



## Capital University of Science and Technology

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### 1. Overview of QEC

Quality Enhancement Cell was established at CUST with a mandate to implement IQA and EQA processes set by HEC, ensuring academic standards through conduct of different surveys /assessments and provide feedback to the institutional departments for their future actions. Detailed remedial mechanism as devised by HEC, plays an important role in contributing towards improvement of academic programs. QEC on the basis of IQA processes receives feedback and suggest certain suggestions/recommendation to institutional management for consideration and action. CUST through implementation of these set QA standards/guidelines, develop professional knowledge, competencies and employable skills of its graduates, enabling them to contribute effectively in the job market. QEC as per regulators requirements strived hard to comply strictly with devised, structured QA approaches ensuring its implementation and contribution towards promotion of quality culture.

Prime objective of QEC is to maintain, enhance and monitor, quality of undergraduate and graduate, academic program periodically being offered at institutional level. IQA and EQA practices introduced through a systematic process help to monitored periodically the quality of academic programs, safeguards institutional functioning as per its laid down mission and vision. QEC through quality interventions extend its support to the departments in improving standard of their teaching-learning and research enabling its compatibility with other national and international HEIs. QEC intends to ensure through the implementation of QA practices, production of competent graduates, equipped with requisite knowledge and skills as per requirement of existing job market.

### 2. Self IPE & Self PGPR 2021-2022

Self -IPE and Post Graduate Program Reviews as annual activities were conducted to assess the effectiveness of academic programs being offered, compliance of different QA guidelines, preparedness and capacity of institution performance as per HEC devised standards/ policies. Available relevant documents/evidences, provided through University Portfolio Report was reviewed as per HEC guidelines. Almost all CUST academic programs, research productivity and governance indicators were in line with the predefined standards of regulator and appeared to fulfilled quality prerequisites, enabling students to learn and create new knowledge. The

feedback of these reviews provides academic guidance, suggests certain future actions for the compliance of university management offices/departments against recommended areas related to university governance, teaching-learning and research.



*Figure 1 SELF IPE and Self PGPR Review Panel*

### 3. YPR Scorecard

QEC during year, 2022 accomplished the utmost efficient task achievement appreciation from Higher Education Commission, Pakistan receiving outstanding Score of 98.61% against QA yearly Progress set targets. Yearly progress Report (YPR), covers both internal and external quality processes, being mandatory to be completed and complied by all institutional stakeholders. YPR exercise mainly depends on gathering of information/ evidences/data against established QA parameters (IPE, SARs, Accreditation, PGPR, Functioning of QEC, Implementation of HEC policies).

### 4. Rankings (THE, QS and UI Green Metric)



QEC, CUST in 2022 QS Asia Ranking, secured 41 positions out of fifty, Universities participated from Pakistan. UI Green Metric (University Indonesia) 2022 ranking declared CUST 11th (341) Higher Education Institution out of 58 Pakistani Universities.

### 5. Professional Development Center (PDC)

QEC under the auspices of Staff Development Centre organized conducted five capacity building workshops for faculty and university management in the area of Preparation of self-assessment Report for QAC members (Three Day), Effective Quality Assurance Activities (One Day), Importance of QS ranking (One Day), THE Ranking (One Day) for QAC members, Academic Writing (Two Days) and three sessions on Office management. Three consultative sessions with Faculty of Health and Life sciences were organized on CQI cycle. Sixty-Eight newly inducted Faculty members including QAC members and twelve non-academic university staff participated in these workshops. These workshops experiences enable faculty/ management to equip themselves with the basics required pedagogical and andragogical teaching skills. Non-Academic staff (Mid- Career officials) were exposed about

managerial skills/ strategies required to be used by them for effective disposal of official business.

