others. A Business degree could include separate programs for accountants, for economists, or for management and administration, and these would be different programs leading to quite different occupational skills.

The programs that have been used in these examples are separate entities, and will be accredited as such. However this does not prevent groups of related programs being considered together by an external review team in the accreditation process provided it is possible for external review panels to include the necessary expertise. A panel might consider an undergraduate and a post graduate program in the same field at the same time. However the institution's self study and the reports of the review panel will deal separately with each program and it would be possible for one such program to be accredited and not the other.

Guidance on the planning and review of new and existing programs to meet these requirements is provided in Chapter 2 of Part 2 of the Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia.

Evidence of Performance

Judgments about quality based on general impressions could be accurate, but they could also be badly distorted for a number of reasons. Consequently general opinions without supporting evidence cannot be relied on in making assessments of quality in relation to specified standards. Because of this it is necessary to consider appropriate forms of evidence whenever a judgment is made about quality of performance in relation to standards.

What is appropriate evidence will vary widely for different things that are evaluated and an important element in any quality assessment is to decide on what kind of evidence is appropriate for the matter being considered.

In many cases several different forms of evidence should be considered to make a reliable judgment, and the evidence will need to be interpreted. For example high average grades in a course could mean that students have achieved very high standards because of excellent teaching. Alternatively they could mean that standards are low and grades have been inflated. To draw valid conclusions it would be necessary to check that tests were sufficiently rigorous and that criteria for allocating grades were appropriate and fairly administered.

Interpretations of evidence can also be unreliable, and to guard against this it is recommended that groups that undertake evaluations in relation to the standards include some people who have been involved in the activity concerned, some who are the recipients of the service provided (eg students, or members of other departments for which service courses are provided) and also some who are familiar with that kind of program, but are not directly involved. As a further safeguard it is recommended that the final judgments be reviewed by someone who has not been involved in the initial evaluation as a check on whether the interpretations seem reasonable in the light of the evidence provided.

Performance Indicators

A wide range of kinds of evidence can be considered. However as part of the evidence to be used decisions should be made about some specific items of information that can be expressed in quantitative terms and used as performance indicators. These should be identified in advance as part of planning processes. For example when major goals or objectives are established specific indicators should be specified so achievement of those goals and objectives can be monitored on a continuing basis. It is also important for an institution to identify some key performance indicators that will be used consistently by departments and colleges throughout the institution to monitor their own performance, provide for comparisons of performance between departments and colleges, and permit university committees and senior administrators to monitor the quality of programs throughout the institution on a continuing basis. Data on these indicators should be collected in standard form and retained within the department and also in a central data base so there can be comparisons within the institution and over time. An evaluation of the effectiveness of these processes will consider whether appropriate indicators have been identified, whether the data is consistently collected and recorded, and whether the information is used in monitoring and analysing quality of performance.

While it is the responsibility of every program to monitor and plan for improvement in relation to its own mission and objectives the Commission has also identified certain key performance indicators on which information should be provided by all institutions. This requirement has several important objectives. It provides a common set of statistical data that can be used by programs for comparisons of performance within their institution and benchmarking with other programs within the country. (The Commission will publish information for groups of similar institutions, but individual institutional and program data will be confidential to each institution) It assists the Commission and other relevant Ministries and organizations in monitoring the quality of performance of the system of higher education as a whole, and it provides a sample of important information about institutions and programs that makes it possible for the Commission to maintain accreditation of institutions and programs in the interval between major external reviews.

These indicators established by the Commission should be used by institutions and departments administering programs as part of their quality assurance processes, but they are also encouraged to add additional indicators which they select for themselves that relate to their own mission and objectives and their priorities for improvement.

Good Practices Relevant to More than One Standard

Within each standard and sub-standard a number of statements are made about things that should be done if the standard (or sub-standard) is being met. Many of these statements appear in several different places. This should not be regarded as unnecessary duplication, but rather as a result of the fact that a number of practices are relevant to more than one standard. For example, an expectation that teaching staff be involved on a continuing basis with scholarly activities that ensure they remain up to date is relevant to Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff (Standard 4.8) and also to Personal and Career Development (Standard 9.3), and an expectation that standards of learning outcomes should be checked against the National Qualifications Framework and standards at other comparable institutions is relevant to the standard for Management of Quality Assurance and Improvement (Standard 3) and also to the sub-standards for Student Learning Outcomes (Standard 4.1) and Student Assessment (Standard 4.4).

Standards for Distance Education Programs

This document has been prepared for programs through conventional and largely campus-based instruction. For programs through distance education methodology there are some different expectations that relate to that mode of teaching. The standards for distance education or dual mode or blended instruction (a combination of conventional and distance education) standards are set out in separate publications available from the Commission.

Self Evaluation Scales

High quality standards can only be achieved by action planned and undertaken within the institutions offering educational programs. In keeping with this the approach to quality assurance and accreditation of institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on self evaluation in relation to generally accepted standards of good practice, and verified by independent external review.

To help with this approach the standards are supported by self evaluation scales through which institutions (or sections responsible for particular functions within them) and faculty and staff responsible for programs rate their own performance using a starring system. Self evaluation scales that relate directly to these standards are included in separate publications. *Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Institutions and Self Evaluation Scales for Higher Education Programs*. It is expected that these self evaluation scales will be used by institutions, and by those responsible for programs in their initial quality assessment, their continuing monitoring of performance, and in their more extensive periodic self studies prior to an accreditation review by the Commission.

Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education Programs

1. Mission Goals and Objectives

The mission of the program must be consistent with that for the institution and apply that mission to the particular goals and requirements of the program concerned. It must clearly and appropriately define the program's principal purposes and priorities and be influential in guiding planning and action.

Sub-Standards

1.1 Appropriateness of the Mission;

The mission statement must be appropriate for the institution and for a program of its type in Saudi Arabia.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 1.1.1 The mission for the program should be consistent with the mission of the institution.
- 1.1.2 The mission should establish directions for the development of the program that are appropriate for a program of its type and the needs of students in Saudi Arabia.
- 1.1.3 The mission should be consistent with Islamic beliefs and values.
- 1.1.4 The mission should be explained to its stakeholders in an accompanying written statement.

1.2 Usefulness of the Mission Statement

The mission statement must be useful in guiding planning and decision making for the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 1.2.1 The mission statement should be sufficiently specific to provide an effective guide for decision-making and choices among alternative planning strategies.
- 1.2.2 The mission statement should be achievable through effective strategies that can be implemented within the level of resources expected to be available.
- 1.2.3 The mission statement should be clear enough to provide criteria for evaluation of progress towards the achievement of the program goals and objectives.

1.3 Development and Review of the Mission

The mission must be developed through consultative processes and formally adopted and periodically reviewed.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 1.3.1 The mission should be defined in consultation with and with the support of major stakeholders.
- 1.3.2 The mission should be formally approved by the appropriate decision making body within the institution.
- 1.3.3 The mission should be periodically reviewed and reaffirmed or amended as appropriate in the light of changing circumstances.
- 1.3.4 Stakeholders should be kept informed about the mission and any changes made to it.

1.4 Use Made of the Mission

The mission must be used consistently as a basis for planning and major policy decisions.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 1.4.1 The mission should be used as the basis for a strategic plan over a specified medium term (eg. 5 years).
- 1.4.2 The mission should be publicized widely among those associated with the program and action taken to ensure it is known about and supported by teaching and other staff and students.
- 1.4.3 The mission should be used to provide criteria for consideration of major program proposals.

1.5 Relationship Between Mission, Goals and Objectives

The mission must be used to guide the establishment of goals and objectives and strategic plans for the development of the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 1.5.1 Goals for the development of the program should be consistent with and support the mission.
- 1.5.2 Goals should be stated clearly enough to guide planning and decision making in ways that are consistent with the mission.
- 1.5.3 Goals and objectives for the development of the program should be reviewed periodically and modified if necessary in response to results achieved and changing circumstances.
- 1.5.4 Statements of major objectives should be accompanied by specification of clearly defined and measurable indicators that are used to judge the extent to which objectives are being achieved.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of the mission could be obtained from examination of the mission statement itself, copies of papers proposing the mission or modifications in it, interviews with teaching staff, students, graduates and employers to find out how well it is known and supported, and consideration of other reports, proposals and statements to see the extent to which the mission is used as a basis for decisions. Indicators that could be used include responses to questions on surveys to see how well the mission is known and supported, or the proportion of policy decisions that refer to the mission among criteria for the decision made.

