



CUST Quality Assurance Policy

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1. Preamble

Establishment of quality assurance system in higher education is a global concern. There is a growing demand for Quality Assurance (QA) mechanisms at national, regional and global levels. Over the years, it is observed that there is an increase in the number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and increased involvement of external stakeholders through changes in governance structures. The HEIs around the world have been introduced to quality assurance system internally with formal institutional approach and documentation. This has been done with the establishment of quality assurance agencies like accreditation bodies at the national level. Policy guidelines by these agencies help align the HEIs' quality policy with national and international standards and best practices.

1.1 QEC Vision

To be recognized as the leading educational institution, instilling and pursuing the highest quality assurance practices, as recognized nationally and internationally. *

1.2 QEC Mission

Incorporating Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in teaching, student learning, and administrative support mechanism.

1.3 QEC Aims

QEC aims to pursue the following:

- a) Teacher Empowerment
- b) Student Centricity in Overall Education System
- c) Programmatic Improvements
- d) Faculty Development & Capacity Building
- e) Student Counseling and Feedback
- f) PEOs Definition by Involving Stakeholders

1.4 QEC Strategy

Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) at Capital University of Science & Technology (CUST) uses various strategies to achieve its aims. Few strategies implemented at CUST are mentioned below:

- Faculty Course Review
- Student Course Feedback
- PLOs Assessment

Reports (CRR)

- Student Exit Survey
- Employers' Feedback
- CLOs Assessment
- Quality Assurance Committee
- Alumni Survey
- CQI Cycle
- Faculty Exit Survey
- Faculty Satisfaction Survey
- New Program Approvals *

1.5 QEC Values

We, at CUST give prime importance to our values, and believe that these values play an important role in achievement of our goals. Our values include:

- a) Teacher efficacy
- b) Facilitation in student learning
- c) Professional and caring administration
- d) Transparency in operations
- e) Individual, departmental, and organizational accountability

1.6 Functions of QEC

Recognizing the role that it has to play in higher education sector, CUST has established a Quality Enhancement Cell. This cell has the responsibility to ensure that the university's quality assurance procedures are compatible with international standards and are designed to improve the quality of higher education. Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) at Capital University of Science & Technology is taking deliberate steps to bring about continual improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students. In (QEC), there is greater emphasis on internal quality assurance and the encouragement of an institutional **"Quality Culture"**. CUST has always been in the forefront for accepting and adapting best practices in the field of Education.

At CUST, we believe that quality enhancement and assurance is a collective responsibility. It is the professionalism and creativity of staff, individually, that makes the most vital contribution to the enhancement of provision. This is made possible through their attention to their students' experience as learners, to the development of their disciplines, and their engagement with their teaching practice. Functions of QEC at CUST include:

- a) To review the quality of teaching and learning in each subject area as per the recognized quality standards.

- b) To promote public confidence that the quality and standards of the award of degree are enhanced and safeguarded.
- c) To foster curriculum, subject and staff development.
- d) To develop qualification framework by setting out the attributes and abilities that can be expected from the students.
- e) To develop quality assurance processes and methods of evaluation to affirm that the quality of provision and the standards of awards are being maintained.
- f) To develop procedures for approval of new programs, monitoring and evaluation, departmental review, student feedback, employer feedback, quality assurance of various degree programs, subject review and qualification framework.

1.7 Functions of Quality Assurance Committee

Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) consists of members from all the departments of university. These members are involved in all QEC activities and they are the focal persons/representatives of their departments. Due to their active involvement in QEC activities, they bridge department with the QEC. QAC meetings are regularly conducted to discuss various quality assurance activities in the university.

2. Self Assessment

Assessment is a systematic process of gathering, reviewing and using important quantitative and qualitative data and information from multiple and diverse sources about educational programs, for the purpose of improving student learning, and evaluating whether academic and learning standards are being met. Self Assessment is a significant tool for maintaining academic quality and then enhancing it. It also provides feedback for the decision makers to initiate action plans for improvement.

2.1 Self Assessment Process at CUST

SAR manual by Higher Education Commission (HEC) will be used as a guiding document for the preparation of Self Assessment Reports (SARs) of all academic programs at CUST. Each academic program shall undergo a self-assessment (SA) every two years (assessment cycle). Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) is responsible for planning, coordinating and following up on the self-assessment (SA)activities. The steps of the procedure for SA at CUST are as follows:

- a) The QEC initiates the SA one semester prior to the end of the assessment cycle through the Vice Chancellor Office. However, if the program is undergoing the SA for the first time, the department will be given one academic year for preparation.
- b) Upon receiving the initiation letter the department shall form a Program Team (PT). The PT will be responsible for preparing a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) about the program under consideration over a period of one semester. They will be the contact group during the assessment period.
- c) The department shall submit the SAR to the QEC through the concerned Dean. The QEC reviews the SAR within one month to ensure that it is prepared according to the required format.
- d) The Vice Chancellor forms a program Assessment Team (AT) in consultation with the QEC recommendations within one month. The AT comprises of 2- 3 faculty members from within or outside the university. The AT must have at least one expert in the area of the assessed program.
- e) The QEC plans and schedules the AT visit in coordination with the department that is offering the program.
- f) The AT conducts the assessment, submits a report and presents its findings in an exit meeting that shall be attended by the QEC, Dean and PT.
- g) The QEC shall submit an executive summary on the AT findings to the Vice Chancellor.
- h) The Department shall prepare and submit an implementation plan to QEC based on the AT findings. The plan must include AT findings and the corrective actions to be taken, assignment of responsibility and a time frame for such actions.
- i) The QEC shall follow up on the implementation plan to ensure departments are adhering to the implementation plan. The academic department shall inform the QEC when a corrective action is implemented. QEC shall review the implementation plan once a semester to assess the progress of implementation.