### 5.1. Preparation of Self-Assessment Report

A three-day workshop on the subject “Preparation of SAR” was organized by QEC on 1st – 3rd March 2022. Twenty-two faculty member/program team member from all academic departments participated in the said workshop. Prof. Dr. Majid Ali was the resource person who had enriched academia and industrial experience. The objective of workshop was to provide detailed information related to the preparation of SAR and its role in the IQA mechanism of the HEIs. The resource person apprised the participants on how SAR could be prepared, what components would be considered for the preparation of SARs, Outcome Based Education (OBE), it’s importance and contribution for improving the academic program’s effectiveness. The resource person explained the process about how Program Education Objectives (PEOs), Program Learning Outcome (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcome (CLOs) could be designed in accordance with the CUST vision and mission. The workshop was concluded with the Question Answer session wherein participants actively asked their queries, which were well addressed by the resource person.



*Figure 2 Three-day Workshop on Preparation of Self-Assessment Report*

### 5.2. Effective Quality Assurance Activities

QEC at CUST organized a workshop on the subject “Effective Quality Assurance Activities in HEIs” on June 06, 2022. Fifteen faculty members from different academic departments participated in the workshop. Prof. Dr Arshad Islam Director QEC, from FAST University, was the resource person. The objective of the workshop was to share with participants the concept & role of QEC in HEIs/DAIs and various effective quality assurance mechanisms



implemented at CUST. The resource person explained the phenomena in detail including various effective IQA and EQA processes and standards followed by QEC as per the direction of HEC-QAA. Dr. Arshad Islam highlighted the importance of QA processes, its role in improving the overall academic program quality and how QEC act as a liaison office between institution and regulator. Question answer session was held at the end of workshop. Director QEC presented a memento to Prof. Dr Arshad Islam and the event was concluded successfully.



*Figure 3 Effective Quality Assurance Activities in HEIs*

### **5.3. Importance of QS Ranking**

QEC organized one day workshop on September 8, 2022 on the subject Importance of QS World University Ranking. 12 QAC member from all academic department of CUST participated in the said workshop. Dr. Fawad Sadiq acted as resource person, who is a profound researcher, quality practitioner and currently working as acting Director QEC at Riphah International University. The objective of this workshop was to provide information regarding the World University Ranking system, their evaluation criteria and importance of world university rankings for HEIs and other various stakeholders. The resource person informed the participants regarding world university ranking system including THE, QS and Shanghai Ranking, their assessment/evaluation criteria and score distribution. It was a very interactive session where participants actively participated and asked their queries on the subject. In the end of workshop, Director QEC acknowledged the efforts of resource person for delivering a thought-provoking session and hoped that this intellectual discourse would help CUST to streamline their IQA processes.



*Figure 4 Workshop on Importance of QS University Ranking*

#### **5.4. Workshop on Academic Writing**

A two-day workshop was organized by QEC for early career faculty on the subject Academic writing on 17-18<sup>th</sup> August 2022 with the mandate to provide information regarding the whole process of scholarly/research article writing and publishing it in a reputable international journal. 19 faculty members from different academic departments of CUST participated in the workshop. Prof. Dr. Majid Ali was the resource person, who is a profound researcher, academician and industrial specialist. The resource person apprised the participants that workshop agenda was comprised of theoretical content regarding research articles & proposal writing along with activities that they were supposed to perform for better understanding. He also explained various research approaches employed by the researcher including literature, experimental and numerical. Dr. Majid Ali also informed the article writing and publishing process and highlighted the points that the researcher has to consider while publishing in a reputable impact factor journal. The workshop was concluded with QA session where all participants asked their queries on the subject which were well addressed by the resource person.



*Figure 5 Workshop on Academic Writing*

### 5.5. Workshop on Office Management

QEC conducted a workshop on the subject “Office Management” on September 20, 2022 with the objective to orient and make aware mid-career administrative staff of the CUST about managerial skills/strategies, required to be used for effective disposal of their official tasks. 12 non-academic staff members from various administrative offices including; Examination, Registration, Admission, GSO, Library and IT etc. participated in the workshop. Dr. Ahsan Mahmood, Assistant Professor Faculty of Management & Social Sciences joined as the resource person for the said workshop. The workshop content focused on the aspects of effective time management, self-management, importance of communication skills in office activities and creative utilization of mind skills. He explained various effective office management strategies during peak hours and guided participants that how they can utilize their resources efficiently and effectively for the timely and successful completion of office tasks. During the workshop session, participants are encouraged to asked their queries which were well addressed by the resource person. In the end of session, Director QEC acknowledged the efforts of resource persona for delivering such an informative and thought-provoking session and presented a memento to resource persona certificate to the participants.



