Standard 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The program’s mission, aims and objectives are consistent with, and contribute to, the HEI’s Mission, Vision, and Values, and reflect the particular requirements of Oman. In development of the program, cognizance has been taken of the views of internal and external stakeholders, and periodic review of the program ensures the program’s ongoing alignment with the institution’s priorities and the Omani context. There are appropriate and effective arrangements for management of the program, including in relation to: operational planning; funding; risk management; student grievances; health and safety; a program policy framework; and affiliations with collaborating partners and associated entities. There is routine monitoring and periodically review of the program in order to promote its quality improvement.

Criterion 1.1: Mission, Vision and Values

The program’s mission, aims and objectives are consistent with, and contribute to, the institution’s Mission, Vision, and Values, and reflect the particular requirements of Oman, including the Oman Qualifications Framework. In development of the program, cognizance has been taken of the views of internal and external stakeholders. Periodic review of the program ensures the program’s ongoing alignment with the institution’s priorities and the Omani context. These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program development reflects the particular requirements of Oman, including curriculum content and delivery relevant to Oman. [based on ROSQA, part 2.2, p39]

b) Program learning outcomes reflect fully the expectations of the Oman Qualifications Framework, and meet relevant professional requirements for employment in Oman and abroad [ROSQA, part 2.2, p56].

c) Program development, rationale and aims align with the institution’s Mission, Vision and Values, and the delivery of the program supports the achievement of these.

d) Periodic review of the program includes consideration of the ongoing alignment with the institution’s Mission, Vision and Values.

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1 A significant number of the standard’s criteria and indicators are based on the program criteria used in ROSQA, and on the standards employed by the accreditation bodies, agencies and organisations used as benchmarks, as discussed in the Program Standards Conceptual Design Framework. Where the program criteria and indicators have been based on ROSQA, this has been explicitly identified. A list of the benchmark organisations is set out in Appendix A.
e) Development of the program has been informed by consultation with a number of internal and external stakeholders, including: students and alumni; industry and employers; the community and civil society organizations; and international peers.

Criterion 1.2: Governance (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address governance)

There are appropriate and effective arrangements for oversight of the management of the program, and these arrangements adhere to the institution’s governance systems and regulations.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Oversight of the program is subject to, and benefits from, the institution’s governance systems and regulations.

b) Departmental policies and practices for the program are consistent with those of the institution, and the stated purpose of the institution.

c) The principles of governance for the program (including its committee system) reflect the representation and participation of academic staff, students and other stakeholders; these structures are communicated to all parties based on the principles of transparency, accountability and authority.

Criterion 1.3: Management (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover management)

The program has defined and effective program management arrangements.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program management arrangements are clearly located within the institution’s management structures, ensuring accountability to, and effective communication with, senior management, and also ensuring that program managers have the authority and flexibility to manage the program effectively.

b) The department/school/academic unit managing the program has an appropriate degree of autonomy and is an active policy-making body.

c) There are clear criteria for the appointment of program managers (or equivalent), including those of appropriate qualifications and expertise for academic leadership.

d) The department/school/academic unit managing the program has an effective committee system responsible for the deliberative management of the program, and this system has clear and effective reporting lines with the institution’s committee system.

e) Program managers have clearly defined responsibilities, provide effective leadership, and take responsibility for creating an environment conducive to academic innovation and creativity; the effectiveness of academic leadership is evaluated at defined intervals.

f) Collectively, program management arrangements (individual academic staff roles; program committees) provide academic leadership for establishing program academic standards and quality, and for the effective planning and implementation of the program.

g) There are sufficient, and appropriately qualified or experienced, administrative staff to support effectively the implementation of the program.

h) Where the program is delivered in multiple locations and/or through multiple modes of delivery, there is appropriate managerial, academic and administrative resource and
expertise to effectively manage the program across these locations, and to ensure consistency in the delivery of the program.

