



REVIEW COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference

Version Control	
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Policy owner	Director
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Related HECF documents: procedures/guidelines, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklist 0-1c: Renewal of Registration Application Form 0-1b: Application Form For/Renewal of Registration Guide 1-1a: Quality Standards for Fiji Higher Education Guide 1-1b: Evidence Guide to Quality Standards Form 1-1a: Self-assessment to Quality Standards Higher Education Act 2008 Higher Education Regulations 2009 Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2010 Schedule 7 – Higher Education Regulations 2009 – Prescribed Fees Schedule 9 & 10 – Higher Education Regulations 2009
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1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Review Committee is a committee of the Higher Education Commission (Commission), established under Section 9(1) of the Education Act 2008 (“the Act”). Its objectives, membership, duties, and responsibilities are prescribed below.

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the Review Committee (“the Committee”) is to provide an independent review, recommendation, and assistance to the Commission on quality assuring registered Higher Education Institutions (“HEIs”), which includes:
- a. Conducting periodic reviews of registered HEIs for quality assurance according to the criteria and guidelines set out by the Commission as per Regulations 36 and 39(1) of the Higher Education Regulations 2009 (“Regulations 2009”).
 - b. Recommending to the Commission on the outcome of each HEI review in regard to their continuation of Registration as per Regulation 43(1) of the Regulations 2009.
 - c. Submitting reports to the Commission to deliberate on the revocation of Recognition and Registration of HEIs, as per Section 25 of the Act and/or be consulted for the revocation of Registered or Provisionally Registered HEIs, as stated in Regulation 34(1) of the Regulations 2009; and
 - d. In exceptional cases, undertaking special audits on Registered HEIs as directed by the Commission as per Section 9(3) of the Act.

3.0 Membership

- 3.1 The Committee shall consist of **four (4) members** who are not current members of the Commission or other committees appointed by the Commission as stipulated in Section 9(1) of the Act.
- 3.2 Membership does not include internal Secretariat¹ personnel, such as the Director. The composition of the Committee shall be:
- a. A Chairperson, elected internally by members of the Committee; and
 - b. Three (3) members.

¹ Secretariat means officers approved to assist the Commission as stipulated in Regulation 9 of the Regulations 2009.

3.3 The Chairperson and all members of the Committee shall serve a term of 3 years and are eligible for a second term re-appointment.

4.0 Appointment

4.1 The Commission appoints each member.

4.2 The shortlisting and selection process of members is based on Regulation 37(2) of the Regulations 2009, Terms of Reference – Review Committee and other key selection criteria.

4.3 Appointment of each member is on the basis that the following qualifications prescribed in Regulation 37(2) of the Regulations 2009 are met:

- a.** Substantial knowledge and experience with a balanced combination of post-graduate qualifications and work experience.
- b.** Teaching, research, and publication experience in any academic field.
- c.** Knowledge and experience of higher education academic affairs.
- d.** Knowledge and experience of higher education institution management.
- e.** Knowledge and experience in the design, development, and delivery of higher education courses.
- f.** Knowledge and experience in the review of tertiary institutions.
- g.** Knowledge and experience in quality assurance processes.

5.0 Resignation of Membership

5.1 A member intending to resign from the Committee needs to give 30 consecutive days' notice to the Commission in writing.

5.2 The outgoing member will ensure existing review duties are successfully transferred to the current members.

5.3 All items associated with the HEI review submissions and properties of the Commission (laptop or other ICT devices) shall be returned to the HECF Secretariat in working conditions.

6.0 Conflict of Interest

6.1 A member who has any direct or indirect personal pecuniary or institutional interest in any matter coming before the Committee, shall on each and every occasion on which the matter comes before the Committee and as soon as possible after the relevant facts have come to the member's knowledge declare his or her interest in the matter.

6.2 A declaration shall be made in writing by the member to the Commission. The Commission will deliberate on the members disclosure and determine their future involvement in that particular assignment.

7.0 Confidentiality

7.1 All matters discussed by the Committee are confidential and shall not be divulged to any third party without the approval of the Commission.