*Figure 6 Workshop on Office Management*

## 6. CQI Implementation in Non-Engineering Faculty

CQI used as an effective tool to assess the quality of existing programs including PEO, PLOs and CLOs attainment. The CQI process enables departments to emphasis that How they are performing? And how it would be improved, what need to do more? CQI cycle basically depends upon Objective Based Learning approach, focuses on the graduates' outcomes/attributes after completing any educational program. Every program intended Learning outcomes are determined first and relevant curriculum, teaching and learning methodology and supporting facilities are designed after to accomplish in form of achieved



outcomes. During the progression of the program, numerous measurement tools are used to assess the level of outcomes that have been attained by graduates. Different counter steps/ techniques are applied to further improve the achievement of the outcomes. The entire process of CQI rest on effective implementation of OBE process.



*Figure 7 Consultative Session with Faculty of Health & Life Sciences on CQI Implementation*



*Figure 8 Consultative Session with Faculty of Health & Life Sciences on CQI Implementation*



OBE strategy was focused on the achievement of graduate attributes after completion of an academic program. The intended outcomes/attributes are determined before start of teaching-learning process, course content selection along with learning methodology and supporting material are then designed accordingly to achieve desired intended learning outcomes. During the progression of academic program, various measurements tools are used to assess the level of attainment of these outcomes by graduates. Different strategies are then applied in order to further improve the achievement of these outcomes. The courses are designed on the basis of needs of the stakeholders including Students, alumni, employer and industry.

Importantly, three types of outcomes, Program Educational Objectives (PEO), Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) need to identify for each academic programs before start of the process. PEO reflects requisite skill set which should be acquired by graduates after graduation, PLOs are achieved graduates' attributes whereas CLOs are the necessary acquisition of skills at the end of each course. The OBE cycle PEOs, PLOs and CLOs are mapped with each other after the completion of each academic program to ascertain the level of contribution of CLOs towards overall achievement of PLOs and PEOs. Attainment of all outcomes are measured through different surveys like self-survey by students, external survey and formal assessments. The results are analyzed and shortcomings on the level of attainments of outcomes could be addressed and further improvements proposed.

## **7. Surveys**

QEC received regular feedback through different surveys (Freshman, Course & Teacher evaluation, Faculty Satisfaction level, Exit, Alumni and Employer) engaging concerned Stakeholders periodically on regular basis regarding the quality of academic programs, faculty satisfaction level and course & teacher evaluation. Key findings and recommendations made on the basis of these survey results were communicated to the university competent authority before sharing with concerned university offices and departments. All concerned department submit their implementation plan including proposed remedial action against each recommendation in a form of action taken report with stipulated time line for inclusion in the yearly progress report.