**Criterion 1.4: Institutional Affiliations for Programs and Quality Assurance**

*Program affiliation agreements are clearly defined and effectively implemented and managed to maintain academic standards and quality, and to promote quality improvement.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The program has the current formal approval of the institution responsible for the program award(s).

b) There is a formal agreement for any program delivered through a collaborative agreement with another institution which sets out the responsibilities of both the local institution and its partner; this agreement is regularly reviewed with respect to the partnership arrangements.

c) The partnership agreement and program documentation specifies the detailed quality assurance arrangements and respective responsibilities of both parties, including for academic standards, program quality and quality improvement, and monitoring and review; both parties discharge their respective responsibilities effectively.

d) Where the program is based on those of the partner institution, courses/modules, assignments and examinations are adapted to the local environment using examples and illustrations relevant to Oman [based on ROSQA 3.5.4; part 2.2, p38].

e) Program design ensures consistency with both the Oman Qualifications Framework and, for foreign programs the national frameworks of the sending countries, and with other Omani requirements and laws [based on ROSQA 3.5.5].

f) Professional programs include relevant regulations and conventions appropriate to the local environment [based on ROSQA 3.5.5].

g) Where the program is delivered in a branch campus of a foreign institution, program approval by the parent institution is clearly documented, including: program management arrangements: resourcing: the student learning experience on the program at the branch campus; and how students achieve the same learning outcomes as students following the program at the parent institution’s other campus(es).

**Criterion 1.5: Strategic Planning (note: ROSQA program criteria do not include strategic planning)**

*The program is accommodated within the wider strategic plans of the department/school/faculty and the HEI, and planning at program level is effectively aligned to wider strategic plans.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program planning is aligned to the department/school/faculty and HEI’s strategic plans.

b) Program planning incorporates consideration of external benchmarks, the use of evidence and engagement with all key stakeholders.

**Criterion 1.6: Operational Planning**

*Program operational plans are soundly-based, implemented effectively and link to wider operational and strategic planning processes in the institution.*
These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Operational plans for the program align to departmental/school/faculty operational plans and to the institution's Operational Plan, and contribute to the achievement of strategic plans at all these levels.

b) Program operational plans are implemented effectively, including through the use of annual priorities, key performance indicators, and designated responsibilities.

c) Program operational planning is informed by the use of evidence, feedback and intelligence [based on ROSQA, part 2.2, p58].

d) In the case of a decision to close a program, there are clear and specific operational plans to protect the rights of, and learning experience of, any student enrolled on the program.

Criterion 1.7: Financial Management (note: ROSQA program criteria do not include financial management)

The program is adequately funded and operates on a sound and sustainable financial basis; program budgetary processes align with the institution's system for financial management.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program-operating balances and budget projections demonstrate the financial viability and sustainability of the program; budgetary processes for the program allow for the long-term financial planning over at least a three-year period/ a program cohort period.

b) There are clear budgetary and procurement procedures to ensure resources are sufficient for the program to achieve its goals and maintain standards.

c) There are clear lines of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation which take into account the specific needs of the program; program managers have sufficient autonomy to appropriately allocate resources to achieve the program's goals and maintain standards.

d) Program annual and longer-term budgetary processes align with and integrate effectively with the institution's systems for financial management.

e) Where a program is deemed to no longer be financially sustainable, there are plans to phase out the program, including plans for personnel and learning resources specific to the program.

Criterion 1.8: Risk Management (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover risk management)

There are systematic and effective arrangements for identifying, managing, minimizing and monitoring of risk related to the program, and these align with the institution’s arrangements for risk management.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program design and management demonstrates an awareness of all potential risks in the delivery of the program, including risks to academic standards and/or quality.

b) There are effective policies and procedures at the program level for the management, minimization and monitoring of risk, and these arrangements align with the institution's arrangements for risk management.
Criterion 1.9: Policy Management (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address policy management)

The management of the program is guided by a comprehensive policy framework; to support quality improvement, there are effective arrangements for the review and development of this policy framework.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The design and operation of the program is overseen effectively by a framework of policies and guidelines, including institutional, academic, support services and administrative policies.

b) Policies and guidelines relevant to the program are published and easily accessible to program staff and students.

c) There are effective arrangements for the regular review of policies relevant to the program, including arrangements for policy revision and development, to support quality improvement.