7.2 It is understood and accepted that discussion with engaged technical subject advisor(s), Secretariat and Commission members does not constitute any breach in confidentiality.

8.0 Internal Committee Meeting

8.1 The Committee shall determine its own meeting procedures for any internal meeting convened by the Committee.

8.2 3 members constitute a quorum for a meeting of the Review Committee.

9.0 Duties and Responsibilities

9.1 Responsibilities of Members

9.1.1 Members of the Committee are expected to understand and observe the legal requirements of the Act, the Regulations 2009, and Terms of Reference – Review Committee.

9.1.2 Members are also expected to:

- a.** Act in the interest of the Commission.
- b.** Understand the review criteria and guidelines to be applied with conducting reviews.
- c.** Contribute the time needed to review submissions provided for reviews.
- d.** Apply good analytical skills, objectivity, and good judgment.
- e.** Prepare and submit reports that are quality assured and are based on fair and balanced assessment.

9.2 Periodic Review of HEIs

9.2.1 The Committee shall conduct the review of HEIs based on the principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behaviour.

9.2.2 Pre-Review

- a. Prior to the commencement of the Review of a HEI, each member must complete a *Conflict of Interest (COI) Declaration Form* to declare any actual, perceived, or potential COI of the HEI they are scheduled to Review.
- b. If a member of the Committee makes a declaration on their COI form, the Secretariat will refer the disclosure to the Commission for their consideration and decision.

9.2.3 Periodic Review of HEIs comprises of 3 phases:

a. Phase 1 – Desktop Review

- i. The Committee shall conduct a desktop review based on the submission received on the HEI.
- ii. The Committee shall meet at least once to confirm the Lead Reviewer² and work plan.
- iii. The Committee may request for technical subject advisor(s)³ in writing – to assist in the Review and assessment of programme materials and learning resources. In such a case, the Committee must notify the Commission before the commencement of Phase 2 – HEI site visit(s) and identify the deliverables to be undertaken by the technical subject advisor(s).
- iv. The Committee shall review the submission against the Review criteria stated in Part 4 of the Regulations 2009 guideline⁴ and consider supplementary information provided by the Secretariat.
- v. The Committee will consider a suite of evidence in the HEI submission. Evidence may include, but is not limited to:
 - Information provided by the HEI as stipulated in Regulation 40 of the Regulations 2009:

² The Lead Reviewer is responsible for leading the Review of the HEI, which includes finalising the work plan, HEI site visit schedule and programme, leading opening and closing meetings during HEI site visit(s), consolidating and finalising the Review report and strategizing for all phases of the Review.

³ Under Section 12(4) of the Higher Education Act 2008, the Commission may, from time to time, appoint such other officers, employees, consultants, agent, or other personnel as it thinks fit for effective performance of its functions.

⁴ Guidelines – refer to the *Quality Standards for Fiji Higher Education*.

- Vision, mission, objectives, policies, regulations, and procedures.
 - Annual report(s).
 - Structure and content of study programmes.
 - Teaching and assessment strategies.
 - Facilities for staff and students.
 - Quality assurance and quality control procedures.
 - Practical attachments, if any.
 - Staff qualifications and other staffing matters.
 - Admission requirements.
 - Audited financial statements.
 - Status of research work (where applicable).
 - Internal review and evaluation procedures.
 - Administrative structure and arrangements.
 - Fees and charges.
 - Any other matters.
 - HEI's application for Renewal of Registration and supporting documents.
 - HEI's response on the *self-assessment: Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions*.
 - the most recent periodic assessment report of the HEI under Review shall be made available (where applicable), outlining the findings and determining the veracity of whether each quality standards has been complied with.
 - The HEI's most recent financial viability assessment report under Review shall be made available (where applicable) to assess the HEI's financial sustainability.
 - Other information provided by the Secretariat on the performance of the HEI, such as monitoring data, learner enrolled numbers, risk assessment, any additional information, or extenuating circumstances.
 - Additional information requested by the Committee.
- vi.** The Committee shall complete the desktop review within **15 calendar days** of receipt of the HEI's submission.
- vii.** The Committee shall submit their desktop review assessment.
- viii.** The Committee must confirm the proposed HEI site visit(s) schedule at least two weeks before the proposed HEI site visit(s) and submit to the Secretariat.
- ix.** The Secretariat will confirm the site visit schedule and date with the HEI and the Committee.