Standard 2: Program Administration

Program administration must provide effective leadership and reflect an appropriate balance between accountability to senior management and the governing board of the institution within which the program is offered, and flexibility to meet the specific requirements of the program concerned. Planning processes must involve stakeholders (eg. students, professional bodies, industry representatives, teaching staff) in establishing goals and objectives and reviewing and responding to results achieved. In sections for male and female students resources for the program must be comparable and there must be effective communication between them and equitable involvement in planning processes. The quality of delivery of courses and the program as a whole must be regularly monitored with adjustments made promptly in response to this feedback and to developments in the external environment affecting the program.

Sub-Standards

2.1 Leadership

Program administrators must provide effective and responsible leadership for the development and improvement of the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 2.1.1 The responsibilities of program administrators (department chairs or others) should be clearly defined in position descriptions.
- 2.1.2 There should be sufficient flexibility at the level of the department or college offering the program to respond rapidly to course and program evaluations and changes in program learning outcome requirements, (eg. Departments should have delegated authority to change text and reference lists, modify planned teaching strategies, details of assessment tasks and updating of course content as far as possible subject to conditions set by the university council or other responsible authority.)
- 2.1.3 Program administrators should anticipate issues and opportunities and exercise initiative in response.
- 2.1.4 Program administrators should ensure that when action is needed it is taken in an effective and timely manner.
- 2.1.5 Program administrators should have sufficient authority to ensure compliance within the program with formally established or agreed institutional or program policies and procedures.
- 2.1.6 Program administrators should provide leadership, and encourage and reward initiative on the part of teaching and other staff.
- 2.1.7 Program administrators should accept responsibility for the effectiveness of action taken within their area of responsibility regardless of whether that action is taken by them personally or by others responsible to them.
- 2.1.8 Regular feedback should be given on performance of teaching and other staff by the head of the department.
- 2.1.9 Delegations of responsibility should be formally specified in documents signed by the person delegating and the person given delegated authority, that describe clearly the limits of delegated responsibility and responsibility for reporting on decisions made.
- 2.1.10 Regulations governing delegations of authority should be established for the institution and approved by the governing board. These regulations should indicate key functions that cannot be delegated, and specify that delegation of authority to another person or organization does not remove responsibility for consequences of decisions made from the person giving the delegation. Delegations affecting the program should be consistent with these regulations.
- 2.1.11 Advice and support should be made available to teaching and other staff in a manner that contributes to their personal and professional development.
- 2.1.12 Proposals for program developments and recommendations on policy issues should be

presented to the appropriate decision making body in a form that clearly identifies the issues for decision and the consequences of alternatives.

Planning Processes

Planning processes must be managed effectively to achieve the mission and goals of the program through cooperative action by the instructional team and program and course reporting and decision making. Planning must combine coordinated strategic planning with flexibility to adapt to results achieved and changing circumstance.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 2.2.1 Planning should be strategic, incorporating priorities for development and appropriate sequencing of action to produce the most effective short-term and long-term results.
- 2.2.2 Plans should take full and realistic account of aspects of the external environment affecting demand for graduates and the skills they require.
- 2.2.3 Planning processes should provide for involvement of teaching and other staff, students and other stakeholders.
- 2.2.4 Planning should have a particular focus on intended learning outcomes for students with course content and teaching and assessment strategies that reflect both the background of students and theory and research on different kinds of learning. (For advice on the planning of new programs and review and documentation of existing programs refer to Section 2.4.7 in *Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia Part 2, Internal Quality Assurance Arrangements*.)
- 2.2.5 Plans should be effectively communicated to all concerned with impacts and requirements for different constituencies made clear.
- 2.2.6 Implementation of plans should be monitored with checks made against short term and medium term targets and outcomes evaluated.
- 2.2.7 Planning should provide for regular reports on key performance indicators to senior management in the institution.
- 2.2.8 Plans should be reviewed, adapted and modified, with corrective action taken as required in response to operational developments, formative evaluation, and changing circumstances.
- 2.2.9 Planning should incorporate risk management as an integral component of planning strategies with appropriate mechanisms developed for risk assessment and minimization.

2.3 Relationship Between Sections for Male and Female Students

In sections for male and female students the program coordinators and teaching staff in both sections must participate fully in cooperative planning, decision making and program and course reporting. There must be equitable distribution of resources and facilities to meet the requirements of program delivery, research, and associated services and quality evaluations must consider both performance in each section as well as the program overall.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 2.3.1 In sections for male and female students resources, facilities and staffing provisions should be comparable in both sections.
- 2.3.2 Program managers in both sections and staff teaching the same courses should be fully involved in planning and reporting processes and decision making, and communicate regularly

about the program through appropriate processes that are consistent with bylaws and regulations of the Higher Council of Education.

- 2.3.3 Male and female sections should be adequately represented in the membership of relevant committees and councils.
- 2.3.4 Planning processes and program and course specifications should lead to comparable standards in each section while taking account of differing needs.
- 2.3.5 Planning and implementation processes should ensure that reports on courses and the program, and information on key performance indicators show results for both sections as well as for the program as a whole.

2.4 Integrity

Teaching and other staff involved with the program must meet high ethical standards of honesty and integrity including avoidance of conflicts of interest and avoidance of plagiarism in their teaching, research, administrative and service functions. These standards must be maintained in all dealings with students, teaching and other staff, and in relationships with other internal and external agencies including both government and non government organizations.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 2.4.1 Teaching and other staff and students should comply with codes of practice relating to ethical conduct in research, teaching, performance evaluation and assessment, committee decision making and in the conduct of administrative and service activities.
- 2.4.2 Declarations of pecuniary interest should be made whenever they exist and conflicts of interest should be avoided in all dealings by teaching and other staff.
- 2.4.3 Advertising and promotional material should always be truthful, avoid any actual or implied misrepresentations or exaggerated claims, or negative comments about other programs or institutions.

2.5 Internal Policies and Regulations

Policies and regulations must be established that clearly define the major responsibilities and procedures for the administration of the program and for committees and teaching and other staff and students involved.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 2.5.1 Terms of reference and operating procedures associated with the program should be established for major committees and administrative positions.
- 2.5.2 Policies and regulations should be made available to staff and students and kept in locations that are readily accessible to all teaching and other staff and students who are affected by them, including new members of teaching and other staff, and members of committees.
- 2.5.3 Decisions made by committees on procedural and academic matters should be recorded and referred to as a guide in future related decisions to ensure consistency.
- 2.5.4 Guidelines or regulations should be established for dealing with recurring procedural or academic issues.
- 2.5.5 All policies, regulations, terms of reference and statements of responsibility relating to the management and delivery of the program should be periodically reviewed and amended as required in the light of changing circumstances.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about effective management could include documents setting out policies, terms of reference and operating procedures for major committees and administrative positions, responses to surveys of teaching and other staff and students about procedures followed, and opinions of senior administrators in the institution to which program administrators are responsible. Evidence of dissemination of integrity expectations should include information on websites, advertisements and awareness of requirements on the part of staff and students in interviews or surveys.

Indicators could be based on responses to surveys by teaching and other staff and students, graduates, employers and professional bodies.

Standard 3: Management of Program Quality Assurance

Teaching and other staff involved in the program must regularly evaluate their own performance and be committed to improving both their own performance and the quality of the program as a whole. Regular evaluations of quality must be undertaken within each course based on valid evidence and appropriate benchmarks, and plans for improvement made and implemented. Quality must be assessed by reference to evidence and include consideration of specific performance indicators and challenging external benchmarks. Central importance must be attached to student learning outcomes with each course contributing to the achievement of overall program objectives.

Sub-Standards

3.1 Commitment to Quality Improvement in the Program

Program administrators and teaching and other staff must be committed to maintaining and improving the quality of the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 3.1.1 All teaching and other staff should participate in self-evaluations and cooperate with reporting and improvement processes in their sphere of activity.
- 3.1.2 Innovation and creativity should be encouraged within a framework of clear policy guidelines and accountability processes.
- 3.1.3 Mistakes and weaknesses should be recognized by those responsible and used as a basis for planning for improvement.
- 3.1.4 Improvements in performance should be acknowledged and outstanding achievements recognized.
- 3.1.5 Evaluation processes and planning for improvement should be integrated into normal planning processes.

