Capital University of Science & Technology

CUST QUALITY FRAMEWORK

(2025)

Contents

1 CUST- Governance Structure

Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) being an academic and research provision, prepares students to become responsible and well-equipped global citizens, who could contribute in the development of the society/community. Capital University of Science & Technology (CUST) Islamabad, a federally Chartered University established through the promulgation of a federal Act No. XVI passed by the Parliament of Pakistan in 2015. Capital University of Science &Technology, contextually started functioning in 1998 as the Islamabad Campus of Mohammad Ali Jinnah University (MAJU) Karachi. Academic excellence, research & innovation state of the art infrastructure and qualified faculty, community engagement and commitment to quality collectively contributed in transforming CUST into a well reputed, renowned national institution.

CUST is committed to achieve these values through implementing certain interventions and strategies. Faculty and students are being encouraged to take part in research and innovation activities. The required financial resources in the form of grants are provided to Faculty and students for conducting different innovative research projects. The industry collaboration and partnership for specific research areas has been given due importance. Faculty and students are motivated to publish their research work in the high impact international research journals. Policies regarding inclusiveness and diversity are observed. Special and disabled students being provided support by institution student affair. University Firmly observe institutional code of ethics as envisioned through its vision and expects ethical attitude and behavior from students, faculty and staff in all professional endeavors. CUST Volunteers In -service office provides opportunities to the students for completing 65 hours of compulsory community volunteer service enabling them to become socially responsible citizen. Institutional Internal quality assurance processes are well established and help to improve the quality of academic programs on regular basis. The OBE approach has been practiced as a tool to assess PLOs and CLOs attainment level of each course, managed by portal reports and analysis.

University has a very inclusive governance structure. Board of Governors being highest body manages overall administrative, academic and financial matters and approves policies related to institutional structure of the university. The board has power to supervise and approve institutional strategic, administrative, academic, financial, appointments & promotions and quality & relevance plans and policies. The Executive Committee being executive body of the university supervised all academic and managerial affairs of the university as per act and statues. The Academic Council is the apex academic body of the university with a power entrusted as per act to devise strategies/ standards associated with

research, education and assessment activities of university. Beside these CUST have many other bodies/committees operating under different domains supporting smooth functions of university administrative and managerial affairs.

CUST dedicatedly accomplishes its academic and research standards, compatible with international best practices. The main pride of CUST apart from quality education and excellent infrastructure is highly motivated, committed and professional faculty. Students at CUST are being exposed to conducive learning environment which helps to groom students' personality and interpersonal skills, enabling them to become responsible citizen. A wide range of academic programs being offered under six faculties' including, Engineering, Management & Social Sciences, Health & Life Sciences, Computing and Associate Degrees. A total of 28 undergraduate (4 ADP, BS-18) and 24 Post Graduate (15 MS/MPhil and 9 PhD) Graduate programs being offered under thirteen departments in various fields of study. A good number of graduate academic programs in engineering, computing and management sciences are being offered in the evening to facilitate relevant working professionals. CUST is striving hard towards the promotion of higher education by providing best academic and research facilities to its students and faculty, enabling them to professionally contribute and excel in accordance with job and industrial requirements. The university has huge infrastructure with highly sophisticated and well-equipped laboratories and IT structure.

Capital University of Science and Technology, as a leading private sector university in Pakistan, is highly conscious of the quality of education and the training it imparts to the students. Capital University of Science and Technology has three focal points in its planning which are: -

- Range of quality academic programs
- Training and human resource development
- University's endeavors in research

Each point is outlined below:

The first focal point is the *range of quality academic programs*. It has the following faculties offering degrees at undergraduate and graduate levels, to prepare *students* for Industry:

- Faculty of Engineering
- Faculty of Computing
- Faculty of Management and Social Sciences
- Faculty of Health and Life Sciences
- Faculty of Pharmacy

- Faculty of Law
- Faculty of Associate Program

The Faculty of Engineering offers BS, MS and PhD programs in Electrical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Cyber Security, Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics and Civil Engineering. Faculty of Computing offers programs in Computer Science, Software Engineering, AI and Mathematics. Faculty of Management and Social Sciences offers Management Sciences, Psychology, English and Accounting and Finance while Faculty of Health and Life Sciences offers Biosciences, Microbiology and Biotechnology programs. Faculty of Pharmacy offers BS and MS in Pharmacy. Faculty of Law offers BS in Law, Faculty of Associate Program offers Associate Degree in Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Commerce and Computing. The programs are tailored not for the popular market but for the real need of our country's economy and manpower development.

The second focal point of Capital University of Science and Technology is ***training and human resource development***. In addition to pure academic programs, the University runs training programs, seminars and workshops for its ***student population*** to make them well-informed and beneficial for the industry, public sector and community at large. The Capital University of Science and Technology believes in contributing to the development of professional manpower of the country. The focus is not only on the professional skills but also on personality building and inculcating ethical values among its graduates.

The third focal point is the ***university's endeavors in research***. The Capital University of Science and Technology is deeply conscious of the fact that research and development are the main tools that the countries use to transform their developing economies into developed ones, through the future population i.e., ***students*** at present. The Capital University of Science and Technology has matured Masters and PhD programs in Computer Sciences, Engineering, Management Sciences and Life Sciences. The Capital University of Science and Technology is investing heavily in facilities, technology and faculty development to promote research in meaningful and purposeful areas. For further details refer relevant policy sections.

All the programs being offered at CUST are recognized by the Higher Education Commission (**HEC**) and relevant Councils (e.g., Pakistan Engineering Council, Counting Council, Pharma Council etc.).

The Capital University of Science and Technology has a well-defined management structure which is influential in not only future planning and institutional growth but also in day to day running and Quality Management System of the university. Please refer to **Figure 1**, for the details of management and Organogram of Capital University of Science and Technology Islamabad.
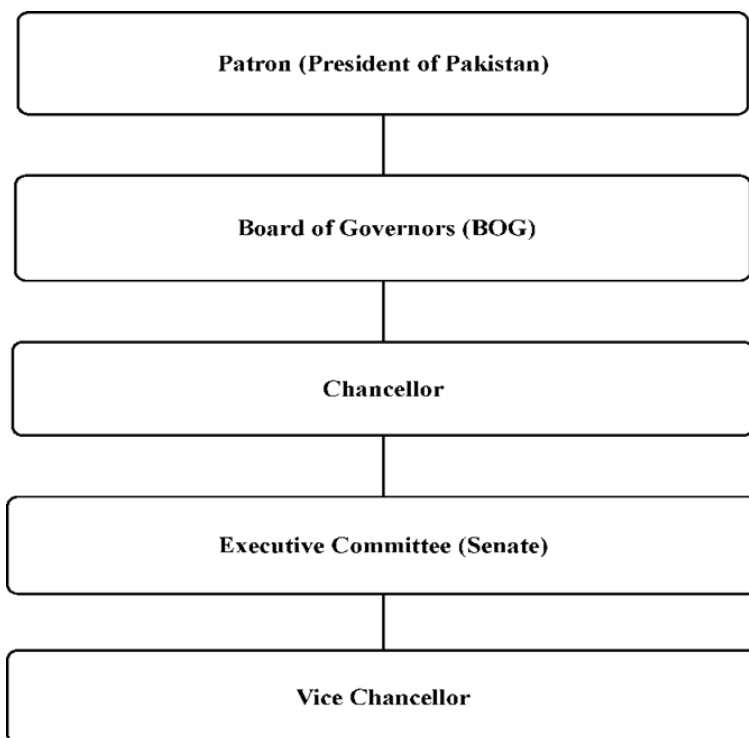

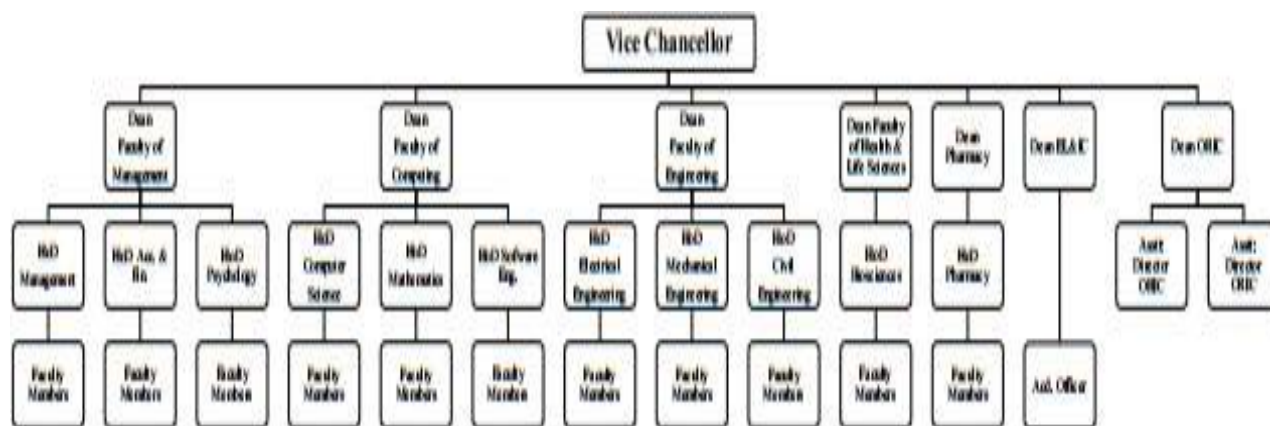**Figure 1:** CUST Management (high level) – Part-A

Figure 2: CUST Management (Daily Operational level) – Part-B

An integrated Quality Management System (QMS) is in place at Capital University of Science and Technology which ensures the quality of education and maintains the academic standards. Besides the regular departments of examination, registration, and student affairs, the following university bodies play active part in overall QMS at different levels; *all these bodies work for the benefit of student to provide them a well-structured educational system to meet the present and future needs of their profession and society.*

Statutory Bodies & Boards:

University Level:

- Board of Governors (BoG)
- Academic Council
- Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)
- Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC)
- External Linkages and International Collaborations (ELIC)
- Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR)
- Selection / Promotion Board
- Discipline Committee
- Admission Committee

Faculty Level:

- Board of Faculty (BoF)
- Industrial Advisory Board (IAB)

Department Level:

- Departmental Faculty Meeting
- Board of Studies (BoS)
- Curriculum Review Committee (CRC)
- Industrial Outreach Committee (IOC)
- Department Program Team (DPT)
- Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Details (setup, role, responsibilities, actions, record keeping etc.) of each QMS entity are explained as per the Act of the university.