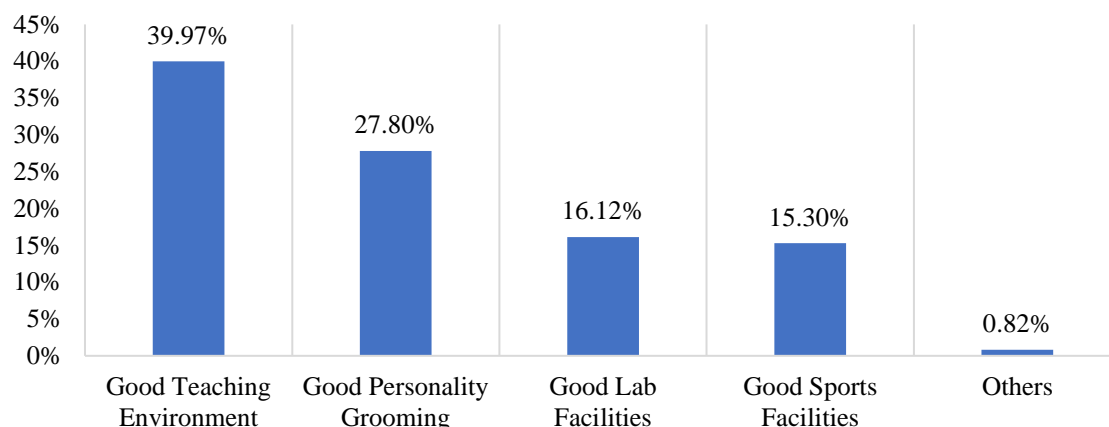


Figure 9 Reason for joining CUST

## 8. Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)

Quality Assurance Committee considered to be policy/advisory body, plays an important forum for devising and implementing IQA practices within institution. Four QAC meetings were held during the reporting year wherein certain policy matters pertaining to the quality of academic programs and research were reviewed and suggestions were made. Revision of different survey instruments were discussed and suggestions/amendments were proposed. Bifurcation of Exit survey into undergraduate and graduate level was proposed, depending on the scope and context of these programs. Course and Teacher survey instrument was also separated into two parts representing each component as a separate tool.



Figure 10 Quality Assurance Committee Meeting

Faculty satisfaction survey tool was reviewed on the basis of certain factors related to the university governance. Based on faculty experiences certain management aspects were incorporated in the existing instrument with appropriate weightage. Accordingly, QEC introduced advanced QA interventions, encouraging CUST Departments, provision of conducive educational/learning environment at undergraduate and graduate level of education. Existing survey tools like course and Teacher evaluation was reviewed and revised with the addition of new fields and areas. Graduate satisfaction tool was separated into undergraduate and graduate format in view of scope and focus of studies at both levels.



*Figure 11 Quality Assurance Committee*



## 9. Self-Assessment Report

Self-Assessment Report is used as one of the important tools for assessing the quality of academic programs being offered. During 2022, 6 undergraduate and 12 graduate assessment team meeting were conducted by CUST. Assessment Teams prepared their findings on the basis of available information's and evidences, which were converted into recommendations/executive summaries by QEC for sharing with university management and relevant departments. All 18 programs SAR analysis indicates that these programs fulfill minimum required qualitative prerequisites prescribed as per HEC guidelines. Action taken report prepared on the basis of recommendations were included in the YPR 2023 document.

## 10. Student Interview

### 10.1. Dr. Rabbiah Manzoor (PI141001-Passes Out)

#### Q1. Why you join CUST to study?

I got my M.Phil degree in 2000. Since 2007 I have been doing my job in Wah Medical College. Getting a PhD degree was a big task for me to improve my professional carrier, but with 9 to 5 job it was difficult for me to join some Ph D program as for that I had to quit my job which was not suitable for me. CUST provides evening classes for its PhD program and it was convenient for me to do my PhD with job. Secondly my major specialty is Biochemistry and for that again doing research work in laboratories was not favorable for continuation of my job, while on other hand Bioinformatics is a field in which one can do work on Computer without joining some lab. CUST was the only leading institute for Bioinformatics at that time so I joined my PhD program here in Bioinformatics.

#### Q2. What professional development have you acquired? And, what is the role of CUST faculty in professional development?

CUST is blessed with highly competent and talented teaching faculty. Being a university teacher myself I learnt a lot from my teachers, including their control over the class, their command on subject and talent to inculcate knowledge to students, which helped me to improve my teaching abilities. And the degree I received CUST was a milestone in my carrier

#### Q3. What personality development have you acquired? And, what role CUST faculty played in your personality development?

Confidence and Struggle. As I was not only the student but a professional medical teacher, a mother and a house wife as well. And I had to play all these roles simultaneously. And I had to proof myself best in all these domains which was not possible without the tiring struggle.

**Q4. What is your opinion about the available research facilities i.e, labs, computing facilities, and equipment at CUST?**

These facilities are at one of the best levels being provided by the Institutes in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The well-equipped laboratories of both the Biological Sciences and Computers, updated libraries, online portal system both for students and faculty, and above all the man power provided to facilitate students for availing these facilities are at their best level in CUST.