3.2 Scope of Quality Assurance Processes

Quality assurance activities that are necessary to ensure good quality must apply to all aspects of program planning and delivery including provision of related services, and to all teaching and other staff involved in those processes.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 3.2.1 Quality assurance processes should deal with all aspects of program planning and delivery, including services and resources provided by other parts of the institution.
- 3.2.2 Quality evaluations should provide an overview of quality issues for the total program as well as components within it (including individual courses and program offerings in sections for male and female students)
- 3.2.3 Quality evaluations should consider inputs, processes and outcomes, with particular attention given to learning outcomes for students.
- 3.2.4 Quality assurance processes should include evaluations of performance in relation to both continuing routine activities and to strategic objectives.
- 3.2.5 Quality assurance processes should ensure both that required standards are met, and that there is continuing improvement in performance.
- 3.2.6 In sections for male and female students detailed evaluations in relation to all standards should be carried out in a consistent way in both sections and quality reports on those

standards should report on any significant differences found and make appropriate recommendations for action in response to what is found.

3.3 Administration of Quality Assurance Processes

Quality assurance arrangements for the program must be effectively administered and coordinated with the quality assurance arrangements for the institution as a whole.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 3.3.1 Quality assurance processes should be fully integrated into normal planning and program delivery arrangements.
- 3.3.2 Evaluations should be (i) based on evidence, (ii) linked to appropriate standards, (iii) include predetermined performance indicators, and (iv) take account of independent verification of interpretations.
- 3.3.3 Quality assurance processes for the program should make use of standard forms and survey instruments for use in the institution as well as gathering any special information required for this program.
- 3.3.4 Survey data should be collected from students and analysed for individual courses, the program as a whole, and also from graduates and employers of those graduates.
- 3.3.5 Statistical data on indicators, including grade distributions, progression and completion rates should be retained in an accessible central data base and regularly reviewed and reported in annual and periodic program reports.
- 3.3.6 Responsibility should be given to a member of the teaching staff to provide leadership and support for the management of quality assurance processes. The responsible person should involve other staff in the activities of the quality assurance center.
- 3.3.7 The quality assurance arrangements for the program should themselves be regularly evaluated and improved. As part of these reviews unnecessary requirements should be removed to streamline the system and avoid unnecessary work.
- 3.3.8 Processes for evaluation of quality should be transparent with criteria for judgments and evidence considered made clear.

3.4 Use of Performance Indicators and Benchmarks

Specific indicators must be identified for monitoring performance and appropriate benchmarks selected for comparative evaluation of the achievement of goals and objectives and quality of performance more generally.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 3.4.1 Information should be provided regularly on key performance indicators specified by the NCAAA and any required by the institution.
- 3.4.2 Additional performance indicators and benchmarks relevant to this particular program should also be selected and used for program evaluation and reporting.
- 3.4.3 The additional benchmarks for the program should be approved by the appropriate senior committee or council within the institution (senior academic committee, university council) as part of its program approval decision.
- 3.4.4 Benchmarks for comparing quality with past performance and for comparisons with similar programs elsewhere should be selected and used in evaluations and reports.
- 3.4.5 The format for indicators and benchmarks should be consistent with those used across the institution.

3.5 Independent Verification of Evaluations

Evaluations of performance must be based on evidence (including but not restricted to predetermined performance indicators and benchmarks) and conclusions based on that evidence must be independently verified.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 3.5.1 Self-evaluations of quality of performance should be based on several related sources of evidence including feedback through user surveys and opinions of stakeholders such as students and staff, graduates and employers.
- 3.5.2 Interpretations of evidence about quality should be verified by independent advice from persons familiar with the type of activity concerned and impartial mechanisms should be used to reconcile any differing opinions.
- 3.5.3 Standards of learning outcomes achieved by students should be checked in relation to the requirements of the *National Qualifications Framework* and standards in similar programs at other comparable institutions.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of management of quality assurance processes can be obtained by looking at the extent of involvement in quality assurance processes by teaching and other staff and the adequacy of responses made to evaluations that are made in program and course reports and other reports prepared. The outcomes of those processes can be assessed by examining trend data to see whether there has been progressive improvement in the planning and administration and the learning outcomes achieved by students.

Evidence about the quality processes followed can be obtained from surveys or discussions with staff or students and the quality of reports prepared by program administrators, including whether the quality evaluations are evidence-based and appropriately benchmarked in relation to external standards.

The key performance indicators identified by the Commission should be used, but additional indicators linked to the particular mission of the institution and the program should also be used when needed. When goals and objectives are established for the development and improvement of the program appropriate performance indicators should be identified as part of that planning process.

Standard 4: Learning and Teaching

Student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with the *National Qualifications Framework* and requirements for employment or professional practice. Standards of learning must be assessed and verified through appropriate processes and benchmarked against demanding and relevant external reference points. Teaching staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies suitable for different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programs must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate and employer surveys with evidence from these sources used as a basis for plans for improvement. Required standards for male and female sections must be the same, equivalent resources provided, and evaluations must include data for each section.

Sub-Standards

4.1 Student Learning Outcomes

Intended student learning outcomes must be consistent with the *National Qualifications Framework*, and with generally accepted standards for the field of study concerned including requirements for any professions for which students are being prepared.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.1.1 Relevant academic and professional advice should be considered when defining intended learning outcomes.
- 4.1.2 Intended learning outcomes should be consistent with the *National Qualifications Framework*. (covering all of the domains of learning at the standards required).
- 4.1.3 Programs leading to professional qualifications should develop learning outcomes that meet requirements for professional practice in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the fields concerned. (These requirements should include local accreditation requirements and also take account of international accreditation requirements for that field of study, and any Saudi Arabian regulations or special regional needs.)
- 4.1.4 Any special student attributes specified by the institution for its graduates, or in the program, should be incorporated as intended learning outcomes in all relevant courses and required student activities, and appropriate teaching strategies and forms of student assessment used for them.
- 4.1.5 Appropriate program evaluation mechanisms including graduating student surveys, employment outcome data, employer feedback and subsequent performance of graduates should be used to provide evidence about the appropriateness of intended learning outcomes and the extent to which they are achieved. (see also sections 4.3 and 4.4 dealing with processes for program evaluation and verification of standards of student achievement)

4.2 Program Development Processes

Programs must be planned as coherent packages of learning experiences in which all courses contribute in planned ways to the intended learning outcomes for the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.2.1 Plans for delivery and evaluation of the program should be included in detailed program specifications that include knowledge and skills to be acquired, and strategies for teaching and assessment for the progressive development of learning in all the domains of learning.
- 4.2.2 Plans for courses should be set out in course specifications that include knowledge and skills to be acquired and strategies for teaching and assessment for the domains of learning to be addressed in each course.
- 4.2.3 The content and strategies set out in course specifications should be coordinated and followed in practice to ensure effective progressive development of learning for the total program in all the domains of learning.
- 4.2.4 Planning should include any action necessary to ensure that teaching staff are familiar with and are able to use the strategies included in the program and course specifications.
- 4.2.5 The academic and/or professional fields for which students are being prepared should be monitored on a continuing basis with necessary adjustments made in programs and in course content and reference materials to ensure continuing relevance and quality.
- 4.2.6 In all professional programs continuing advisory panels with membership that includes leading practitioners from the relevant occupations or professions should be used to monitor and advise on content and quality of programs.
- 4.2.7 New program proposals or major changes in programs should be assessed and approved or rejected by the institution's senior academic committee using criteria that ensure thorough and appropriate consultation in planning and capacity for effective implementation.