University offices:

Brief role of each office is given:

Vice Chancellor: The Vice Chancellor (VC) is the overall incharge and custodian of the entire university on behalf of the Chancellor and the Patron. VC runs daily affairs of the university as per the charter and guidelines of the governing bodies / councils for the benefit of the students' professional studies and growth.

Deans of the Faculties: Dean assists the VC in academic matters of the respective faculty. In each faculty, there are number of departments and their programs which are taken care by the Dean.

Heads of Departments (HoD): An HoD is incharge of the department and its programs. He is in direct contact with the departmental faculty and the students to address their academic and administrative needs. He submits principal matters to the Dean of his faculty or to the VC, as the case may be.

Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC): It is an important set up of the university that carries out, evaluates and improves quality policy and its procedures in collaboration with the university departments and with due contacts with HEC. The cell has a notified team that runs its affairs.

Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC): This office looks after research, innovation and commercialization of study projects / research work in terms of quality research, patents, copyrights, guidelines, industry demands etc. It also collects and disburses data / information related to collaborations and funding opportunities etc. The office has designated team that runs its daily matters.

Students Affairs: This office deals with the students' matters including but not limited to their transport matters, ID cards, student functions, discipline issues etc. which are related to execute academics, safety and security of the student population.

Graduate Studies: This office deals with the graduate students enrolled for MS or PhD. It keeps an eye on students' progress and issues intimations whenever needed to safeguard their study program. It also carries out various processes necessary for completion of graduate degree programs of students.

Admissions: This office is assigned duties to advertise admissions, guide students and their family for admission procedures, undertake admission tests, issue offer letters, collect & analyze documents and forward data of admitted students to registration office for student enrollment.

Registration and Attendance: This office registers a student in a program referred by the Admissions. This office prepares timetable in consultation with the departments and is responsible to assign auditoriums, help to conduct class attendance and ensure compliance to attendance policy. This office

deals with all academic / registration affairs of students. It also prepares the "Calendar of Activities". It keeps complete file record of every student.

Examinations: This office holds mid-term and final-term exams of all programs being offered in the university as per the "Calendar of Activities". It prepares date sheets and distributes among the students through university portal. It also resolves issues and matters related to examination conduct in a transparent way. The office maintains all record of examination. It also completes data and its analysis required to notify degree completion, transcript and the Convocation.

Treasurer and Finance: This office deals with the financial matters such as fee challans, remuneration to faculty & staff, tax matters and budget preparation for approval by the competent authority.

VIS (Volunteer in Service): VIS helps student to do VIS activities – a pre-requisite for the degree award as per HEC guidelines. This office shortlists number of Govt. and Non-Govt. organizations which perform social activities and signs MoUs with them to place CUST students safely and professionally for VIS works. At the end of VIS work, this office evaluates VIS of each student and submits result to the Examination for "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" VIS activity which appears on student's transcript.

Directorate of Environment and Sustainability (DSE): DSE performs activities related to SDGs which are the seventeen sustainable development goals defined by the UN. Through these activities, the student population becomes aware and responsible to undertake effective sustainable activities in their profession and in the society. DSE does work mostly in collaboration with all departments of the university. It also makes annual submissions to the UI GM ranking of the university.

Managers Administration, Security & HR: These offices do the administrative tasks of the university as per their assigned duties.

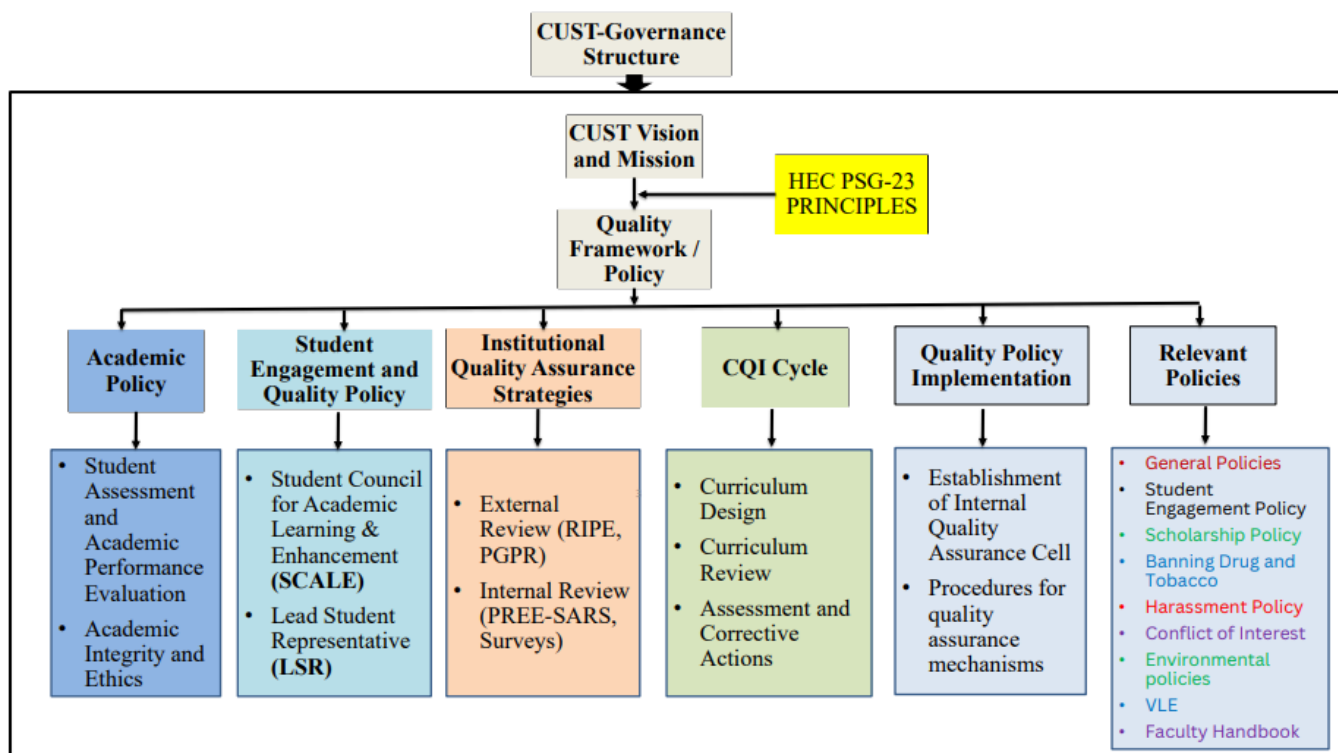Complete details of each Office are available separately as per the Act of the university.

Figure 3: CUST Quality Framework

2 Quality Policy

2.1 Introduction

Higher education is essential for the socio-economic growth of developing countries and the quality of education has a direct impact on the strength and value of the degrees and qualifications which are flourished at the higher education institutes. Therefore, quality assurance and accreditation have become an essential part of higher education quality management all over the world. To ensure sustainable high-quality education, it is essential to develop an internal quality culture in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).

The successful development of a quality culture requires commitment and active collaboration of all the stakeholders. As *quality culture* is commonly misunderstood as a system of internal quality monitoring, it is pertinent to note that the development of quality culture requires structural, procedural, and behavioral changes at the institute level. A well-documented institutional quality policy plays a vital role in communicating the commitment of all the stakeholders to foster a quality culture at an institute.

CUST quality policy document is prepared in accordance with the HEC, Precepts, Standards and guidelines-2023, emphasizing on excellence in higher education, fostering a culture of quality, transparency & accountability and continuous quality improvement. Assuming everyone's active participation and responsibility for quality, HEIs are supposed to develop 'quality culture' at all levels within institution with the purpose to improve level of academic quality being offered through implementation of best quality practices. As per PSG-2023, establishment of IQAE and IQC forums, headed by the university Vice Chancellor is considered to be the focal point for planning and implementation of all quality assurance policies and practices as per HEC guidelines. Being innovative internal quality intervention, these forums are considered to facilitate the development and effective delivery of internal and external quality practices within HEIs.

2.2 Quality Policy Concept

The idea to devise an overall institutional quality policy is, to de-centralize the idea of quality and communicate an overall *quality is everyone's responsibility* moto to all the stakeholders of the university. This document outlines what, how, and why of the requirements, expectations, and quality assurance practices that are regularly undertaken and operationalized at CUST.

Quality Policy applies to **all stakeholders** including students, and academic and non-academic staff

employed at or contracted to CUST. This includes members of Executive and Senior Management, Administrative, Technical, and Support staff, Senior Administrative and Professional staff, and Academic staff.

CUST wants to incorporate the quality principles stated in "Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (PSG-23) at the core and, therefore, the six principles outlined in PSG-23 (explained below) have been integrated with the quality assurance practices as important dimensions.

As its commitment to continuous quality improvement, inclusive and ethical educational leadership, and innovative and critical learning independence, the CUST quality policy document states clear goals and practices that allow the university to achieve the standards and objectives highlighted in the mission and vision of CUST. All the principles complement and enhance the regularly conducted Quality Assurance practices and steer the activities to stretch further to excel at all levels.

Another important idea/ concept to be noted here is that the Policy applies equally to the University's academic operations (design and all modes of delivery of taught programs and courses, research and innovation) and non-academic operations (design and delivery of administrative, financial, technical, professional and support services) as well as to its formal and public engagement. This way all the stakeholders shall endorse the document and be aware of its terms and references.

CUST quality policy takes into account the Vision and Mission of the University and aligns all procedures and activities accordingly.

2.2.1 CUST Quality Policy Statement

CUST shall strive to achieve excellence in continuous quality improvement by creating a quality culture and enhancing the ownership and shared responsibility of quality education to all stakeholders by ensuring effective and efficient quality assurance mechanisms. The university shall make efforts to develop ethically sound professionals by integrating the core values of inclusion, scholarship, innovation, and leadership.

2.3 Purpose

To promote Quality Culture, CUST as an HEI, must ensure continuous institutional improvement through its rules and regulations and activities related to faculty teaching, student learning,

educational program, and administrative and educational support services, to provide students with a high-quality learning experience and attain nationally/internationally comparable qualifications and awards.