Criterion 1.10: Entity Activity Review Systems

There are effective procedures in place to routinely monitor and periodically review the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program monitoring and review procedures support and complement the institution’s policies and procedures for the regular review of its core activities.

b) Program monitoring and review provides an evaluation of program effectiveness, including in relation to: academic standards; currency of the curriculum; teaching and learning; and assessment approaches.

c) Program monitoring and review draws on a range of evidence including: key performance indicators covering recent years (for example, student attainment and progression data); feedback from students and other stakeholders, including professional bodies where relevant; external benchmarks and other external reference points. In this use of evidence, the program is supported by the institution’s data management services [based on ROSQA, part 2.2, p58].

d) Program monitoring and review ensures the ongoing identification of areas for improvement and consequent action planning, thereby supporting and promoting a culture of quality improvement.

Criterion 1.11: Student Grievance Procedures (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address student grievance procedures)

The institution’s Student Grievance Procedures are transparent, clearly communicated and accessible to all students on the program, and contribute to quality improvement at the program level.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:
a) The institution’s code of conduct and procedures for student grievance are transparent and clearly communicated to students in the program handbook, and/or other program materials, including on-line materials.

b) Program students have appropriate access to advice on student grievance procedures, including through advice by program managers and academic staff.

c) The outcomes of student grievance procedures contribute to quality improvement at the program level, as well as at the institutional level.

**Criterion 1.12: Health and Safety (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address health and safety)**

_There are effective policies, procedures and protocols embedded in the design and delivery of the program, to ensure the health and safety of all students and staff involved with the program._

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Health and safety standards at the program level adhere to Oman’s legal requirements for safety and to the institution’s health and safety policies and procedures.

b) The program has appropriate protocols for health and safety, including those particular to the subject specialism, and including designated staff responsibilities.

c) There is regular evaluation of the adequacy of arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of program students and staff.

**Criterion 1.13: Oversight of Associated Entities (e.g. Owned Companies) (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address oversight of associated entities).**

_Where the program design and delivery includes contracts with the institution’s owned companies, these associations are clearly identified; operated in accordance with the institution’s policies and procedures; and evaluated regularly to promote quality improvement._

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Clear identification of all contracts with any of the institution’s owned companies that have a direct impact on the operation of the program, and the rational/purpose of these associations.

b) Adherence by the program to the institution’s policies and procedures for the oversight of associated entities.

c) Established and effective arrangements for the regular evaluation of the impact of these associations on the delivery of the program, and for quality improvement arising from this evaluation.
Standard 2: STUDENT LEARNING BY COURSEWORK

Programs delivered through student learning by coursework are defined by well-grounded student learning outcomes, curricula and teaching, learning and assessment approaches, so as to achieve clearly defined graduate attributes and positive graduate destinations and employability.

Criterion 2.1: Graduate Attributes and Student Learning Outcomes

The program has appropriate and clearly defined student learning outcomes and graduate attributes which students will be able to achieve and demonstrate on the completion of their program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are definitive learning outcomes which are clearly expressed and communicated to staff and students, so that both academic staff and learners know what is expected of them [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p56].

b) Program learning outcomes incorporate effectively the institution’s student graduate attributes.

c) Learning outcomes take full consideration of the academic standards and general expectations in the relevant academic field(s) of study and reflect fully the expectations of the Oman Qualifications Framework for standards of achievement in student outcomes, including: conceptual skills, relevant knowledge, and the ability to apply what is learned [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p56].

d) Where applicable, learning outcomes meet the relevant professional requirements for employment in Oman and abroad [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p56].

e) For articulated qualifications and defined exit awards within the program (for example, a Diploma or Advanced Diploma within a Bachelor’s qualification), there are clearly defined learning outcomes for each award.

f) There are appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable students to demonstrate their development of the graduate attributes and achievement of the learning outcomes.