4.3 Program Evaluation and Review Processes

The quality of all courses and of the program as a whole must be monitored regularly through appropriate evaluation mechanisms and amended as required, with more extensive quality reviews conducted periodically.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.3.1 Courses and programs should be evaluated and reported on annually and reports should include information about the effectiveness of planned strategies and the extent to which intended learning outcomes are being achieved.
- 4.3.2 When changes are made as a result of evaluations details of those changes and the reasons for them should be retained in course and program portfolios.
- 4.3.3 Quality indicators that include learning outcome measures should be established for all courses and the program.
- 4.3.4 Records of student completion rates should be kept for all courses and for the program, and included among quality indicators.
- 4.3.5 Reports on the program should be reviewed annually by senior administrators and quality committees.
- 4.3.6 Systems should be established for central recording and analysis of course completion and program progression and completion rates and student course and program evaluations, with summaries and comparative data distributed automatically to departments, colleges, senior administrators and relevant committees at least once each year.
- 4.3.7 If problems are found through program evaluations appropriate and timely action should be taken to make improvements.
- 4.3.8 In addition to annual evaluations a comprehensive reassessment of the program should be conducted at least once every five years. Procedures for conducting these reassessments should be consistent with policies and procedures established for the institution.
- 4.3.9 Program reviews should involve experienced people from relevant industries and professions, and experienced teaching staff from other institutions.
- 4.3.10 In program reviews opinions about the program should be obtained from students and graduates through surveys and interviews, discussions with teaching staff, and other stakeholders such as employers.

- 4.3.11 In sections for male and female students evaluations should provide data for each section as well as for the program as a whole, and any deficiencies in one or the other section dealt with appropriately in recommendations for action.

4.4 Student Assessment

Student assessment processes must be appropriate for the intended learning outcomes and effectively and fairly administered with independent verification of standards achieved.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.4.1 Student assessment mechanisms should be appropriate for the different forms of learning sought.
- 4.4.2 Assessment practices should be clearly communicated to students at the beginning of courses.
- 4.4.3 Appropriate, valid and reliable mechanisms should be used for verifying standards of student achievement in relation to relevant internal and external benchmarks. The standard of work required for different grades should be consistent over time, comparable in courses offered within a program and college and the institution as a whole, and in comparison with other highly regarded institutions. (Arrangements for verifying standards may include measures such as check marking of random samples of student work by teaching staff at other institutions, and independent comparisons of standards achieved with other comparable institutions within Saudi Arabia, and internationally.)
- 4.4.4 Grading of students tests, assignments and projects should be assisted by the use of matrices or other means to ensure that the planned range of domains of student learning outcomes are addressed.
- 4.4.5 Arrangements should be made within the institution for training of teaching staff in the theory and practice of student assessment.
- 4.4.6 Policies and procedures should include action to be taken to deal with situations where standards of student achievement are inadequate or inconsistently assessed.
- 4.4.7 Effective procedures should be used to ensure that work submitted by students is actually done by the students concerned.
- 4.4.8 Feedback to students on their performance and results of assessments during each semester should be given promptly and accompanied by mechanisms for assistance if needed.
- 4.4.9 Assessments of student work should be conducted fairly and objectively.
- 4.4.10 Criteria and processes for academic appeals should be made known to students and administered equitably (see also item 5.3)

4.5 Educational Assistance for Students

Effective systems must be in place for assisting student learning through academic advice, study facilities, monitoring student progress, encouraging high performing students, and providing assistance when needed by individuals.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.5.1 Teaching staff should be available at sufficient scheduled times for both full time and part time students as appropriate consultation and advice to students. (availability of staff should be confirmed, not just assumed because times have been scheduled).
- 4.5.2 Teaching resources (including staffing, learning resources and equipment, and clinical or other field placements) should be sufficient to ensure achievement of the intended learning outcomes.

- 4.5.3 If arrangements for student academic counselling and advice include electronic communications through email or other means the effectiveness of those processes should be evaluated through means such as analysis of response times and student evaluations.
- 4.5.4 Adequate tutorial assistance should be provided to ensure understanding and ability to apply learning.
- 4.5.5 Appropriate preparatory and orientation mechanisms should be provided to prepare students for study in a higher education environment. Particular attention should be given to preparation for the language of instruction, self directed learning, and bridging programs if necessary for students transferring to the institution with credit for previous studies. Preparatory studies must not be counted within the credit hour requirements for programs.
- 4.5.6 If the language of instruction in the program is other than Arabic, action should be taken to ensure that language skills are adequate for instruction in that language when students begin their studies. (This may be done through language training prior to admission to the program. Language skills expected on entry should be benchmarked against other highly regarded institutions with the objective of skills at least comparable to minimum requirements for admission of international students in countries where that language is the native language. The benchmarking process should involve testing of at least a representative sample of students on major recognized language tests)
- 4.5.7 If preparatory programs in other languages or other areas of learning are outsourced to other providers the institution should still accept responsibility for ensuring the necessary standards are met and entry requirements to the program are maintained.
- 4.5.8 Systems should be established for monitoring and coordinating student workload across courses.
- 4.5.9 Progress of individual students should be monitored and assistance and/or counselling provided to those facing difficulties.
- 4.5.10 Year to year progression rates and program completion rates should be monitored, and analysed to identify and provide assistance to any categories of students who may be having difficulty.
- 4.5.10 Feedback on performance by students and results of assessments should be given promptly to students and accompanied by mechanisms for providing assistance if needed.
- 4.5.11 Adequate facilities should be provided for private study with access to computer terminals and other necessary equipment.
- 4.5.12 Teaching staff should be familiar with the range of support services available in the institution for students, and should refer them to appropriate sources of assistance when required.
- 4.5.13 The adequacy of arrangements for assistance to students should be periodically assessed through processes that include, but are not restricted to, feedback from students.

4.6 Quality of Teaching

Teaching must be of high quality with appropriate strategies used for different categories of learning outcomes.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.6.1 Effective orientation and training programs should be provided within the institution for new, short term and part time teaching staff. (To be effective these programs should ensure that teaching staff are fully briefed on required learning outcomes, on planned teaching and assessment strategies, and the contribution of their course to the program as a whole.)
- 4.6.2 Teaching strategies should be appropriate for the different types of learning outcomes the program is intended to develop.
- 4.6.3 Strategies of teaching and assessment set out in program and course specifications should be followed by teaching staff with flexibility to respond to the needs of different groups of students

- 4.6.4 Students should be fully informed about course requirements in advance through course descriptions that include knowledge and skills to be developed, work requirements and assessment processes.
- 4.6.5 The conduct of courses should be consistent with the outlines provided to students and with the course specifications.
- 4.6.6 Textbooks and reference material should be up to date and incorporate the latest developments in the field of study.
- 4.6.7 Textbooks and other required materials should be available in sufficient quantities before classes commence.
- 4.6.8 Attendance requirements in courses should be made clear to students and compliance with these requirements monitored and enforced.
- 4.6.9 Effective systems should be used for evaluation of courses and of teaching.
- 4.6.10 The effectiveness of different planned teaching strategies in achieving learning outcomes in different domains of learning should be regularly reviewed and adjustments should be made in response to evidence about their effectiveness.
- 4.6.11 Reports should be provided to program administrators on the delivery of each course and these should include details if any planned content could not be dealt with and any difficulties found in using planned strategies.
- 4.6.12 Appropriate adjustments should be made in plans for teaching if needed after consideration of course reports.

4.7 Support for Improvements in Quality of Teaching

Appropriate strategies must be used by the program administrators and teaching staff to support continuing improvement in quality of teaching.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.7.1 Training programs in teaching skills should be provided within the institution for both new and continuing teaching staff including those with part time teaching responsibilities.
- 4.7.2 Training programs in teaching should include effective use of new and emerging technology.
- 4.7.3 Opportunities should be provided for additional professional development of teaching staff, with special assistance given to any who are facing difficulties.
- 4.7.4 The extent to which teaching staff are involved in professional development to improve quality of teaching should be monitored.
- 4.7.5 Teaching staff should be encouraged to develop strategies for improvement of their own teaching and maintain a portfolio of evidence of evaluations and strategies for improvement.
- 4.7.6 Formal recognition should be given to outstanding teaching, and encouragement given for innovation and creativity.
- 4.7.7 Strategies for improving quality of teaching should include improving the quality of learning materials and the teaching strategies incorporated in them.