2.2 Program Team

Program Team (PT) is a team of two to three faculty members, nominated by Head of Department (HoD) that is responsible for preparation of SAR of their concerned department. HoD can nominate two or three faculty members (Lecturer or above) from the department to be members of PT.

2.3 Key Responsibilities of Program Team

Responsibilities of Program Team include:

- a) Preparation of SAR as per the guidelines given in HEC SAR manual.
- b) Collecting and compiling of relevant data to respond to all the criteria and standards in SAR.
- c) Facilitating the Assessment Team during their visit.
- d) Incorporating all the changes and recommendations suggested by Assessment Team, received through Executive Summary from QEC.

2.4 Assessment Team

Assessment Team (AT) is a group of professionals from within or outside the university, nominated by the Vice Chancellor in consultation with QEC, to review the SAR prepared by Program Team. It is preferable to include at least one member who is expert in the field/ subject of which the SAR is reviewed.

2.5 Key Responsibilities of Assessment Team

Responsibilities of Assessment Team are mentioned below:

- a) Review SAR as per HEC SAR manual.
- b) Verify the relevance of all the responses in SAR.
- c) Validate the data provided in SAR.
- d) Visit the department, meet students, teachers and staff, if required.
- e) Compile and integrate the findings of all team members.
- f) Carry out rubric evaluation of SAR.
- g) Write down Assessment Team report.

3. Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE)

Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE) is a process to be conducted every year by HEIs to evaluate compliance against eleven standards:

- Mission Statement and Goals
- Planning and Evaluation
- Organization and Governance
- Integrity
- Faculty

- Students
- Institutional Resources
- Academic Programs and Curricula
- Public Disclosure and Transparency
- Assessment and Quality Assurance and
- Student Support Services

Once in a three year, HEC team visits university to conduct IPE, for next two years university is allowed to conduct self-evaluation with at least one external member.

3.1 Institutional Performance Evaluation at CUST

Institutional Performance Evaluation (IPE) at Capital University of Science and Technology is conducted annually, in order to check the compliance of the university to eleven IPE standards. For IPE, University Portfolio Report (UPR) is prepared by QEC. Evidences against each standard and sub-criterion in the form of meeting minutes of various bodies, real-time data and record from the university portal, reports of different events, and financial reports will be prepared by QEC with the support of Registrar Office.

Once in a three years period, IPE is conducted by HEC. During HEC visit, Dean QEC assisted by Assistant Director QEC will be the focal person from CUST.

In case of Institutional Performance Self Evaluation, Vice Chancellor will nominate the team with at least one member from outside the university.

During IPE, QEC will facilitate the meetings of IPE team with relevant university officers to address their queries.

4. Liaison with International Quality Assurance Organizations

QEC will liaison with various quality assurance networks and agencies on behalf of CUST. QEC will propose higher management for membership acquisition with any national or international QA network or agency, when required. Membership fee will be catered for by QEC annual budget. All the payments for new membership or annual fee for the prevailing memberships will be made by the university Treasurer, after formal approval from CUST management.

Currently, CUST has memberships with International Network of Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (INQAAHE) and Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN).

5. Plagiarism Policy

The university follows HEC plagiarism policy and dissertation/thesis, project reports and other technical reports shall be cleared for evaluation if its similarity index is less than 20% in total and less than 5% from a single source. Similarity from the student's own published work carried out during the PhD studies shall be excluded.

In case of any ambiguity in plagiarism assessment, the following committee shall evaluate the case and shall submit its recommendations to the BASR for decision:

- a) Concerned Dean
- b) Concerned HoD
- c) Students' Supervisor
- d) Director Graduate Studies

5.1 University Plagiarism Standing Committee

The following Plagiarism Standing Committee is constituted to conduct the investigation of plagiarism claim as per HEC Plagiarism Policy: -

Dr. M. Abdul Qadir	Professor/Dean FoC, CUST	Convener
Dr. Arshad Hassan	Associate Professor/Dean FMSS, CUST	Member
Dr. Amir Qayyum	Professor/Dean QEC, CUST	Member
Dr. Rohama Gill	Assistant Professor/Director QEC, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi	HEC Nominee
Mr. Khalid Mahmood	Assistant Professor/Director Graduate Studies, CUST	Member/ Secretary

As per clause-10 of HEC Plagiarism policy, the "Plagiarism Standing Committee" will submit its report with clear cut findings and recommendations to the Vice Chancellor within a specified period not exceeding sixty days. The Vice Chancellor will have the discretion to implement the recommendations after approval through the statutory process and take punitive action against the offender as per penalties prescribed under HEC plagiarism policy or to forward the report to HEC for further action if outside his purview / jurisdiction.

6. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

To ensure Continual Quality Improvement (CQI) and to improve the standard of faculty, services and academic programs, multiple inputs (feedback) will be taken from students, faculty and administrative staff periodically. Similarly, feedback from alumni, employers and other stakeholders are obtained for the improvement of ongoing programs. The detail of Feedback is as follows:

- a) Midterm and Final Course Feedback
- b) Exit Survey
- c) Alumni Survey
- d) Employer Survey
- e) Faculty Course Review Report
- f) Research Student Feedback Form
- g) Faculty Satisfaction Survey
- h) Survey of Department Offering Ph.D. Programs

Analysis of feedback from various stakeholders is required for improvement of the respective programs and for making part of SARs. Office of Corporate Linkages collects data for Alumni and Employer Feedback Surveys through various social media websites, sending emails and arranging Alumni Get Together, etc.