b. Phase 2 – HEI Site Visit(s)

- i. The Committee must meet at least once to plan and strategise for the HEI site visit(s).
- ii. In the event the HEI site visit is not possible due to health and safety concerns, the HEI site visit can be substituted by virtual meetings.
- iii. For any meetings with HEI stakeholders, all Committee members shall use the allocated meeting time to clarify and validate the desktop review assessment findings.
- iv. During HEI site visits, all Committee members should refrain from providing advisory services to HEIs.
- v. Interviewed stakeholders and the Committee members shall complete and sign the attendance register and submit to the Secretariat for record-keeping.
- vi. Where applicable during the HEI site visit, the Committee shall verify evidence requested on-site and inspect the HEI training facilities and learning resources on-site.

c. Phase 3 – HEI Review Report submission

- i. The Committee shall meet at least once to summarise their Review findings in the Review Report and confirm the outcome of the Review.
- ii. The Committee shall demonstrate due diligence in reviewing evidence and information to satisfy itself; the Review findings are based on analysed facts and without prejudice.
- iii. The Review Report should determine the HEI's overall compliance or non-compliance against the applicable Review criteria and guidelines. The Review Report should also include the recommendation to the Commission, either to recommend:
 - Continued Registration without conditions; or
 - Continued Registration with conditions.
- iv. The Lead Reviewed shall be responsible for finalising and submitting the HEI Review Report to the Secretariat.
- v. The Committee shall submit a Review Report in the prescribed reporting template to the Secretariat within 90 days after completing Phase 2 – HEI site visit(s).
- vi. If further clarifications or amendments are required, the Committee will be notified to make the necessary clarification or presentation to the Commission.

9.3 Revocation of HEIs

9.3.1 The Commission may request the Committee to conduct a HEI assessment and submit a report to deliberate on the Revocation of Recognised or Registered HEIs.

9.3.2 The Committee will review submission tabled by the Secretariat on the proposed Revocation of Registered or Provisionally Registered HEIs.

9.4 Special Audit

9.4.1 In exceptional cases, the Commission may request the Committee to conduct special audits of HEIs.

9.4.2 Based on the scope of the special audit, the Committee shall conduct the audit according to the applicable *Quality Standards for Fiji Higher Education* against the evidence submitted by the HEI.

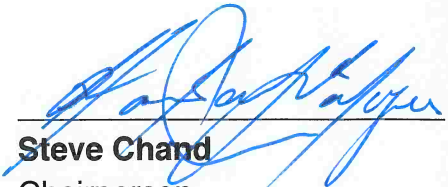
9.4.3 The Committee may undertake HEI site visit(s) if required as part of the special audit.

10.0 Secretariat Roles and Responsibilities

10.1 The Secretariat will provide the following duties to assist the Committee in undertaking its functions:

- a.** Consolidate and disseminate HEI submission to the Committee members for their Review.
- b.** Provide relevant periodic assessment reports, financial viability assessments, and other information (where applicable) that will assist the Committee when reviewing HEIs.
- c.** Act as the liaison between the Committee and the HEI under review to obtain additional information and confirmation of HEI site visit(s) schedule.
- d.** Organise and facilitate logistical arrangements for the Committee members during any scheduled HEI site visit(s).
- e.** Organise and facilitate internal meetings of the Committee, such as booking conference room or office space, printing documents, accessibility to information communication technology services, such as office Wi-Fi internet, printing and photocopying services.
- f.** Arrange payment of allowances and entitlements to the Committee members upon completion and submission of deliverables.
- g.** Provide administrative support to ensure the Committee conducts HEI review within the Commission's criteria and guidelines.

11.0 APPROVAL BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION



Steve Chand
Chairperson
Higher Education Commission

SEPT 19th, 2023
Date