4.8 Qualifications and Experience of Teaching Staff

Teaching staff should have qualifications and experience necessary for teaching the courses they teach, and keep up to date with academic and/or professional developments in their field.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.8.1 Teaching staff should have appropriate qualifications and experience for the courses they teach. (For undergraduate and masters degree programs this would normally require academic

- qualifications in their specific teaching area at least one level above that of the program in which they teach.)
- 4.8.2 If part time teaching staff are appointed there should be an appropriate mix of full time and part time teaching staff. (As a general guideline at least 75 % of faculty should be employed on a full time basis.)
- 4.8.3 All teaching staff should be involved on a continuing basis in scholarly activities that ensure they remain up to date with the latest developments in their field and can involve their students in learning that incorporates those developments.
- 4.8.4 Full time staff teaching post-graduate courses should be active in scholarship and research in the fields of study they teach.
- 4.8.5 In professional programs teaching teams should include some experienced and highly skilled professionals in the field.

4.9 Field Experience Activities

In programs that include field experience activities, the field experience activities must be planned and administered as fully integrated components of the program, with learning outcomes specified, supervising staff considered as members of teaching teams, and appropriate evaluation and course improvement strategies carried out. (Field experience includes any work based activity such as internships, cooperative training, practicums, clinical placements or other activities in a work or clinical setting under the supervision of staff employed in that work or professional setting)

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.9.1 Intended learning outcomes from the field experience should be clearly specified and effective processes followed to ensure that those learning outcomes, and strategies to develop that learning, are understood by students and supervising staff in the field setting.
- 4.9.2 Supervising staff in field locations should be thoroughly briefed on their role and the relationship of the field experience to the program as a whole.
- 4.9.3 Teaching staff from the program should visit the field setting for observations and consultations with students and field supervisors often enough to provide proper oversight and support. (Normally at least twice during a field experience activity)
- 4.9.4 Students should be thoroughly prepared for participation in the field experience through briefings and descriptive material.
- 4.9.5 Arrangements should be made through follow up meetings or classes for students to reflect on and generalize from their experience, applying that experience to situations likely to be faced in later employment.
- 4.9.6 Field experience placements that are selected should have the capacity to develop the learning outcomes sought and their effectiveness in developing that learning should be evaluated.
- 4.9.7 If supervisors in the field setting and teaching staff from the institution are both involved in student assessments, criteria for assessment should be clearly specified and explained, and procedures established for reconciling differing opinions.
- 4.9.8 Provision should be made for evaluations of the field experience activity by students, by supervising staff in the field setting, and by teaching staff of the institution, and the results of those evaluations should be considered in subsequent planning.
- 4.9.9 Preparations for the field experience should include a thorough risk assessment for all parties involved, and plans should be made for responsible staff to minimize and deal with those risks.

4.10 Partnership Arrangements With Other Institutions

In situations in which local institutions deliver programs through cooperative arrangements with another institution these arrangements must be clearly specified, enforceable under Saudi Arabian law, and all requirements for programs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must be fully complied with.

Educational programs or courses offered by international organizations including on line or other distance education programs or courses, must not be used unless they have been accredited or otherwise quality assured and approved by the relevant government authorized educational quality assurance agency in the country of origin. Any such programs must adapted as needed to suit the needs of students in this country, and must meet all Saudi Arabian requirements regardless of where and by whom materials are developed.

In situations where institutions deliver programs using materials developed by another institution, the institution granting the academic award must accept full responsibility for the quality of all aspects of the program including the materials used and the teaching and other services provided.

An institution based in another country and delivering programs in Saudi Arabia through a Saudi Arabian agent or local institution, and for which it grants an academic award, must meet all Saudi Arabian requirements for standards of educational provision and for cross border provision of education into the country.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 4.10.1 The respective responsibilities of the local institution and the partner should be clearly defined in formal agreements enforceable under the laws of Saudi Arabia.
- 4.10.2 The effectiveness of the partnership arrangements should be regularly reviewed.
- 4.10.3 Briefings and consultations on course and program requirements should be adequate, and effective mechanisms should be available for ongoing consultation on emerging issues.
- 4.10.4 Teaching staff from the partner institution who are familiar with the content of courses offered under the partnership arrangement should visit the local institution regularly for consultation about course details and standards of student assessments.
- 4.10.5 If arrangements involve assessment of student work by the partner institution in addition to assessments within the local institution, procedures should be established that ensure that final assessments are completed promptly and results made available to students within the time specified for reporting of student results under Saudi Arabian regulations.
- 4.10.6 If the program is based on that of the partner institution, courses, assignments and examinations should be adapted to the local environment, unfamiliar colloquial expressions should be avoided, and use made of examples and illustrations relevant to the local setting where the programs is offered. This may require amended and/or supplementary materials, and special tutorial assistance to apply learning to the local environment.
- 4.10.7 The program and courses should be consistent with the requirements of the Qualifications Framework for Saudi Arabia, and in professional programs, include regulations and conventions relevant to the Saudi Arabian environment.
- 4.10.8 If courses or a programs developed by a partner institution are delivered in Saudi Arabia adequate processes should be followed to ensure that standards of student achievement are at least equal to those achieved elsewhere by the partner institution as well as by other appropriate institutions selected for benchmarking purposes.
- 4.10.9 If an international institution or other organization is invited to provide programs, or to assist in the development of programs for use in Saudi Arabia full information should be provided in advance about relevant Ministry regulations and NCAAA requirements for the National Qualifications Framework and requirements for program and course specifications and reports.

Special Note

Programs offered with the same title in different parts of an institution, for example in male and female sections, on a central and a branch campus, by daytime, evening or parallel classes, or by face to face or distance education, delivery will normally be considered as the same program and must be considered together in the self study and external review. The Commission MAY consider treating them as separate programs in exceptional circumstances but this will require special approval in advance, and normally a difference in the title of the award to make it clear that they are intended to be different programs.

If programs are offered in different parts of the institution the self-study will have to show clearly any differences between the sections concerned and strategies to respond to any differences in quality found.

Requirements for distance education programs have been recommended by the National Center for ELearning and Distance Education and approved by the Higher Council of Education. The NCAAA has also specified requirements for the accreditation of programs offered by distance education.

Under the Higher Education Council requirements students can no longer be admitted to .distance education programs that do not meet these requirements, and older style distance education programs that do not meet the new requirements must be phased out before September 2015.

If a program is offered by distance education it must meet both the Higher Council regulations and the standards for higher education programs offered by distance education.

A program offered by distance education must have been formally approved for delivery in that mode by the institutions senior academic committee after considering it in relation to the required standards,. This must be done whether the program is considered as the same program as one delivered face to face, or as a different program.

If a program is offered by distance education as well as by face to face instruction the distance education arrangements must meet both the requirements of the Ministry of Higher Education and the distance education standards of the NCAAA, and the on campus arrangements must meet the general requirements for higher education programs. However a period of transition is allowed to give a reasonable amount of time for processes used for those programs to be modified.

The following arrangements will apply:

To be eligible for consideration for accreditation the NCAAA's self evaluation scales for distance education programs must have been completed for the distance education program(s) and a strategic plan prepared for transition to meet both the Higher Council regulations and the NCAAA distance education programs before September 2015.

If a program is offered by both distance education and face to face instruction the self evaluation scales must have been completed and the strategic plan must deal with the distance education delivery. Note that programs leading to a degree with the same title will be considered as the same program regardless of whether they are managed by the same or a different organizational unit within the institution.

If other eligibility requirements are met the institution may be considered for accreditation before September 2015. However the certificate of accreditation will indicate that the accreditation does not apply to the distance education programs.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of learning and teaching may be obtained from ratings by students, graduates and employers of the quality of programs, statistics on course and program completions and employment outcomes, ratios of students to teaching staff, and statistics on teaching staff qualifications. Important sources of evidence might include independent expert advice on the appropriateness of teaching strategies and assessments for the different domains of learning in the *National Qualifications Framework*. Evidence should be available about the results of benchmarking of standards of learning outcomes in relation to appropriate external reference points. This could be done in several different ways including check marking of samples of students' work and independent assessments of the standards of test questions and students' responses.

The selection of performance indicators for quality of learning and teaching requires use of data in a form that can be quantified and used in comparisons across the institution, with other institutions, and with past performance.

Standard 5: Student Administration and Support Services

Admission processes must be efficient, fair, and responsive to the needs of students entering the program. Clear information about program requirements and criteria for admission and program completion must be readily available for prospective students and when required at later stages during the program. Mechanisms for student appeals and dispute resolution must be clearly described, made known, and fairly administered. Academic counselling and career advice related to the fields of study dealt with in the program must be available.