**Q5. What major role you had played while participating in extracurricular and co-curricular activities?**

Being the PhD student unfortunately I could not play any role in extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

**Q6. What do you think about the quality of teaching at CUST?**

The qualities of a good teacher include skills in listening, communication, collaboration, adaptability, empathy and patience. Other characteristics of effective University teaching include research abilities, value in real-world learning, exchange of best practices and a lifelong love of digging facts and writing. Teachers at CUST are best providing their abilities and efforts at utmost level.

**Q7. What is your opinion related to the available learning opportunities at CUST?**

Learning opportunities are at the highest level at which a student can urge to avail, including lab skills, research techniques, computer skills, virtual learning, reading material, Internet facilities, etc.

**Q8. How would research conducted help your professional career?**

The main focus of PhD research is the development of both highly specialized research and writing abilities. My PhD research has helped me in my professional career, and contributing in professional development of my Institute and ultimately the society as well. It helped me a lot in getting more and more publications which were the basic requirement for the upgradation of my professional carrier.

### **10.2. Yusra Tanweer**

I am a student of Mathematics department. I chose CUST for higher education due to its competent faculty, conducive learning environment, scholarships, and availability of state-of-the-art library and laboratory. After getting admission I had come to know that CUST is providing a very conducive learning environment to its students which helps to nurture their professional skills and personality. During my studies, all faculty members are very cooperative and striving hard to develop effective professional skills. The Outcome-Based Education (OBE) implemented in CUST enables me to gain and demonstrate the skills and competencies related to the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of Bloom's Taxonomy. One of the most important things, I want to mention is that I got ample opportunities for professional development like I had taken part in different extra-curricular and community service activities which were organized by the department.

### **10.3. Rimsha Shaukat**

I am a student of Accounting & Finance Department. As, I was aware of a disciplined environment, quality of education, experienced and cooperative faculty due to here so that's why I joined CUST for higher education. I have experienced a very good environment, quality of education, competent faculty and ample resources that provide the means and opportunity to achieve professional and personality development. One thing that I have observed and experienced is that the faculty of CUST is very supportive and always guides properly in every aspect of life. I have got ample opportunities for personal and professional development such as I had worked with TRAVELOUGE WORLD and organized various extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. After the completion of my education, I want to pursue higher studies and join baking industry.

## **11. Interviews**

**Dr. Nousheen Tariq Bhutta**

**Assistant Professor of Finance, QAC member**

**from Department of Accounting & Finance**

**Q1. Please tell us about your qualification and academic profile?**



I completed MBA program at International Islamic University, Islamabad in 2007. Then, I enrolled in the MS program leading to the Ph.D program in 2008 and graduated from International Islamic University, Islamabad in 2015 with partial research at the State University of New York, USA in 2013. I received the Rector Award from International Islamic University, Islamabad, during my Ph.D. program. I worked as an Assistant Professor at Dar ul Aloom University in Saudi Arabia from 2015 to 2017. I was awarded a Post Doctorate Fellowship at the University of Sannio in Italy, which was fully funded by the European Union, and completed the fellowship in 2018.

I published 16 research papers in HEC-recognized journals and presented many papers at national and international conferences, including a paper at the Academy of Management annual meeting in San Antonio, USA, in 2011. I served as session chair and discussant at the Academy of Management's annual meetings in 2013, 2016, and 2017 in the USA. I received research training organized by the National Institute of Health in 2013 at State University of New York, USA. I attended the Career Consortiums in Academy of Management Annual Meeting in 2016 at California, USA and in 2017 at Atlanta, USA respectively.

I have been working as an Assistant Professor, in Accounting and Finance Department, at Capital University of Science and Technology, Islamabad since 2018. Besides teaching. I am Quality Assurance Member representing Accounting and Finance department and participated in periodic QEC meetings. Moreover, I am a team member in Erasmus Plus Capacity Building Project: Strategic Support for Accreditation of Programs and Internalization at South Asian Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)/ SSAPI. I attended the International Training at the University of Bremen, Germany in July 2022. I am an Associate Editor of Jinnah Business Review, CUST. I was track chair under Accounting and Finance at 8th CIBRC and 9th CIBRC, CUST. Furthermore, 21 MS students and 1 Ph.D. student have successfully defended their theses under my supervision. I am currently supervising 5 Ph.D. students.