2.4 Aims and Objectives

Quality Assurance practices in education play a pivotal role in ensuring the consistent delivery of high- quality education and fostering continuous improvement in academics. CUST is committed to elevating the standard of education by implementing a comprehensive strategy across all the faculties. Therefore, the main aim of the quality policy is to serve as the ultimate quality assurance guide to pave the way for all the stakeholders in implementing and fostering the quality culture in the university through CQI. It provides and sets out imprints of all the quality processes whether internal or external to achieve the following objectives:

- To provide guidance in understanding, developing, implementing, and reviewing internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices.
- To ensure that the quality of academic programs of all faculties at CUST meets standards laid out by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and all the relevant councils.
- To ensure the development and transformation of students into excellent intellectuals and skilled professionals.
- To provide a foundation to all the stakeholders in practicing and implementing quality assurance practices through enhanced support processes.
- To facilitate the development of a culture of continuous quality improvement to achieve inclusive, innovative, and ethically sound academic excellence.

2.5 Adoptation of HEC PSG-23 QA Principles

CUST is committed to ensure continuous quality improvement through pursuit of highest standards in teaching, research and services. Quality principles envisioned to promote student's needs, learning experiences and success through regular assessment and enhancement of QA process. By focusing on the following quality guidelines, CUST ensures its obligation towards accomplishing quality culture, academic excellence, continuous improvement, accountability, collaboration and partnership, integrity and ethics, staff development, resources and infrastructure. Provision and graduates' achievement:

1. Practicing High Quality innovative teaching pedagogy.
2. Continuous Improvement through regular assessment and enhancement of academic programs.

3. Maintenance of highest standards of academic honesty and ethics.

4. Accountability and Transparency in decision making.

5. Encouraging original research, knowledge creation and innovation.

6. Building partnership and collaboration with industry, community and academia.

7. Preparing graduates for successful careers progression and employability.

8. Developing faculty/support staff professionally.

9. Providing suitable resources and infrastructure.

In view of the above inevitably reflecting Quality guiding pillars, CUST develop its QA policy framework in accordance with the following laid down HEC-PSG 2023 6 Quality principles to be practiced for evaluation and improvement of teaching, research and governance: -

Quality is everyone's responsibility

Quality of learning opportunity for students and other stakeholders

Quality and contribution to society

Quality and good governance

Quality and Accountability

Quality and change
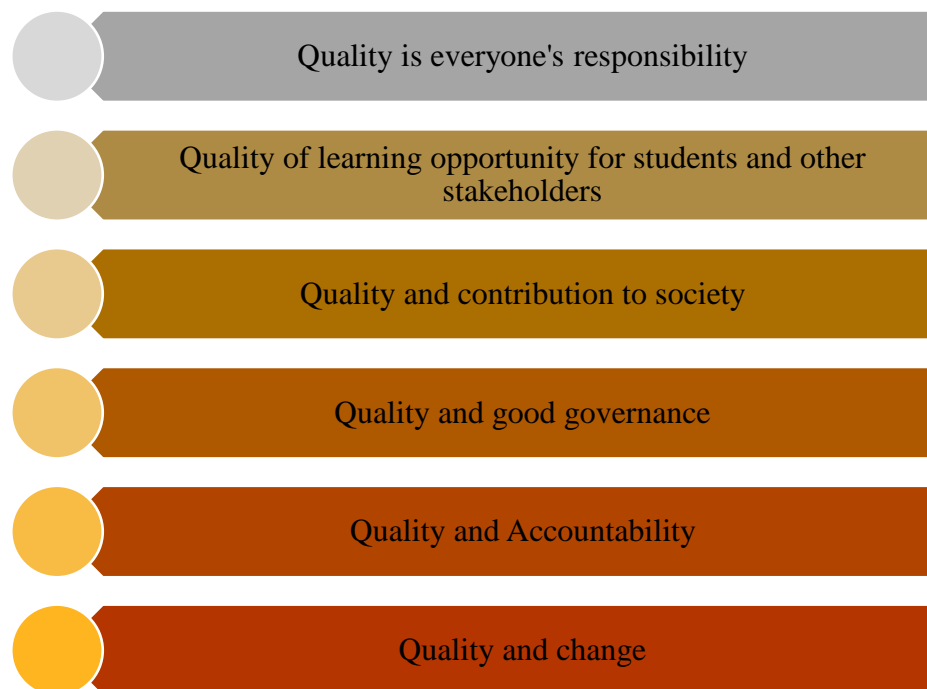
Figure 4: PSG-23 Quality Principles

The six principles are elaborated as follows:

2.5.1 Principle 01: Quality is everyone's responsibility

All statutory and non-statutory bodies / positions are involved in ensuring Quality assurance in all procedures, practices, and decisions of the institute. That essentially includes statuary positions such as the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Controller, Deans, HODs, faculty members, staff, students, and the Statutory Forums, that is, Syndicate/BOG, Academic Council, BoF, BoS, BASR, and so on. Also, QEC, ORIC, and other non-statutory positions of the university. Student / student body(s) shall also be made

part of only forums where they have a role to play. Incorporation of "Quality is everyone's responsibility" at CUST, as an HEI, shall encourage all the stakeholders to develop a 'quality culture' as a central institutional focus at all levels. It has to be an integral part of academic practices and should promote the development of an enabling learning environment for students. It assumes that everyone has a responsibility for quality.

2.5.2 Principle 02: Quality of learning opportunity for students and other stakeholders

All the students, faculty, and staff must be provided with a high-quality opportunity for academic learning (including remedial learning), personality development, and character building.

The university shall ensure that it recruits, retains, and develops a body of faculty that could serve the institutional purpose of providing quality learning opportunities for the students and ensure that learning and teaching practices are informed by reflection, evaluation of professional practice, and subject-specific and educational scholarship. The management shall safeguard and maintain physical, virtual, and social learning environments that are safe, accessible, and reliable for all stakeholders.

The university shall be committed to expanding and strengthening academic initiatives as one of the six (6) strategic pillars, shown below. Moreover, the strategic plan provides a clear road map and required actions to achieve the outcomes prescribed in the objectives of strategic pillars. Enhancing graduate employability is one of them. University leadership pays serious attention to these concerns as they determine the sustainability of the institutes and their graduates.

2.5.3 Principle 03: Quality and contribution to society

The quality of the higher education provision is judged by how well it contributes to the socio-economic development of the surrounding areas, region, and national and international development.

University aims to achieve such a standard of educational experience that can enable the students to learn independently and enhance the capacity to develop analytical and critical thinking skills which can contribute to the socio-economic development of the state especially benefitting the marginalized areas of the society. The university's curriculum and projects are designed to achieve such outcomes with the help of specified learning objectives. Expanding civic engagement is also one of the pillars on which the strategic plan of CUST stands. The university has a special focus to make students responsible persons who are capable to know and resolve societal matters professionally and as a citizen. The course projects,

problem-based learning, compulsory VIS (Volunteer in Service) activities, seminars, workshops, professional talks etc. along with Sustainability drives/activities are meant to achieve this principle.

The university also envisions achieving this outcome by strengthening the industrial linkages with inclusive initiatives which can help in balancing and connecting the remote and marginalized areas with development industries and organizations.

CUST has full commitment to make sure its stakeholders especially the student body commit to the socio-economic development of the society and engage in civic roles at different levels.

2.5.4 Principle 04: Quality and good governance

Quality and good governance go hand in hand. University governance systems shall be inclusive and comply with all the elements that are critical in facilitating the fulfillment of its mission and goals and shall strengthen institutional effectiveness and integrity. The university shall adhere to the statutes mentioned in the Charter/ Act, with strong institutional mechanisms by all the statutory authorities.

Complete compliance with the Charter/Act, and the essential elements of governance must be ensured at all levels; that is participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus-oriented, equity and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, and accountability.

2.5.5 Principle 05: Quality and accountability

Having a Charter from the Parliament/Public Institutions, it is the responsibility of the university to sustain a strong commitment to accountability, transparency, and public disclosure; engendering public confidence and sustaining public trust. That includes evidence of strong commitment to the requirement of accreditation councils and government regulations and other national/international quality assurance & accreditation entities, including QAA/HEC Pakistan. CUST is committed to continuous quality improvement in its pursuit of excellence which can be achieved through transparency and accountability at all the levels of the institution. As regularly practiced, the university shall make efforts to acquire accreditations from national and international councils and accreditation bodies to enhance public trust and deliver the quality standards outlined in its vision and mission statement. The university's vision to become a globalized university also contributes to achieving these outcomes as international recognition requires meticulous documentation and disclosure of QA practices along with sound evidence which enhances and expands the accountability of the HEI.

2.5.6 Principle 06: Quality and change

Quality higher education needs to be inclusive, flexible, creative, and innovative; developing and evolving to meet students' needs, to justify the confidence of society, and to maintain diversity. The university motivates and encourages the faculty members and the student body towards advanced research and innovation to meet the national and international standards of quality education. CUST is committed to strengthening and providing an environment that fosters inclusion, creativity, and innovation. The mission statement of CUST draws the attention of all the stakeholders to this principle and puts the responsibility on every stakeholder to take ownership in implementing and achieving standards in this domain. CUST has defined a standard mechanism of data collection, review/analysis and corrective actions to ensure or revise its processes in all endeavors including but not limited to program development, curriculum development, semester overview for course & its delivery with a focus to inculcate required skills in the students' community to prepare them for national and international professional practices and societal benefit.

2.6 Academic Policy

2.6.1 Curriculum Development and Review Process

The curriculum development and review process at CUST follows a structured and comprehensive approach aligned with national and international academic standards. The university ensures that its academic programs remain relevant, rigorous, and industry-focused.

Board of Studies (BOS)	BoS within each department is responsible for designing, reviewing, and updating course content.
Board of Faculty (BOF)	The BoF provides oversight and recommendations before final approval by the Academic Council
Stakeholder Involvement	Curriculum revisions incorporate input from faculty, industry experts, alumni, and students to align with market trends and research advancements.
Periodic Reviews	Academic programs undergo periodic internal and external reviews to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and quality benchmarks.
Integration of Outcome Based Education (OBE)	Course learning outcomes (CLOs), program learning outcomes (PLOs), and program educational objectives (PEOs) are defined, assessed, and continuously improved.
Innovation and Emerging Disciplines	The curriculum integrates advancements in science, technology, and professional practices to meet evolving industry needs.