Sub-Standards

5.1 Student Admissions

Student admission processes must be reliable, efficient and simple for students to use.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 5.1.1 Admission requirements should be consistently and fairly applied for all students.
- 5.1.2 For programs or courses that include components offered by distance education, or use of e-learning in blended programs information should be provided before enrolment about any special skills or resources needed to study in these modes. (For distance education programs a separate set of standards that include requirements for that mode of program delivery are set out in a different document, *Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs Offered by Distance Education*)
- 5.1.3 Student advisors familiar with details of course requirements should be available to provide assistance prior to and during the student registration process.
- 5.1.4 Rules governing admission with credit for previous studies should be clearly specified.
- 5.1.5 Decisions on credit for previous studies should be made known to students by authorized staff before classes commence.
- 5.1.6 Complete information about the program, including the range of courses, program requirements, costs, services and other relevant information should be publicly available to potential students and families prior to applications for admission.
- 5.1.7 A comprehensive orientation program should be provided for commencing students to ensure thorough understanding of the range of services and facilities available to them, and of their obligations and responsibilities.

5.2 Student Records

Student records must be maintained in a secure and confidential location. Statistical data needed quality indicators and internal and external reporting requirements and generation of reports on student progress and achievements must be readily available through automated processes that protect the confidentiality of individual student information.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 5.2.1 Automated procedures should be in place for monitoring student progress throughout their programs
- 5.2.2 The student record system should regularly provide statistical data required for planning, reporting and quality assurance.
- 5.2.3 Clear rules should be established and maintained governing privacy of information and controlling access to individual student records.
- 5.2.4 Eligibility for graduation should be formally verified in relation to program and course requirements.

5.3 Student Management

Policies and regulations must be established for fair and consistent processes of student management, with effective safeguards for independent consideration of disputes and appeals.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 5.3.1 Student appeal and grievance procedures should be specified in regulations, published, and made widely known within the institution. The regulations should make clear the grounds on which academic appeals may be based, the criteria for decisions, and the remedies available.
- 5.3.5 Appeal and grievance procedures should protect against time wasting on trivial issues, but still provide adequate opportunity for matters of concern to students to be fairly dealt with and supported by student counselling provisions.
- 5.3.5 Appeal and grievance procedures should guarantee impartial consideration by persons or committees independent of the parties involved in the issue, or who made a decision or imposed a penalty that is being appealed against.
- 5.3.5 Procedures should be established to ensure that students are protected against subsequent punitive action or discrimination following consideration of a grievance or appeal.
- 5.3.5 Appropriate policies and procedures should be in place to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

5.4 Student Advising and Counselling Services

Adequate provision must be made for academic advising and counselling services to assist students in planning their participation in the program and in seeking subsequent employment.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 5.4.1 Provision should be made for academic counselling and for career planning and employment advice within the college, department or another appropriate location within the institution.
- 5.4.2 Adequate protection should be provided, and supported by regulations or a code of conduct, to protect the confidentiality of academic or personal issues discussed with teaching or other staff or students.
- 5.4.3 Effective mechanisms should be established for follow up to ensure student welfare and to evaluate quality of service.
- 5.4.4 An effective student support system should be available to identify students in difficulty and provide help with personal, study related, financial, family, psychological or health problems.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of student administration and support services can be obtained from surveys of students about the quality and responsiveness of services provided, usage rates for particular services, response times for communicating decisions on admissions and results and the frequency and results of discipline procedures. Performance indicators can be based directly on this information, but additional evidence in a review might include such things as visits to facilities and discussions with students and staff.

Standard 6: Learning Resources

Learning resource materials and associated services must be adequate for the requirements of the program and the courses offered within it and accessible when required for students in the program. Information about requirements must be made available by teaching staff in sufficient time for necessary provisions to be made for resources required, and staff and students must be involved in evaluations of what is provided. Specific requirements for reference material and on-line data sources, and for computer terminals and assistance in using this equipment will vary according to the nature of the program and the approach to teaching.

Sub-Standards

6.1 Planning and Evaluation

Policies and procedures must be in place to ensure that resource materials and services needed to support student learning are adequate and appropriate for the program, regularly evaluated, and kept up to date as required.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 6.1.1 Teaching staff responsible for the program and for courses within it should regularly provide advice on materials required to support teaching and learning.
- 6.1.2 Teaching staff and students should participate in user surveys dealing with adequacy of resources and services, extent of usage, and consistency with requirements for teaching and learning.
- 6.1.3 Data on the extent of usage of learning resources for the program should be used in evaluations of learning and teaching in the program.
- 6.1.4 In addition to participation in surveys program administrators and teaching staff should have opportunities to provide input to evaluations of forward planning for provision of resources and services.
- 6.1.5 Teaching staff should provide regular advice on material that should be held in reserve in the library to ensure access to necessary materials and this advice should be responded to appropriately.

6.2 Organization

The library or resource center must be managed in a way that meets the requirements of the program for student access and availability of resources and services.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 6.2.1 Library and resource centers and associated facilities and services should be available for sufficient extended hours to ensure access when required by users in the program .
- 6.2.2 Heavy-demand and required reading materials required for the program should be held in reserve collections.
- 6.2.3 Provision should be made for reliable and efficient access to on-line data-bases and research and journal material relevant to the program.

6.3 Support for Users

Adequate support must be provided to assist students and teaching staff to make effective use of library services and resources.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 6.3.1 Orientation and training programs should be provided for new students and other users to prepare them to access facilities and services.
- 6.3.2 Assistance should be available to help users in conducting searches and locating and using information.
- 6.3.3 A reference service should be provided through which in-depth questions can be answered by qualified librarians.
- 6.3.4 Electronic and/or other automated systems with search facilities should be available to assist in locating resources within the institution and in other collections.
- 6.3.5 Teaching staff and students in the program should be kept informed about library developments such as acquisition of new materials, training programs, or changes in services or opening hours.

6.4 Resources and Facilities

Adequate reference material for the program must be available and facilities in the library or resource center must be appropriate for the needs of the program,

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 6.4.1 Adequate books, journals and other reference material including on-line resources should be available to meet program requirements.
- 6.4.2 Up to date computer equipment and software should be available on a sufficient scale to meet program requirements to support electronic access to resources and reference material.
- 6.4.3 Books and journals and other materials should be available in Arabic and English (or other languages) as required for the program and associated research.
- 6.4.4 Sufficient facilities should be provided for both individual and small group study and research as required for the program.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of learning resource provision and performance indicators derived from this evidence can be obtained from user satisfaction surveys, success rates for students in accessing course reference material, documents describing processes for identifying and responding to course requirements, and details of times when facilities are available for use by students and teaching staff. Information should be available about provision of orientation programs for new students and other users, and responsiveness to requests from groups of stakeholders. The institution and/or the program should be able to provide information about comparisons of level of provision through books, periodicals and web-based resources with comparable institutions offering similar programs and an appropriate performance indicator would be whether that level of provision was equalled or exceeded.

Standard 7: Facilities and Equipment

Adequate facilities and equipment must be available for the teaching and learning requirements of the program. Use of facilities and equipment should be monitored and regular assessments of adequacy made through consultations with teaching and other staff and students.

Sub-Standards

7.1 Policy and Planning

Planning processes for the provision of facilities and the acquisition and maintenance of equipment should include consultation with program representatives to ensure clear specification of program requirements. Plans for provision should appropriately balance program requirements with institutional policies to ensure compatibility of systems and resources available.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 7.1.1 Equipment acquisitions should meet program requirements and also be consistent with institutional policies to achieve compatibility of equipment and software systems across the institution.
- 7.1.2 Teaching staff should be consulted before major equipment acquisitions to ensure that current and anticipated emerging needs are met.
- 7.1.3 Equipment planning should provide for acquisition, servicing and replacement according to a planned schedule.

7.2 Quality and Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment

Facilities and equipment must be of good quality with effective strategies used to evaluate their adequacy for the program, their quality and the services associated with them.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 7.2.1 Facilities should meet health and safety requirements.
- 7.2.2 Quality assessment processes should include both feedback from principal users about the adequacy and quality of facilities, and mechanisms for considering and responding to their views.
- 7.2.3 Standards of provision of teaching, laboratory and research facilities should be adequate for the program and should be benchmarked through comparisons with other comparable institutions. (This includes such things as classroom space, laboratory facilities and equipment, access to computing facilities and associated software, private study facilities, and research equipment.)
- 7.2.4 Adequate facilities should be provided for confidential consultations between teaching staff and students.
- 7.2.5 Appropriate provision should be made for students and teaching and other staff with physical disabilities or other special needs.