**Q2. What is your opinion about quality standards in the academic institutions of Pakistan?**

Although HEC plays an important role in providing quality assurance in academic institutions, it is the primary responsibility of academic institutions to establish quality standards in their academic programs because they contribute to the development of society and the country. Moreover, continuous curriculum improvement should be required in academic programs. Capital University of Science and Technology not only established quality standards for local

bodies such as HEC or PEC, but also for international quality standard associations such as the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Washington Accord, USA, and The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Spain.

**Q3. What are the current quality-related activities in the Department of Accounting & Finance?**

After joining the Capital University of Science and Technology and having experience as a quality member at Dar ul Aloom University in Saudi Arabia, I brought attention to updating the PLOs-CLOs mapping of the BS program under the Objective-Based Education (OBE) system. This effort was admired because of the outstanding leadership of the our worthy Dean and HOD, and a course review team was formed to ensure continuous improvement in the course curriculum. I participated as a trainer in FDP workshops in 2020 and 2022, presenting sessions on assessment techniques and research trends in finance.

I introduced the Help Grow and Build (HGB) model in one of my cost accounting classes in spring 2021, and formed class groups with one team leader who has a good CGPA, one average student, and two students who have a low CGPA from previous semesters. The low CGPA students performed significantly better in overall assessments. I am confident that new ideas will emerge if people are encouraged to think outside the box without being ridiculed. Our esteemed Dean and HOD provide sufficient support for faculty to take such steps. This approach is being used in one of my current semester courses.

**Dr. Nadia Shamshad**

**Associate Professor of Pharmacy, QAC Member**

**Department of Pharmacy**

The Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is a comprehensive report that is used to evaluate the quality and performance of higher education programs offered by higher education institutes in Pakistan. The SAR provides an overview of institution's performance against its objectives and goals, an introduction of different degree program, program educational goals, objectives, curriculum, teaching and learning strategies, student support services, research activities, and outcomes. The report also includes information on the faculty, facilities, resources, and other relevant factors that contribute to the program's quality and effectiveness of the programs. Therefore, the primary objective of the SAR is to enhance academic programs and uphold rigorous academic standards. It achieves this by providing valuable feedback to faculty and

administration, enabling them to initiate action plans for program improvement and enhancement.

Furthermore, the SAR strives to equip students with the necessary tools and competencies to thrive in their future careers. It aims to develop their problem-solving abilities, enhance their proficiency in experimental and data analysis techniques, foster teamwork experience, nurture interpersonal skills, and provide them with a solid foundation in both basic and advanced IT skills. Ultimately, the SAR serves as a valuable resource for continuous improvement, aligning academic programs with industry needs, and nurturing the holistic development of students to make them well-prepared for their future endeavors.

The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) requires all universities to prepare and submit SARs periodically to ensure that their degree programs meet the required standards and criteria as part of accreditation and quality assurance process.

The process of preparing a SAR involves a systematic and rigorous assessment of the program's performance based on the established standards and criteria. The first step in preparing a SAR is to identify the program's goals and objectives. This involves a careful analysis of the program's mission and strategic plan. The next step is to collect data on various aspects of the program, including student enrollment, faculty qualifications, curriculum, research output, student performance, and feedback from stakeholders. The data collected is then analyzed. This analysis helps to identify the program's strengths and weaknesses and to identify areas for improvement. The SAR is then prepared based on the data analysis and other relevant information. The report includes a detailed analysis of the program's performance along with recommendations for improvement. Later, the report is reviewed by external experts and stakeholders who provide feedback and recommendations for further improvement.

In Pakistan, all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that are recognized by the HEC have taken the initiative to establish their respective Quality Enhancement Cells (QEC). QEC is a policy making and monitoring body for enhancement and assurance of quality in HEIs. It is involved in systematic implementation of quality enhancement procedures to attain improved levels of international compatibility and competitiveness at institutional and program level. It works closely with faculty, staff, and students to identify areas for improvement, develop strategies, and implement effective measures to enhance the overall quality of education. In line with the practices of other HEIs in Pakistan, Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) has established its own Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) under the leadership of Mr. Fids Hussain,



as the Director of the QEC. QEC executes its policies through Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), CUST. Alongside undertaking many other measures for enhancing academic quality, it also implements quality assessment mechanism of academic programs through SAR. QEC plays a critical role in the SAR evaluation process by ensuring that the report meets the necessary quality standards.