Figure 5: Curriculum development and review processes

2.6.2 Student Assessment and Academic Performance Evaluation

CUST follows a robust assessment and evaluation framework to ensure the academic performance of students is measured effectively and fairly. The assessment system includes multiple evaluation tools to support a holistic learning environment.

Continuous Assessment	Quizzes, assignments, class participation, projects, and presentations to evaluate students' engagement and understanding.
Mid Term and Final Exams	Summative assessments that evaluate students' overall comprehension of course material.
Grading System	The university follows a standardized relevant grading policy where students' performance is mapped against predefined learning outcomes..
Plagiarism and Integrity Check	Plagiarism detection software and strict policies against academic dishonesty.
Feedback Mechanisms	Students receive timely feedback on assessments, and faculty members use this feedback to refine instructional strategies.
Graduate Attributes Assessment and External Accreditation	Students are assessed beyond academics on soft skills, ethics, and critical thinking, while programs undergo periodic accreditation to meet national and international standards.

Figure 6: Student's assessment and evaluation tools used to assess learning.

2.6.3 Academic Integrity and Ethics

Academic integrity and ethics are fundamental to CUST's educational philosophy. The university upholds strict ethical standards to foster a culture of honesty, transparency, and professionalism among students, faculty, and staff.

Table 1: Description of ethical standards in academics at CUST.

Ethical Standards	Description
Code of Conduct	Strict academic integrity policy against plagiarism, cheating, and data falsification.
Plagiarism Detection	Turnitin and similar tools ensure originality in assignments and research.
Ethical Research Practices	Adherence to responsible data collection, citation, and conflict-of-interest policies.

Disciplinary Committee	Reviews academic misconduct cases and enforces appropriate penalties.
Training & Awareness	Regular workshops on academic ethics, research integrity, and professional conduct.
Whistleblower Protection	Ensures confidentiality and security for reporting academic dishonesty.
Fairness & Transparency	Impartial evaluations and disciplinary actions for equal opportunities.
Conflict of Interest	Mandatory disclosure of potential conflicts in academic and research activities.
Ethical leadership	Promotes integrity, accountability, and responsible decision-making.

By adhering to these principles, CUST ensures that academic policies reflect its commitment to excellence, continuous improvement, and ethical responsibility in higher education.

2.7 Student Engagement in Quality Assurance

Students play a critical role in ensuring the quality of education at CUST through their active engagement in various academic and institutional processes. They participate in institutional self-assessments and accreditation procedures, contributing valuable insights that help maintain and enhance educational standards. Additionally, they play a key role in program development and curriculum reviews, ensuring that courses remain relevant and effective. Their feedback, gathered through structured surveys, focus groups, and open forums, provides essential input for continuous improvement. Furthermore, students assist in implementing action plans following reviews, helping to translate recommendations into meaningful changes that enhance the overall learning experience. The main components of student engagement are as follows.

2.7.1 Student Council for Academic Learning & Enhancement (SCALE)

SCALE is an elected student body responsible for representing students in academic and institutional matters. Its key roles include:

- Providing feedback on academic programs.

- Participating in decision-making processes.
- Collaborating with faculty and administration on quality enhancement initiatives.

2.7.2 Lead Student Representative (LSR)

The **LSR**, elected by the student body, acts as the primary link between students and university leadership. The LSR is responsible for:

- Coordinating student feedback and submissions.
- Facilitating student participation in governance and review processes.
- Representing student concerns at institutional meetings.

Feedback mechanisms	Policy Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation	Student's role in external Review	Support and Resources
• Student surveys • Evaluations • Open Forums • Direct communication	• Ensures students engagement activites and align with policy framework	• QEC annual review evaluates student engagaement initiatives.	• RIPE Process • Engaging students in discussions with external review panels.	• Training and Orientation programs • Professional development opportunities through VIS, entrapreneur ship, and professional development trainings.

Figure 7: Elements of Student engagement in improving the institutional QA mechanism.

2.8 Institutional Quality Assurance Strategies

CUST pursued well devised strategic processes safeguarding academic standards and quality of students learning. The well-defined institutional quality policy gave detailed guidelines, ensuring accomplishment of high standards related to quality of academic programs and mainly focuses on the improvement of students learning experiences. The policy document clearly elaborates the significant compelling intrusions for protecting CUST academic programs reputation among students, employers and accreditation agencies. The academic programs being offered at CUST ensures that students are receiving

quality education, fully equipped with requisite skills set and knowledge required as per job requirements. The academic standards and high level of student learning experienced, enhanced student satisfaction and success lead to improve retention rates and employability. Maintenance of academic standards at program level, demonstrates institutional commitment towards regulatory compliances, safeguard the accreditation requirements and recognition. CUST follow rigorous continuous quality improvement mechanism/ feedback system, implemented through different well structure quality tools available through web portal and manually. These internal and external quality tools devised as per HEC directions are being used to acquire feedback of stakeholders, assess institutional effectiveness and identification of areas where further improvement required.

QEC in collaboration with university departments conducts regular internal periodic program reviews and assessment through different quality tools for obtaining students, faculty, alumni and employer's feedback. The prominent quality tools and processes are being used are Periodic Surveys like Course & Teacher, Faculty Satisfaction, Exit, Alumni and employer, Self-Assessment Reports (SARs, PREE), Institutional Performance Effectiveness (Internal RIPE) and Post Graduate Program Review (Level 7&8 Programs PGPR). These tools help to identifies different areas where remedial actions need to be taken through a detailed implementation plan, addressing discrepancies and contributes towards further improvement.

This section focuses on the current QA Practices that are regularly followed and implemented at CUST as a mandate entrusted to HEIs via HEC QAA. The Quality Assurance processes, contribute towards the professional growth of faculty, related to teaching-learning and research competencies/ skills. These processes include external and internal reviews which are administered by the university regularly. The QA guidelines/ standards were introduced to enable the HEIs to offer a conducive learning environment, to their students. It also facilitates students learning by equipping them with the requisite skills as per job market requirements. The QA processes, designed by HEC, lead towards the improvement of the teaching-learning and research environment of the institution. These interventions help institutions of higher learning to become world-class universities by producing quality graduates, suitable for the job market both at the national and international level. There are two types of review strategies, as explained below:
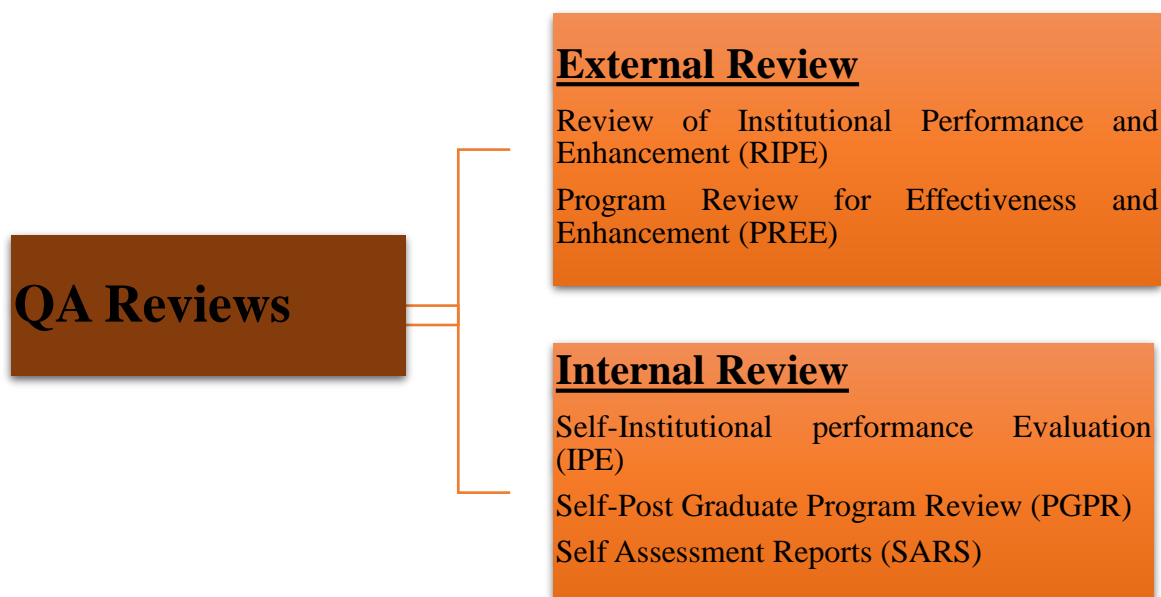
Figure 8: QA review strategies

2.8.1 External Review

- CUST conducts external review after three (03) years. The review is carried out by the HEC team.

- Documentation, which is prepared continuously in routine and presented for external review, is based on ensuring compliance with sixteen (16) Performance Evaluation Standards for the HEIs defined by HEC. Now according to the new PSG- 23 QA Framework, these standards have been further improved. For external quality assurance, institutions are expected to conduct a Review of Institutional Performance and Enhancement (RIPE) and a Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE) against the 16 RIPE and 8 PREE Standards as required in the Quality Assurance Framework.

- RIPE is divided into three tiers namely; Strategic development, Academic Development, and Institutional development. The institutional assessment evaluates the institution's performance in the last academic year against the RIPE Standards as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework.

- The institutional self-assessment should take account of program assessment and, if appropriate, departmental assessment.

- Similarly, PREE revolves around the program reviews, and the university conducts PREE and prepares the program assessment report which is to be submitted to the Higher Education Commission.

- The relevant councils and governing bodies also do their review which are considered for improvement of the program(s).