7.3 Management and Administration of Facilities and Equipment

Management and administration of facilities, equipment and associated services must be efficient and ensure maximum effective utilization of facilities provided.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 7.3.1 A complete inventory should be maintained of equipment used in the program that is owned or controlled by the institution including equipment assigned to individual staff for teaching and research.
- 7.3.2 Services such as cleaning, waste disposal, minor maintenance, safety, and environmental management should be efficiently and effectively carried out.
- 7.3.3 Regular condition assessments should be carried out and provision made for preventative and corrective maintenance and replacement when required.
- 7.3.4 Effective security should be provided for specialized facilities and equipment for teaching and research, with responsibility between individual members of staff, departments or colleges, or central administration clearly defined.
- 7.3.5 Effective systems should be provided to ensure the personal security of teaching and other staff and students, with appropriate provisions for the security of their personal property.
- 7.3.6 Arrangements should be made for shared use of underutilized facilities with adequate mechanisms for security of equipment.

7.4 Information Technology

Computing equipment and software and related support services must be adequate for the program and managed in ways that ensure secure, efficient and effective utilization.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 7.4.1 Adequate computer equipment should be available and accessible for teaching staff and students in the program.
- 7.4.2 Institutional policies governing the use of personal computers by students should be complied with.
- 7.4.3 Technical support should be available for teaching and other staff and students using information and communications technology.
- 7.4.4 Opportunities should be available for teaching staff input into plans for acquisition and replacement of IT equipment for use in the program.
- 7.4.5 Security systems should be in place to protect privacy of personal and institutional information, and to protect against externally introduced viruses.
- 7.4.6 Compliance with a code of conduct relating to inappropriate use of material on the internet should be checked and instances of inappropriate behaviour appropriately dealt with.
- 7.4.7 Training programs should be available for teaching and other staff to ensure effective use of computing equipment and appropriate software for teaching, student assessment, and administration.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about the quality of provision of facilities and equipment can be obtained from planning documents, user satisfaction surveys, comparisons of provision with comparable institutions offering similar programs and direct observations by independent evaluators.

Condition assessments and maintenance schedules provide information about the quality and maintenance of facilities and major equipment. Regulations and codes of practice relating to the use of facilities and expensive equipment provide evidence of sound management practices and security arrangements. Performance indicators could include such things as ratings on surveys of user satisfaction, statistics on equipment breakdowns, comparisons of provision in relation to other institutions.

Standard 8: Financial Planning and Management

Financial resources must be sufficient for the effective delivery of the program. Program requirements must be made known sufficiently far in advance to be considered in institutional budgeting. Budgetary processes should allow for long term planning over at least a three year period. Sufficient flexibility must be provided for effective management and responses to unexpected events and this flexibility must be combined with appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms.

Sub-Standards

8.1 Financial Planning and Budgeting

Funding must be adequate for program requirements and planning must involve full cost estimates and both short and medium term cost projections. Sufficient flexibility must be provided for effective management and responses to unexpected events and this flexibility must be combined with appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 8.1.1 Proposals for new programs, major program changes or other activities with financial implications, equipment or facilities should be accompanied by business plans that include independently verified cost estimates and cost impacts on other services and activities.
- 8.1.2 If new programs, projects or activities are cross-subsidized from existing funding sources the cost sharing strategy should be made explicit and intermediate and long term costs and benefits assessed.
- 8.1.3 The amount of financial resources available for the program should be sufficient for good quality program provision and benchmarked against costs of equivalent programs at other similar institutions.
- 8.1.4 The program coordinator (or department chair or dean) should submit annual budget proposals setting out detailed program requirements and follow up as necessary to make adjustments after those proposals have been considered and financial resources allocated.
- 8.1.5 Budget proposals should support strategic priorities for program developments and improvements in quality, and consider possibilities for savings or alternative revenue sources as well as seeking additional funding if necessary.

8.2 Financial Management

Financial affairs must be effectively managed with a proper balance between flexibility for the cost center manager and institutional accountability and responsibility.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 8.2.1 Sufficient delegations of spending authority should be given to the program manager/head of department for effective program administration.
- 8.2.2 Any delegations should be clearly specified, and accompanied by appropriate accountability and reporting processes.
- 8.2.3 The program manager/head of department should be involved in the budget planning process, and be held accountable for expenditure within the approved budgets.
- 8.2.4 The accounting system should provide for accurate monitoring of expenditure and commitments against budgets with regular reports prepared throughout the year for the program/department.

- 8.2.5 Where possibilities of conflict of interest exist or may be perceived to exist the persons concerned should declare their interest and refrain from participation in decisions.
- 8.2.6 Allowable financial carry-forward provisions should be sufficiently flexible to avoid rushed end of year expenditure or disincentives for long term planning.

Evidence

Evidence about the quality of financial planning and management can be obtained from budget statements and audit reports. Surveys of teaching staff can provide information about whether resources considered by them to be necessary for all programs are available. Comparisons of funding provisions with similar programs elsewhere can provide useful evidence of adequacy of provision provided care is taken to take account of any differences in the management of financial systems. Reports on risk assessment should be available together with strategies for risk minimization.

Standard 9: Employment Processes

Teaching and other staff must have the knowledge and experience needed for their particular teaching or other responsibilities and their qualifications and experience must be verified before appointment. New teaching staff must be thoroughly briefed about the program and their teaching responsibilities before they begin. Performance of all teaching and other staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for professional development and improvement in teaching skills. (Note: Teaching staff refers to all staff with responsibility for teaching classes including full and part time staff, faculty, lecturers, and teaching assistants)

Sub-Standards

9.1 Recruitment

Recruitment processes must be designed to ensure that capable and appropriately qualified teaching and other staff are available for all teaching and administrative functions, administered fairly, and that new staff are thoroughly prepared for their responsibilities.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 9.1.1 Recruitment processes should ensure that teaching staff have the specific areas of expertise, and the personal qualities, experience and skill to meet the teaching requirements in the program. (See also Section 4.8 dealing with qualifications and experience of teaching staff.)
- 9.1.2 Candidates for employment should be provided with full position descriptions and conditions of employment, together with general information about the institution and its mission and programs, and full details about the particular program for which they are being considered. (The information provided should include details of employment expectations, indicators of performance, and processes of performance evaluation.)
- 9.1.3 References should be checked, and claims of experience and qualifications verified before appointments are made.
- 9.1.4 The legitimacy of qualifications claimed by applicants should be checked through processes that consider the standing and reputation of the institutions from which they were obtained, taking account of recognition of qualifications by the Ministry of Higher Education.
- 9.1.5 In professional programs there should be sufficient teaching staff with successful experience in the relevant profession to provide practical advice and guidance to students about work place requirements.
- 9.1.6 All new staff should be given an effective orientation to the institution to ensure familiarity with the institution and its operating procedures, services and priorities for development.
- 9.1.7 New teaching staff should be given a thorough orientation to the program to ensure they have a thorough understanding of the program as a whole, of the contributions to be made to it through the courses they teach, and of the expectations for coordinated planning and delivery of courses and evaluation and reporting requirements.
- 9.1.8 The level of provision of teaching staff (i.e. the ratio of students per teaching staff member calculated as full time equivalents) should be adequate for the program and benchmarked against comparable student/teaching staff ratios at good quality Saudi Arabian and international institutions.