The committee is responsible for appointing auditors from the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) members to review and provide feedback on the report's content. This ensures that the self-assessment process is comprehensive, systematic, and transparent, accurately reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of the institution and its programs, CUST through all these efforts and steps, ensures that the self-assessment report serves as a valuable tool for improving the institution's overall quality and performance.

As a member of QAC, I had the opportunity to review the SARs of various programs offered by CUST. My role as an auditor was to assess the quality of the degree programs, different programs strengths and weaknesses, the steps taken to improve the programs performance and the challenges faced by them to meet emerging trends. My assessment of different degree programs indicates that CUST has implemented a rigorous CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement) process that involves continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement of the programs. I analyzed that through this process, the university has identified multiple areas in need of improvement and has implemented various actions to address them.

For instance, the revision of curriculum where required to align it with the latest industry trends and demands. The faculty has also been trained to incorporate modern teaching methodologies and technology to enhance the learning experience of the students. Furthermore, the university has implemented a robust assessment and evaluation system that ensures that the students' performance is regularly monitored and evaluated. CUST has also established a student feedback system that allows students to provide their feedback on the programs, faculty, and overall learning experience. Moreover, in order to promote diversity and inclusively, the university has also implemented several initiatives i.e., the implementation of a mentorship program to support students.

In conclusion, my assessment of CUST degree programs indicates that they have set clear targets for improvement and had established a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the progress made towards achieving these targets. The SAR and CQI cycle that the university has implemented is an effective mechanism for ensuring that the programs meet the highest

standards of quality. Moreover, it enables them to implement targeted interventions and improvements that ultimately lead towards greater success and achievement. By addressing areas for enhancement in academic programs and ensuring students are equipped with relevant skills, the SAR and CQI cycle contributes to the institution's commitment to academic excellence and prepares students for successful careers. Hence, I believe that CUST's focus on quality and pursuit of excellence through various quality enhancement mechanisms will position them for continued success in the years to come. Their commitment to self-assessment and improvement ensures that they remain responsive to the changing needs of their stakeholders and are well-equipped to deliver degree programs that meet the highest standards of quality.

**Dr. Muzaffar Abbas**  
**Professor of Pharmacy, Dean**  
**Department of Pharmacy**

**Tell us about your academic achievements/qualifications/experiences?**

I completed the PhD degree in Pharmacology under Fulbright Scholarship Program from South Dakota State University, USA, in 2016. I worked at different positions including Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Head of Department. Currently, I am working as Dean at Faculty of Pharmacy, Capital University of Science & Technology (CUST). I have broad research interests in the areas of neuroscience, molecular pharmacology and neuropharmacology. My specific field of research focuses on drug discovery and development for neurological disorders including depression, memory, anxiety, opioid tolerance, opioid-induced paradoxical pain, addiction, neuropathic and neuroinflammatory pain in laboratory animal models. I also supervised post-graduate research projects.

I remained member of Society for Neuroscience (SFN), USA, American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET), USA and American Pain Society (APS), USA and Rho Chi Honor Society, South Dakota State University, USA. I am the receipts research grants from Higher Education Commission and Pharmaceutical Industry.

I joined CUST in July, 2018 and I feel honor and proud that I am the part of CUST family. The University believes in effective sharing of goals with its employees and keep mission and vision of the organization on board. Further, University works through team work and offers its assistance to achieve common goals. The University also understand the risk and takes quick

measures as needed. During COVID-19 when academic activities at all Universities were halted, the CUST was among top two University in Pakistan that was 100% ready for online teaching without any delay in the academic calendar. The Portal system at the University is very friendly and available to all students. The University believes in providing conducive learning environment to the students. The CUST has provided me the opportunity to strive to enhance students' educational experiences and provides them with the required resources so that students can gain expertise in their relevant fields.