2.8.1.1   Review of Institutional Performance and Evaluation- RIPE

The RIPE process is a structured annual review designed to assess the institutional academic performance of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC), in coordination with the Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE) Office, oversees and executes the process systematically.
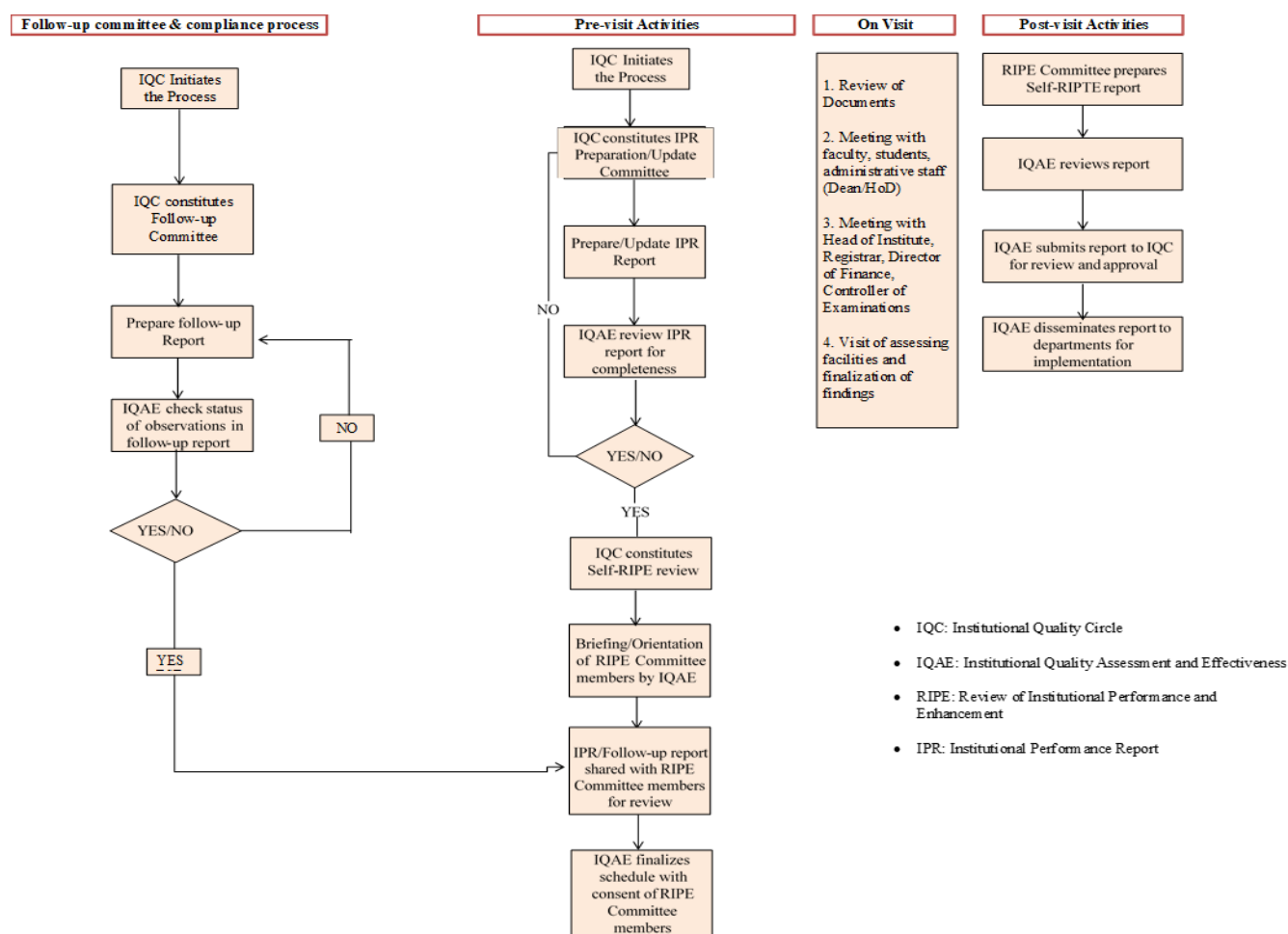

Figure 9: A structured flowchart representing the RIPE (Review of Institutional Performance Enhancement) process

The process is broken down into four main phases, as represented in the flowchart.

Follow-up Committee & Compliance Process

- **Step 1:** The **IQC initiates the process**, ensuring that RIPE is conducted annually before June 30.

- **Step 2: IQC constitutes a Follow-up Committee** that includes **two senior faculty members (professors) and one representative from IQAE**.
- **Step 3:** The **Follow-up Committee prepares a follow-up report**, monitoring previous recommendations and corrective actions from the last review.
- **Step 4: IQAE checks the status of observations** in the follow-up report:
    - If observations are incomplete or unresolved, the report is sent back to the Follow-up Committee.
    - If the report is complete, the process advances to the **pre-visit activities**.

Pre-Visit Activities

- **Step 5:** IQC **initiates the RIPE process** by constituting an **IPR Preparation/Update Committee**.
- **Step 6:** The **IPR Committee prepares or updates the Institutional Performance Report (IPR)**, ensuring compliance with **RIPE's 16 quality standards**.
- **Step 7:** The **IQAE office reviews the IPR report** for completeness:
    - If the report is incomplete, it is sent back for revision.
    - If the report is complete, the **IQC constitutes a Self-RIPE review committee**.
- **Step 8:** The **IQAE organizes an orientation session for RIPE Committee members**, briefing them on RIPE standards, HEC expectations, and the review process.
- **Step 9:** The **finalized IPR and follow-up report are shared** with RIPE Committee members for review.
- **Step 10:** The **IQAE schedules the review visit**, in consultation with the RIPE Committee.

On-Site Visit

The **RIPE Committee conducts an institutional visit** following a structured plan:

- **Step 11: Review of Documents**: The RIPE Committee verifies documentary evidence provided in the IPR.
- **Step 12: Meetings with stakeholders**:
    - Faculty, students, and administrative staff (Deans, HoDs)
    - Heads of Institution, Registrar, Finance Director, Examination Controller

- **Step 13: Assessment of institutional facilities**, including:
  - Classrooms, libraries, auditoriums, transport, sports facilities, and cafeteria.
- **Step 14:** The **RIPE Committee finalizes observations and findings before concluding the visit**.

Post-Visit Activities

- **Step 15:** The **RIPE Committee prepares the Self-RIPE report**, summarizing findings, recommendations, and improvements needed.
- **Step 16:** The **IQAE reviews the report** for consistency and adherence to quality standards.
- **Step 17:** The **IQAE submits the report to IQC** for approval and signing off.
- **Step 18:** The **IQAE disseminates the finalized RIPE report** to departments for implementation.
- **Step 19:** The **IQAE monitors implementation through IQC**, ensuring compliance with institutional Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) policies.

2.8.1.2 Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE)

The Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE) is a structured method used to assess the quality and sustainability of academic programs at levels 5-8 of the Program Qualification Framework (PQF). It ensures that programs meet high-quality assurance (QA) standards and continuously improve student learning. CUST conducts PREE as part of its internal quality assurance (IQA) processes, while external reviews are carried out by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for advanced levels (7 and 8). PREE follows the Precepts Standards and Guidelines (PSG) 2023 and the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) to promote a culture of quality across institutions. The Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) oversees the self-review process, ensuring departments are prepared and managing procedures, templates, schedules, and follow-ups. Departments conduct self-assessments based on eight PREE standards, using relevant evidence to evaluate program performance. The review process concludes with the development of an action plan by the department, guided by recommendations from the assessment team. The PREE process follows a structured sequence of steps, ensuring thorough program assessment and continuous quality enhancement. The flowchart illustrates the procedural steps involved in the self-assessment and evaluation process, linking each phase to responsible stakeholders and decision-making authorities.
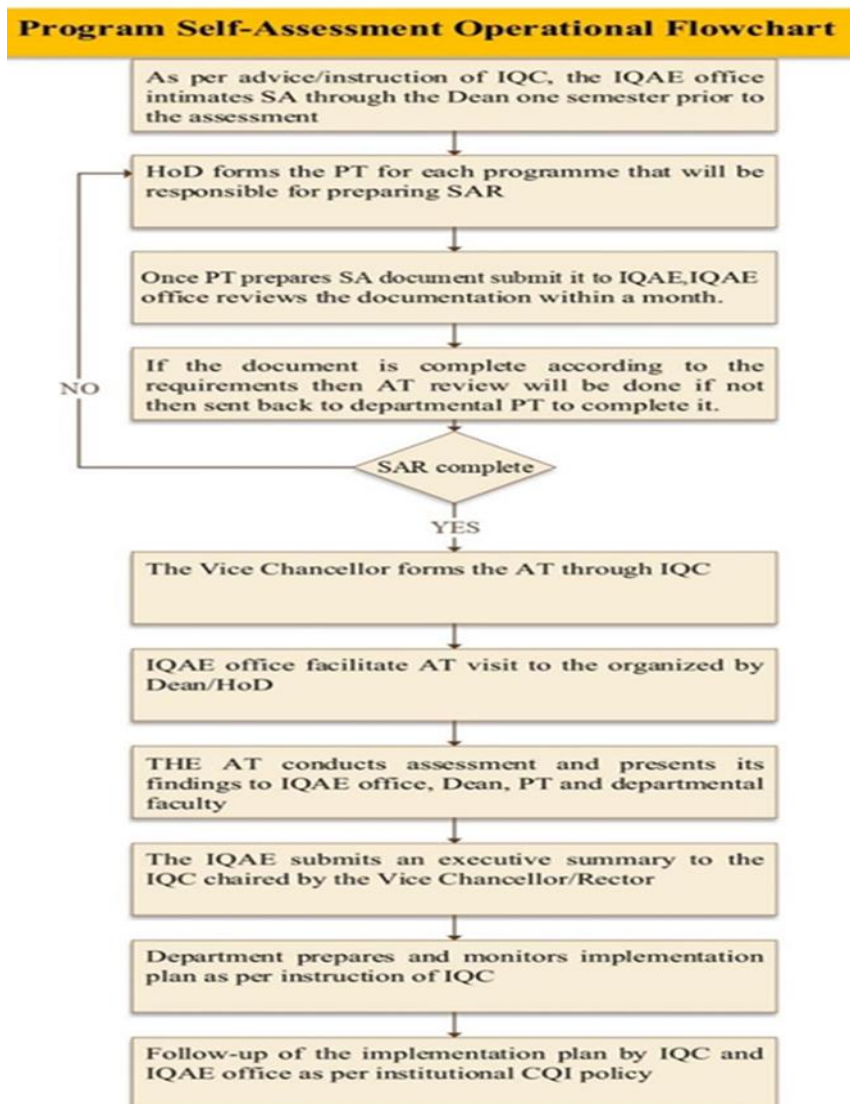
Program Self-Assessment Operational Flowchart

As per advice/instruction of IQC, the IQAE office intimates SA through the Dean one semester prior to the assessment

HoD forms the PT for each programme that will be responsible for preparing SAR

Once PT prepares SA document submit it to IQAE,IQAE office reviews the documentation within a month.