9.2 Personal and Career Development

Processes for personal and professional development must be fair to all teaching and other staff, designed to encourage and support improvements in performance and recognize outstanding achievements.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 9.2.1 Criteria and processes for performance evaluation should be clearly specified and made known in advance to teaching and other staff.
- 9.2.2 Consultations about work performance should be confidential and supportive, and occur on a formal basis at least once each year.
- 9.2.3 If performance is considered less than satisfactory clear requirements should be established for improvement.
- 9.2.4 Performance assessments of teaching and other staff should be kept confidential but should be documented and retained. Staff should have the opportunity to include on file their own comments relating to these assessments, including points of disagreement.
- 9.2.5 Outstanding academic or administrative performance should be recognized and rewarded.
- 9.2.6 All teaching and other staff should be given appropriate and fair opportunities for personal and career development.
- 9.2.7 Junior teaching and other staff with leadership potential should be identified and given a range of experiences to prepare them for future career development.
- 9.2.8 Assistance should be given in arranging professional development activities to improve skills and upgrade qualifications.
- 9.2.9 Appropriate professional development activities should be provided to assist with new programs or policy initiatives.
- 9.2.10 Teaching staff should be expected to participate in activities that ensure they keep up to date with developments in their field and the extent to which they do so should be monitored.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about quality of employment processes can be obtained from documents setting out employment and promotion processes and criteria, descriptions of orientation programs for new teaching and other staff, and procedures for performance evaluation and support for improvement. Records of assessments of quality of teaching, and teaching and other staff participation in professional development activities relevant to their employment can provide valuable evidence, particularly when they include ratios of participation and assessments of the value of those activities by the participants. Data on faculty turnover in parts of the institution can be used to indicate stability or instability in staffing. Regulations dealing with dispute resolution combined with records of the incidence and outcomes of disputes can provide evidence of the effectiveness of those processes.

Performance indicators almost always include student/teaching staff ratios and proportions of teaching staff with levels of qualifications. However a number of others that can also be readily quantified are important such as participation ratios in professional development and scholarly activities. Some others such as rates of turnover of teaching and other staff might be selected if there are problems in the institution that need to be monitored.

Standard 10: Research

A research strategy that is consistent with the nature and mission of the institution should be developed. All staff teaching higher education programs must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain up to date with developments in their field, and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Staff teaching in postgraduate programs or supervising higher degree research students must be actively involved in research in their field. Adequate facilities and equipment must be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and postgraduate students to meet these requirements in areas relevant to the program. Staff research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluation and promotion criteria.

Sub-Standards

10.1 Teaching Staff and Student Involvement in Research

Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities must be made clear and provide for widespread participation. Encouragement and support must be provided to encourage research activity by junior teaching staff and postgraduate students.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 10.1.1 Expectations for teaching staff involvement in research and scholarly activities should be clearly specified and performance in relation to these expectations considered in performance evaluation and promotion criteria. (For universities criteria should require at least some research and/or appropriate scholarly activity of all full time teaching staff.)
- 10.1.2 Clear policies should be established in the institution for defining what is recognized as research, consistent with international standards and established norms in the field of study of the program. (This normally includes both self-generated and commissioned activity but requires creative original work, independently validated by peers, and published in media recognized internationally in the field of study.)
- 10.1.3 Support should be provided for junior teaching staff in the development of their research programs through mechanisms such as mentoring by senior colleagues, inclusion in project teams, assistance in developing research proposals, and seed funding.
- 10.1.4 Opportunities should be provided for postgraduate research students to participate in joint research projects.
- 10.1.5 Participation by research students in joint research projects should be appropriately and fully acknowledged. When a significant contribution has been made reports and publications should indicate joint authorship.
- 10.1.6 Assistance should be given for teaching staff to develop collaborative research arrangements with colleagues in other institutions and in the international community.
- 10.1.7 Teaching staff should be encouraged to include in their teaching information about their research and scholarly activities that are relevant to courses they teach, together with other significant research developments in the field.
- 10.1.8 Strategies should be developed for identifying and capitalizing on the expertise of teaching staff and postgraduate students in providing research and development services to the community and generating financial returns to the institution.

10.2 Research Facilities and Equipment

Adequate facilities and equipment appropriate for research in the program field of study must be available for use by teaching staff and post graduate students. Clear policies must be established for ownership and care for specialized facilities and equipment obtained through research grants or cooperation with industry.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 10.2.1 Adequate laboratory space and equipment, library and information systems and resources should be available to support the research activities of teaching staff and students in the field in which the program is offered.
- 10.2.2 Security systems should be established to ensure safety for researchers and their activities, and for others in the institutional community and the surrounding region.
- 10.2.3 Policies should make clear the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of equipment obtained through teaching staff research grant applications, commissioned research or other cooperative ventures with industry or the outside community.
- 10.2.4 Adequate budget and facilities for the conduct of research at a level consistent with institutional, program and departmental policies should be provided.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evaluations of the quality of research should include a review of the research strategy for the department or the college, and other supporting documents including details of the extent and quality of research output by staff associated with the program. Evidence about involvement in research can be obtained from staff and from departmental research reports and staff evaluation and promotion criteria. Further evidence can be obtained by consideration of agreements for cooperative research and for shared use of major equipment items. Staff and student surveys can provide evidence about the adequacy of provisions for research facilities and equipment.

Performance indicators for research are commonly based on statistics on the volume of research publications per faculty member, the proportions of research-active teaching staff (a term that needs to be defined) and numbers of research citations—These figures should be compared with those at other comparable institutions and departments. In institutions with a commitment to research comparisons may include the extent to which research and scholarly activities are translated into applications within the academic or professional field concerned.

Standard 11: Relationships with the Community

Significant and appropriate contributions must be made to the community in which the institution is established drawing on the knowledge and experience of staff and the needs of the community for that expertise. Community contributions should include both activities initiated and carried out by individuals and more formal programs of assistance arranged by the institution or by program administrators. Activities should be documented and made known in the institution and the community and staff contributions appropriately recognized within the institution.

For the purposes of this standard contributions to the community should include services and activities to assist individuals, organizations or communities outside the institution (i.e. they would not include such things as financial assistance or extra curricular activities for enrolled students or the provision of academic programs leading to qualifications, but could include participation in research or development projects, and community education programs provided either with or without charge.)

Sub-Standards

11.1 Policies on Community Relationships

Commitment to service to the community by the department or program must be clearly specified, clear in its nature and scope, consistent with the community service policies of the institution and appropriate for the particular skills and knowledge of staff teaching in the program. The service commitment should be supported by policies to encourage involvement and regular reports prepared on activities that take place.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 11.1.1 The service commitment of the program should be defined in a way that reflects the community or communities within which the institution operates, and the skills and abilities of staff teaching in the program.
- 11.1.2 Contributions to the community by staff teaching in the program should be reported on annually.
- 11.1.3 Community contributions should be included in promotion criteria and staff assessments.
- 11.1.4 Departmental or program initiatives in working with the community should be coordinated with responsible units in the institution to avoid duplication and possible confusion.

11.2 Interactions With the Community

Relationships should be established with the community to provide needed services and draw on community expertise to support the program.

The level of compliance with this standard is judged by the extent to which the following good practices are followed.

- 11.2.1 Staff should be encouraged to participate in forums in which significant community issues are discussed.
- 11.2.2 In professional programs relationships should be established with local industries and employers to assist program delivery. (For example, placement of students for work-study programs, part time employment opportunities, and identification of issues for analysis in student project activities.)
- 11.2.3 Local employers and members of professions should be invited to join appropriate advisory committees considering programs and other institutional activities.

- 11.2.4 Continuing contact should be maintained with schools in the region, offering assistance and support in areas of specialization, providing information about programs and activities and subsequent career opportunities, and arranging enrichment activities for the schools.
- 11.2.5 Regular contact should be maintained with alumni, keeping them informed about program developments, inviting their participation in activities, and encouraging their financial and other support for new initiatives.
- 11.2.6 Advantage should be taken of opportunities to seek funding support from individuals and organizations in the community for research and other developments.
- 11.2.7 Records should be maintained of community services undertaken by individuals and centers or other organizations within the department and provided regularly for recording in a central data base within the institution.

Evidence and Performance Indicators

Evidence about quality of community relationships can be obtained from documents describing policies on service to the community, criteria for staff evaluation and promotion that include community contributions, and guidelines and processes for community media releases and other public comments on behalf of the institution. Reports on community relationships that include such matters as community use of institutional facilities, participation of staff on community committees or development projects and interactions with schools and other agencies can provide relevant information. The extent of community service activity, including formal courses and other services provided by the department or individuals within it should be documented and reported so records can be retained in a central data system. Community views about the quality of the institution and its standing as a respected member of the community can be obtained from surveys.

A number of these forms of evidence include ratings that can be used directly as performance indicators. However in this area in particular the mission of the institution and the community within which it operates is important in deciding what aspects of performance should be closely monitored.