**How do you perceive the role of QA interventions/strategies being introduced and practiced at CUST? Do they make any qualitative improvements in the existing education environment?**

In academia, Quality Assurance plays a very important role in improving the standards of education and research. The primary focus of Quality Assurance is to ensure that academic institutions meet defined criteria and deliver high-quality outcomes. The Quality assurance at CUST continuously evaluate different academic programs to ensure that they meet established standards of quality. This serves as a stamp of approval, signifying that different programs at CUST adhere to specific educational benchmarks and provides credible education.

Quality Assurance at CUST processes also involve conducting periodic evaluations of various academic programs. This assessment helps identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This also enables departments to enhance the quality of their programs and make informed decisions about resource allocation and program modifications if needed. The Quality Assurance at CUST promotes excellence in teaching and learning. It establishes standards for instructional methods, faculty qualifications, student support services, and assessment practices. Through these standards, academic institutions strive to deliver effective and impactful education. Quality Assurance often conduct evaluations of academic programs to assess the performance through surveys, and analysis of institutional documents. The findings provide valuable feedback to CUST, enabling it to identify areas for improvement and benchmark its academic programs performance against peers.

Overall, quality Assurance at CUST ensures accountability, transparency, and continuous enhancement of academic standards. It helps to maintain the credibility of educational institutions, fosters students' success, and promotes excellence in teaching, research, and other academic endeavors.



**What kind of QA initiatives/strategies are being implemented and practiced in your department?**

Quality Assurance strategies in the Pharmacy Department are crucial to ensure the safety, accuracy, and effectiveness of pharmaceutical products. The Pharmacy Department has developed comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various processes within the pharmacy department. These include prescription processing, dispensing, inventory management, drugs effects & their safety and medication counseling thus minimizing medication errors and adverse effects using technology systems, and effective communication skills.

The Pharmacy Department also provide continuous training and education to its staff to ensure that pharmacy staff are competent in their roles and updated on the latest practices and regulations in Pharmaceutical Services. The Pharmacy Department emphasizes the importance of patient counseling to ensure that patients receive clear instructions on medication use, potential side effects, and any necessary precautions. This can help improve medication adherence and prevent adverse events. Moreover, Pharmacy Department also foster effective collaboration between the Department and other healthcare professionals, including physicians, nurses, and other allied health staff as well as Pharmaceutical Industry. This can help ensure coordinated and seamless care for patients.

By implementing these quality assurance strategies, Pharmacy Department can enhance patient safety, optimize medication management processes, and deliver high-quality pharmaceutical services.

**What QA practices you intend to bring, for ensuring effective conceptual learning of CUST graduate?**

Quality assurance practices play a critical role in ensuring effective conceptual learning for students. The CUST offers excellent teaching facilities to its students. The state-of-the-art classrooms & laboratories, the library, IT labs, sports complex, highly managed portal system, and cafeterias are also available to facilitate students. Implementation of outcome-based education system and volunteer in service activity are strengths of the University. The University is also providing conducive environment to the faculty where they can excel and enjoy the outcomes of qualitative research outcomes. My focus for further improvement of QA practices would be to ensure that curriculum is designed to meet Job market. The Assessment criteria can be further strengthened involving variety of formats, such as multiple-choice

questions, open-ended questions, problem-solving techniques, and problem-solving tasks. Moreover, learning process can further improved through, class discussions, concept maps, and group activities, allowing teachers to monitor students' progress, identify misconceptions, and provide timely feedback. It is also possible to recognize that students have different learning abilities. This can be devised by providing additional resources, adapting teaching methods, and offering enrichment or remedial activities to meet individual needs.

Technology Integration is very crucial for conceptual learning. Interactive simulations, virtual laboratories, educational apps, and online resources can provide opportunities for students to explore and apply concepts in a dynamic and engaging manner.

Moreover, students can be encouraged to reflect on their learning progress and provide feedback to teachers that should be constructive, specific, and focused on the conceptual understanding of the students. Regular feedback helps students identify areas of improvement and promotes metacognition.

By improving above practices, instructors can create a conducive environment for effective conceptual learning, enabling students to develop a deep understanding of the subject matter and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.