If the document is complete according to the requirements then AT review will be done if not then sent back to departmental PT to complete it.

NO

SAR complete

YES

The Vice Chancellor forms the AT through IQC

IQAE office facilitate AT visit to the organized by Dean/HoD

THE AT conducts assessment and presents its findings to IQAE office, Dean, PT and departmental faculty

The IQAE submits an executive summary to the IQC chaired by the Vice Chancellor/Rector

Department prepares and monitors implementation plan as per instruction of IQC

Follow-up of the implementation plan by IQC and IQAE office as per institutional CQI policy

Figure 10: Flowchart of Program Review for Effectiveness and Evaluation (PREE) Process

Initiation of Self-Assessment

- The QEC office initiates the self-assessment process at least one semester before the assessment cycle ends, through the Vice Chancellor (VC) or Rector.
- If a program undergoes self-assessment for the first time, the department is given an academic year for preparation.
- The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) is constituted under the leadership of the VC, including Deans, Heads of Departments (HODs), and representatives from non-academic departments.

- The composition and notification of IQC are formalized through the Registrar's office.

Formation of Program Team (PT)

- The QEC coordinates with departments through Deans/HODs to establish a Program Team (PT) responsible for self-assessment.
- Each PT consists of 2-3 faculty members specializing in the respective program area.

Preparation of Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

- The PT prepares a comprehensive Self-Assessment Report (SAR) within one semester, ensuring all aspects of program quality and performance are covered.
- The SAR is submitted to the IQAE/QEC office via the Dean for review.

Review of SAR by IQAE/QEC

- The IQAE/QEC office reviews the SAR within one month to verify compliance with PREE standards.
- If the document is incomplete or lacks supporting evidence, it is returned to the department for revision.
- If found satisfactory, the Vice Chancellor (IQC) forms an Assessment Team (AT) in consultation with QEC recommendations.

Constitution and Functioning of the Assessment Team (AT)

- The AT consists of 2-3 faculty members, including at least one external expert.
- The QEC schedules a 2-3 days assessment visit in coordination with the department.
- During the visit, the AT interacts with HODs, PT, faculty members, and students to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Conducting the Program Assessment

- The AT reviews the self-assessment report, gathers stakeholder feedback, and identifies areas of best practices and common challenges.
- The assessment findings are presented in an exit meeting with QEC, Dean, PT, and faculty members.

Finalization and Dissemination of Assessment Report

- The QEC submits an executive summary of the AT's findings to the IQC chaired by the VC/Rector.
- The department formulates an implementation plan based on AT recommendations, including corrective actions, assigned responsibilities, and timelines.

Follow-up and Continuous Quality Improvement

- The QEC monitors the implementation plan and ensures corrective actions are taken.
- The progress of the implementation plan is reviewed at least once per semester.
- The SAR findings and action plans become part of the Yearly Progress Report (YPR), maintaining a continuous cycle of quality assurance and program improvement.

2.8.2 Internal Review

- Internal review is conducted annually by a designated team(s) as per HEC requirements.
- The internal review is based on the same lines as defined/required for the external review.
- CUST conducts self-IPE, Self-PGPR, and prepares the Self-Assessment reports of all the programs being offered at the university are prepared and reviewed.
- The same practices become part of the Internal Quality Assurance and are administered and conducted by the university itself. RIPE and PREE for Internal Quality Assurance orientates around an institutional quality assessment. The quality Enhancement Cell is responsible for the smooth conduction and reporting of the whole process through the Implementation plan which is approved by the university's competent authority and is then submitted to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as part of the yearly progress report just like the External Quality Assurance.

The following are required for external and internal reviews.

2.8.2.1 Self-Assessment Reports (SARs)

Self-assessment is an important toolset for assuring the academic quality of a program and provides feedback to the department /faculty and university administration to prepare the required improvement action plan. The basic purpose of the self-assessment exercise is to maintain and enhance academic standards enabling the promotion of students' learning, verifying academic programs, and ensuring institutional objectives and goals. Relevant documentation/ data of programs were gathered against eight set standards and thirty-one attributes through the Self-Assessment process, reviewed critically, and

suggested important remedial action/steps for future improvement of the program. Recently with the launch of the Higher Education Commission, Precepts, Standards, and Guidelines in 2023, the process has been revamped and the program assessment reports will be conducted under the revised standards from the year 2024 onwards.

2.8.2.2 Surveys

CUST QEC conducts semester wise surveys, regularly through devised HEC, QAA quality assurance processes. Each Department in pursuance of OBE under its CQI cycle assesses academic programs PEOs, PLOs and CLOs attainment level through ODOO web portal. The results of the same along with action taken has been incorporated in the program CQI report resulting in closing of the loop. Feedback surveys serve as an important assessment tool for gathering information in the form of quantitative and qualitative responses from the important stakeholders of the university therefore, QEC CUST conducts six surveys as advised by HEC QAA regularly. The surveys include the Freshman Survey, Course and Teacher Evaluation Survey, Faculty Satisfaction Survey, Exit Survey for Graduating Students, and Alumni and Employer Survey. These surveys are conducted at the beginning or end of the semester or after two years depending upon their nature, as prescribed by the Higher Education Commission. The survey results are gathered and a detailed report with the findings and recommendations along with an executive summary is prepared which is then shared with the Vice Chancellor after the approval from the competent authority, the same is communicated to the concerned departments to take further action and relevant measures for the improvement of the quality of education at CUST. The course and teacher evaluation survey are assessed on set benchmark KPIs categorizing courses and faculty on the basis of the student's feedback into three categories.

CUST rigorously follow the accreditation councils' standards and guidelines about programs accreditation. The professional accreditation councils have accredited CUST eight undergraduate programs being offered under Computing, Engineering, Pharmacy and Management Sciences faculties. These councils primarily evaluate the academic programs quality, ensuring that program meet all the standards and criteria requirements at international level and prepare graduates with requisite skills and competence successfully for the job market. All eight academic programs are well rated and assigned high category of accreditation both by national and international accrediting bodies.

All above mentioned external and internal quality tools used under different quality assurance processes being practiced by QEC, CUST as per requirement of professional councils and HEC, QAA. The feedback received from stakeholders contributes towards safeguarding the quality of academic standards and

students learning experiences. The effective role of faculty and university management in the creation of education ecosystem and in observance of university governance has also been monitored through different IQA and EQA processes. The feedback plays key role in the improvement of quality of teaching & learning, research, faculty and overall university governance.

2.9 Continuous Quality Improvement Cycle (CQI)

CUST follows a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process based on three simultaneous assessment cycles: Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) assessment, Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) assessment, and Program Educational Objectives (PEO) assessment. These cycles ensure continuous evaluation and enhancement of the academic programs to maintain their relevance and effectiveness.

Curriculum review is conducted at two levels using these assessment cycles:

- **Course-Level Review:** This includes evaluating CLOs and their mapping to PLOs, reviewing course content, teaching methodologies, and course activities to ensure effective learning outcomes.
- **Program-Level Review:** This focuses on reviewing PLOs, mapping them to the degree roadmap, and modifying courses to align with the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) system. It includes curriculum design, assessment, and CQI as ongoing processes.
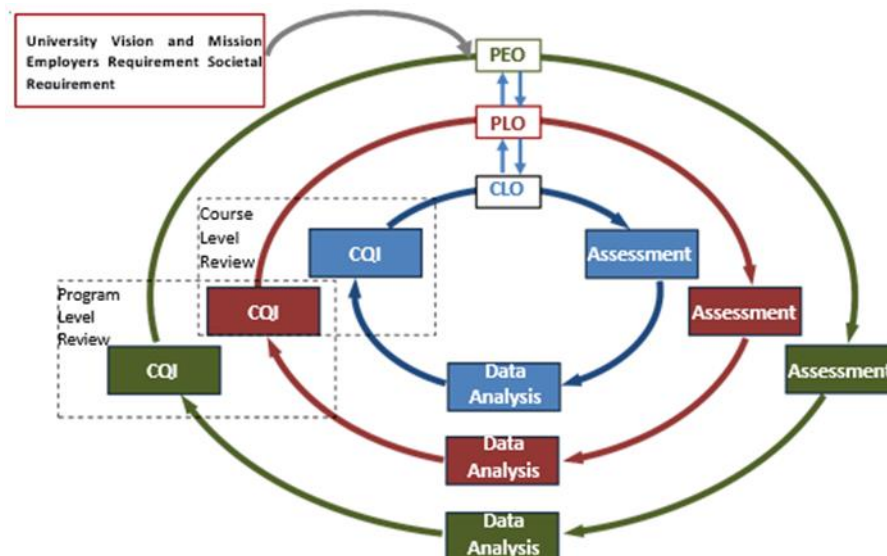

Figure 11: CQI Cycle for Program Curriculum improvement

The curriculum development process is aligned with student needs and industry requirements, ensuring relevance and applicability to job market demands. An interdisciplinary approach is encouraged by integrating multiple disciplines, broadening students' learning experiences, fostering critical thinking, promoting innovation, and addressing societal challenges. This CQI-driven curriculum model equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge to contribute effectively to community development, societal progress, and human well-being. As shown in Figure 6.1, this structured CQI approach ensures that academic programs remain dynamic, responsive, and aligned with evolving industry and societal needs.

The process of **curriculum design** is a top-down process that commences by defining PEOs and linking them to the University's Vision and Mission.
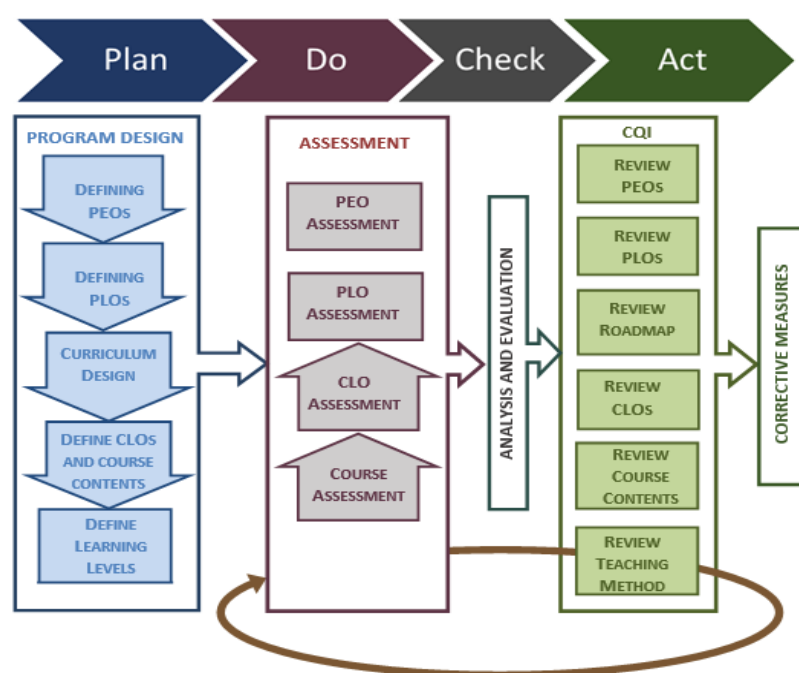
Figure 12: CQI framework in Academic program assessment

At CUST University, the curriculum assessment follows a cyclic process, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with educational objectives. It begins with Program Design, where PEOs, PLOs, and CLOs are defined about the university's Vision and Mission, followed by curriculum structuring and learning level definition. The Assessment phase follows a bottom-up approach, starting from course assessment through quizzes, assignments, projects, and exams, progressing to CLO, PLO, and PEO assessments. The results are analyzed in Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), where PLOs,

roadmaps, program structure, individual CLOs, course contents, and teaching methodologies are reviewed and refined. Any necessary Corrective Measures are implemented, looping back into the program design for further enhancement. Meanwhile, curriculum design follows a top-down approach, beginning with PEOs linked to PLOs, structuring the curriculum roadmap, defining course content, and establishing learning levels based on educational taxonomies, ensuring a well-structured, continuously evolving academic framework.

2.10 Quality Policy Implementation

2.10.1 Commitment

Capital University of Science and Technology, established an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (QEC), as per HEC's PSG-2023 QA framework, to achieve excellence and commitments made under the Quality Policy, through continuous improvement in quality following HEC, QAA guidelines. The QEC has to act as a focal point for planning, implementing all internal and external quality assurance policies and practices as per set standards/tools. One of key function of QEC/IQAE is to manage internal quality processes at both program and institutional level. The function of liaising with external quality assurance bodies like QAA HEC and accreditation council is also the responsibility of QEC/IQAE. It plays very important role in developing institutional quality culture through enhancing the quality of academic programs being offered. The core responsibilities of the office of QEC/IQAE includes following: -

- Promoting public confidence that the standard of academic awards is safeguarded and that quality is assured and enhanced
- Systematic internal review of academic standards and the quality of teaching and learning in each subject area
- Systematic review of academic affiliations and partnerships with other institutions to ensure effective management of standards and quality of programmed
- Facilitating external review of programmed and the institution
- Coordination and liaison with QAA_HEC for implementation of HEC's guidelines related to quality assurance
- Coordination between accrediting departments and accreditation councils for timely accreditation of programmed from respective councils
- Facilitating in establishment and functioning of IQAE sub-offices at campuses, constituent units and affiliated institutions

- Supervision of sub-offices of IQAE at campuses, constituent units and affiliated institutions
- Actively participating in meetings of all statutory bodies
- Capacity building of all internal stakeholders on QA-related activities
- Ensuring institutional alignment with the national qualification's framework of Pakistan at associate degree programmed, bachelor, master's, and doctoral level
- Developing and enhancing quality assurance processes to affirm that the quality of provision and the standard of awards are being maintained
- Fostering curriculum, subject and faculty/staff development, together with research and other scholarly activities
- Developing and enhancing procedures for student partnership in quality assurance activities
- Ensuring that the institution's quality assurance procedures are aligned with national arrangements for maintaining and improving the quality of higher education.

2.10.2 Procedures

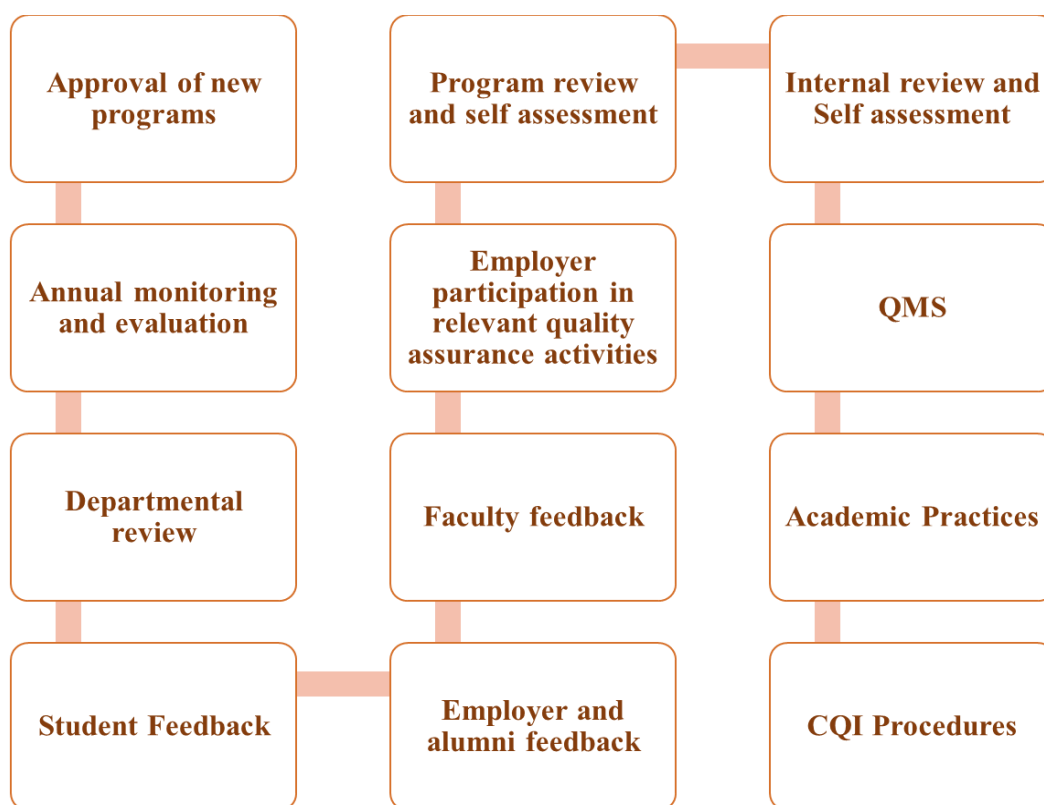| Approval of new programs	Program review and self assessment	Internal review and Self assessment
Annual monitoring and evaluation	Employer participation in relevant quality assurance activities	QMS
Departmental review	Faculty feedback	Academic Practices
Student Feedback	Employer and alumni feedback	CQI Procedures

Figure 13: Procedures for Quality Assurance Mechanisms.

2.10.3 Quality Culture

The CUST Quality Framework, aligned with the university's vision and mission, is committed to elevating educational standards by establishing strong internal quality assurance mechanisms and fostering a culture of quality at all levels. This framework integrates quality assurance into academic practices and promotes a conducive learning environment for students. All institutional stakeholders are dedicated to institutionalizing this culture of quality through active participation and commitment.

The Institutional Quality Circle (IQC), designated by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) under the PSG-2023 QA Framework, serves as the highest centralized forum for quality assurance. Chaired by the Vice Chancellor, the IQC comprises all statutory positions along with two student representatives and is recognized as the highest quality policy forum under CUST's institutional governance framework. As a decisive and delegated authority, the IQC is responsible for facilitating and maintaining both Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA) processes while supporting overall institutional quality improvement.

Acting as a key tool of the Institutional Quality Assurance & Enhancement (IQAE) Office, the IQC plays a pivotal role in fostering a robust quality culture within the institution. It is primarily responsible for developing and reviewing university academic policies and ensuring the continuous enhancement of students' learning experiences while maintaining academic standards. The IQAE Office regularly apprises the IQC forum of key observations and queries raised under IQA and EQA components of university performance reports. It also ensures that appropriate remedial actions are taken and implemented by the relevant university departments and offices.

3 Relevant Policies

The Quality Policy is to be read in conjunction with all relevant policies as mentioned hereunder, but not limited to:

- General Policies / Rules and Regulations (Annexure)
- Student Engagement Policy
- Scholarship Policy (https://cust.edu.pk/scholarship/)
- Policy of banning Drug and Tobacco use on Campus (https://cust.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Policy-Banning-of-Drug-and-Tobacco-use-on-Campus.pdf)
- Harassment Policy (https://cust.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Policy.pdf)

- Conflict of Interest Policy (https://cust.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Conflict-of-Interest-Policy.pdf)
- Environmental policies (https://cust.edu.pk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Environment-Health-and-Safety-EHS-Policy.pdf)
- Virtual Learning Policy (https://cust.edu.pk/virtual-learning-environment/vle-policy/)
- Faculty Handbook (https://cust.edu.pk/static/uploads/2019/12/CUST-Faculty-Hand-Book-2019-1.pdf)

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- https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/services/universities/QAA/Pages/Revamped-QA-Framework.aspx (Pakistan Precepts, Standards and Guidelines PSG – 2023).
- https://policies.uni.edu/chapter-3-student-policies (University of Lowa, USA)

Annexure

General Policies

1. Admission

- The University shall invite applications for admissions in various academic programs through publication of advertisement.

- There shall be an admission test for each program and the applicants with 50% NTS/SAT/GAT may be exempted from the admission test. NTS/SAT/GAT percentage of an applicant shall be equated to admission test percentage conducted by the university.

- O/A levels percentages shall be equated to Matric and Intermediate level percentages respectively.

- The admission requirements and roadmap of each degree program shall be made available on the university website or in prospectus published from time to time.

- A result awaiting candidate can apply for admission by furnishing a certificate that he/she has already appeared in the exam and hoping to meet minimum percentage required for the program.

- If a candidate fails to provide the result within prescribed time, or fails to attain the required percentage, his/her admission shall stand cancelled. No admission fee shall, however, be charged if such candidate applies for fresh admission.

- In case of incorrect or forged information the admission shall be cancelled and no transcript shall be issued.

- A candidate seeking admission in the university shall abide by all its rules, regulations and policies published by the university from time to time.

- Admission in the university shall remain provisional until provision of academic documents by the candidate duly attested by IBCC/HEC/Educational Ministry whichever is applicable.

2. Fee Refund Policy

If a 1st semester student decides to withdraw from the University after having registered, he/she shall be entitled to:

- full (100%) tuition fee refund:- up to the 7th day of commencement of classes;

- half (50%) tuition fee refund:- from 8th - 15th day of commencement of classes;

- no fee (0%) refund:- from 16th day of commencement of classes;

3. Semester Credit Hour

- A course semester credit hour (SCH) is defined as one hour of class work per week for sixteen weeks.

- A laboratory semester credit hour shall be three hours of practical lab work per week for sixteen weeks.

4. Academic Year

- There shall be two regular semesters i.e., Fall and Spring in an academic year. Each Semester shall have 16 teaching weeks.

- A Summer semester is of 08 weeks duration and is usually used for internship, business projects and makeup courses.

- A limited number of courses, on the discretion of a department, may be offered in a Summer semester.

5. Assessment of Tuition Fee

- Fee shall be charged per credit hour as determined by the university from time to time.

- Tuition fee for the registered courses shall be paid within due time period to validate the registration.

- A student with fee default status shall not appear in the attendance roll and there shall be no attendance correction afterwards.

- If the fee is not paid, within the prescribed time, the registration of the course(s) shall stand cancelled.

- For all practical purposes cancelled course(s) shall be deemed as if they were

never registered.

6. **Credit Transfer Policy**

- Transfer credits may be accepted for work completed at a recognized Pakistani or foreign university and an original transcript issued by the university which administered the examination shall be submitted.

- Only those courses/credits shall be transferred in which the candidate has got a grade B or higher and they can be part of the applicants- degree program at CUST.

- Each transfer credit case shall be examined on its merit by the Admission Department in consultation with the respective HoD.

- Accepted credit hours, without grades, shall appear on the transcript.

- Maximum credits transferred shall not exceed 50% of the total credit hours required for the degree program.

- The department has the exclusive right to accept or reject any request of transfer of course /courses.

- A student with transfer credit hours shall not be eligible for a university medal.

7. **Add/Drop**

- A student may add or drop a course within a specified period announced by the Registration Department. A course dropped will be deemed as if it was never registered.

8. **Withdrawal**

- If a student decides not to continue in a course, and add/drop time has expired, he/she may withdraw from the course within twelve weeks from the start of the semester.

- A course withdrawn will be reported on the transcript with a W status.

- A withdrawn course shall not be counted towards the calculation of GPA.

- A withdrawn course shall be treated as a registered course for the evaluation of tuition fee.

9. **Repeat & Substitute A Course**

    - An undergraduate course with grade C- or below and a graduate course with grade B- or below may be repeated and only the better grade shall be counted towards CGPA.

    - A student may substitute an elective course with another elective course. Such a substitution shall be treated as a repeat course.

    - A student can repeat any number of credit hours within permitted time duration but prior to the degree completion.

    - Substitution shall be allowed, with the approval of HoD, at the end of a degree program.

10. **Semester Break**

    - A student, under special circumstance, may apply for a semester break to the concerned HoD. However, to maintain his/her registration the student has to pay the semester break fee as determined by the university from time to time.

    - A student who is not registered in a semester shall lose his registration if he/she is not on semester break.

    - A consecutive two-semester nonregistered status shall lead to the cancellation of admission.

    - A student with cancelled admission is required to apply for readmission on the prescribed form.

    - A re-admission case shall only be considered if it is within the maximum time duration allowed for a degree program.

11. **Change of Program**

    - A CUST student may apply for the change of program with the approval of concerned HoDs before the start of a semester. Such a student shall be issued a new registration number.

    - Only related courses shall be transferred with grades to the opted program.

    - Courses transferred shall appear in the transcript without mentioning the semester details in which they were studied.

- Program transfer facility shall only be given to MAJU students.

- Student shall submit transfer fee as determined by the university from time to time.

- Program transferred student shall not be considered for the award of a medal.

12. Attendance

- To be eligible for final examination 75% attendance shall be required in a course or in a lab work.

- There shall be no relaxation in attendance requirement under any circumstances.

- Class attendance shall only be marked if a student has no outstanding dues.

- A student may request for withdrawal of a course in which his/her attendance is short by paying a fine as determined by the university from time to time.

13. Examination and Grading

i. A student shall be eligible for final examination if his/her name is included in the exam seating plan.

ii. If a student misses final examination for what so ever reason, he/she shall be graded on the basis of sessional performance and there shall be no re-examination.

iii. If a student misses final examination on medical grounds, he/she may apply for course(s) withdrawal before the declaration of final results. The department may require the student to provide medical certificate by a registered medical practitioner.

iv. Letter grades shall be awarded at the end of each semester as per the following distribution:

Assessment	Undergraduate	Graduate
Midterm Examination	20%	20%
Assignments, Quizzes, Projects etc.	30% – 40%	30% – 50%
Final Examination	40% – 50%	30% – 50%

v. Midterm and final examinations shall be administered by the office of Controller of Examinations.

vi. Letter grades shall be awarded at the end of each semester as per the following distribution:

Grades	Definition
A	Excellent
B	Good
C	Satisfactory
D	Poor but passing
F	Failure
I	Incomplete
C	Continued
W	Withdrawal
P	Pass
NC	No Credit
( )	Grade Replaced
S	Satisfactory
US	Unsatisfactory

vii. Letter grades shall be awarded on the following scheme:

Grades	Undergraduate	Graduates
A	4.00	4.00

A-	3.67	3.67
B+	3.33	3.33
B	3.00	3.00
B-	2.67	2.67
C+	2.33	2.33
C	2.00	2.00
C-	1.67	1.67
D+	1.33	0.00
D	1.00	0.00
F	0.00	0.00

viii. **GPA**

Grade Point Average (GPA) shall be computed by multiplying the number of credit hours of each course by the grade points assigned to grade earned, then dividing the sum of these products by the total number of credit hours in which the student was registered in a semester.

ix. **CGPA**

Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) shall be calculated by summing all the earned grade points divided by the total number of registered credit hours during the program.

x. **Incomplete (I) grade**

- A teacher may award I (incomplete) grade to a student who fails to meet all requirements for reasons beyond his/her control.

- I grade shall not be allowed in a regular course/lab work.

- I grade must be changed into an earned grade within the following semester otherwise it will automatically be converted to F grade.

14. Change of Grade

- A student may file a petition with the CoE-s office for review of a final grade within two weeks after the declaration of the results.

- The review of a grade shall be limited to omission and calculation errors.

- The review process shall be initiated after the receipt of requisite fee as prescribed by the university from time to time.

15. Probation & Expulsion

- A student who fails to maintain the minimum CGPA required for their degree (2.0 on the scale of 4.0 for undergraduate programs and 3.0 on the scale of 4.0 for MS/MPhil programs) shall be placed on warning status at the time of declaration of the result.

- A student with two consecutive warnings shall be placed on probation for the next semester and at the end of that semester, if he/she fails once again to attain the required minimum CGPA, such student shall cease to continue.

- A PhD scholar who fails to maintain the required minimum CGPA of 3.0/4.0, shall be placed on probation at the time of declaration of the result. A scholar with two consecutive probations shall cease to continue.

16. Medal Award Policy

- Students desirous to compete for the award of a medal shall apply on the prescribed form to the CoE Office.

- A medal shall be awarded only in the respective convocation.

- Only those graduates shall be considered for the award of a medal who fulfill the following:

    1. Completion of all degree requirements within normal duration.

    2. CGPA 3.50 or higher on the scale of 4.00.

    3. No F grade in the transcript.

    4. No transfer of credits from other Universities / Institutions.

5.No disciplinary punishment throughout the tenure of the degree.

- If number of students in a degree program is less than 10:

    1.Only one medal will be awarded

    2.CGPA of winner will be compared with the CGPA of the winner of a medal in a program having more than 10 students, to assess the type of medal to be awarded.

    3.Gold, Silver and Bronze medals shall be awarded to the top three students of each batch of undergrad degree program, wheras only Gold medal shall be awarded to the toppers of each bactch of MS/MBA graduate degree programs.

    4.If there is a tie in the award of a medal both will be awarded the same medal.

17. Quaid-I-Azam Gold Medal

- A Quaid-i-Azam Gold Medal shall be awarded, in a convocation, to an overall best achiever of the university and shall be based on:

    1.Academics

    2.co-curricular and

    3.Extra-curricular activities.

18. Online Academic Policy

- The University shall establish an online Academic Council which shall be responsible to check the readiness of a course to be offered through distance (online) learning.

- There shall be a Directorate called as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Directorate and it shall be headed by a Dean or a Senior Professor of the University.

- There shall be a committee called as VLE Monitoring Committee comprising of various members at least one from each Department desirous to enter into online education.

- The VLE Monitoring Committee shall ensure the implementation of the University policy adopted for online education and it shall also ensure the compliance with the policies/guidelines issued by the regulatory bodies from time to time such as HEC/PEC etc.

- A course shall be cleared as an Online Course/Lab, if it met all the requirements defined for the purpose, which shall be certified by the concerned HOD and endorsed by the respective Dean of the Faculty.

- Only those courses/labs can be offered which are supported by the University Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS must contain, as a minimum, the following information regarding a specific course/lab:-

  1. Introduction of the course

  2. Course learning objectives

  3. Course description

  4. Course resources, i.e. course books, reference books and other material

  5. Lesson plan

  6. Grading policy

  7. Key dates

  8. Course progress report

- The Department shall ensure that an appropriate communication tool is available to conduct the class remotely, such as: Zoom/Team software etc.

- The University should arrange licensed copy of such tools to ensure their maximum utility.

- The Department shall ensure a connectivity mechanism between the relevant instructor and the student of a course by providing/creating accounts of its members (Course Team Creation).

The HOD shall also ensure that all information regarding Online Timetable, Assessment Policy and Grading Policy etc. must be communicated/known to the students.