Criterion 2.2: Curriculum

The curriculum supports achievement of the program’s aims and intended learning outcomes; there are defined and effective processes for the design, evaluation, review and revision of the program’s curriculum.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The curriculum supports achievement of the program’s learning outcomes and is effective in facilitating: acquisition and application of knowledge and understanding; development and application of cognitive skills; and development of general competencies [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp56-57].
b) Overall, the curriculum has a coherence that ensures that the student’s experience has intellectual integrity; and a logic that is linked clearly to the purpose of the program and to the achievement of its outcomes [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp56-57].

c) The design of the curriculum ensures:
   i. Academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner, over time, in terms of: intellectual challenge; acquisition of knowledge and skills; the capacity for conceptualization; and learner autonomy [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp56-57]
   ii. Appropriate balance between: theoretical and practical elements; academic learning and personal development; breadth and depth of subject material [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp56-57]

d) Curriculum design is firmly based on national and international expectations of the academic discipline/field of study, and is also informed by: internal and external stakeholders; subject benchmarks and other external reference points; and recognized good practice. Currency of the curriculum is maintained through the ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the program curriculum (including modules/courses), informed by these reference points.

Criterion 2.3: Student Entry Standards
Admission criteria for the program are appropriate, transparent, and consistently and fairly applied.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Policies and practices for the recruitment and admission of students are designed to secure a good match between students’ achievement, aptitude, skills and competencies, and the demands of the program [based on ROSQA, attachment 1].

b) Recruitment, selection and admission policies and regulations are clear, efficient, explicit and fair, and in accordance with the institution’s policies and regulations.

c) The admission criteria for the program are clearly defined and clearly communicated to all applicants and other stakeholders.

d) For a program delivered in English, the admission criteria relating to English language proficiency have been benchmarked and are consistent with IELTS\(^2\) scores used for entry into similar programs both locally and internationally.

e) There are well-defined policies covering student mobility, transfer, articulation, recognition of prior learning and credit, for both incoming and outgoing students.

Criterion 2.4: Teaching Quality
Teaching is good quality, effective in enabling students to develop as learners and to achieve the program’s learning outcomes, and is supported by formal systems for the evaluation and ongoing improvement of teaching and learning.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

\(^2\) International English Language Testing System (or equivalent)
a) There are sufficient numbers of teaching staff, and teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver the program; the program’s staff-student ratio is appropriate for the subject’s requirements and to deliver the stated teaching and learning approaches; where the institution specifies optimal class sizes, these are adhered to.

b) The quality of teaching is maintained and enhanced through effective staff induction and development.

c) Effective learning is supported by formal systems of teaching quality evaluation and the professional development of teaching staff including:
   i. The input of educational (pedagogic) expertise to support teaching staff, and the use of external recognized good practice.
   ii. Opportunities for staff development, in accordance with the institution’s staff development policy.
   iii. Student feedback on teaching and learning.

d) Teaching methods are effective in conveying the curriculum content and in helping students achieve the learning outcomes of the program [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp57-58].

e) The breadth, depth, pace and challenge of learning and the variety of methods used, is appropriate to each stage of the program and to the needs of students; where appropriate, opportunities are provided for students to learn from practical classes, fieldwork and placement [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp57-58].

f) Students receive effective direction in their individual learning [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, pp57-58].

g) The program’s approach to teaching and learning enables students to develop as independent learners, to study their chosen subject(s) in depth and to develop their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.

Criterion 2.5: Academic Integrity

*Academic integrity on the program is ensured through the consistent application of the institution’s policies on academic integrity and through the proactive steps taken to prevent and address academic misconduct by staff and students.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program staff and students are aware of, and have access to, the institution’s policies and codes of practice on ethical conduct, plagiarism, copyright and conflicts of interest.

b) Proactive steps are taken to ensure that students understand and are able to avoid plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, and to encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in respect of assessment.

c) Appropriate procedures are in place to identify and address academic misconduct by staff or students, and these are implemented effectively and consistently.

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3 Note the original Quality Audit Scope (‘Plagiarism’) has been broadened to encompass ‘Academic Integrity’. This will allow a wider number of issues related to academic misconduct to be considered during program standards assessment. The outcomes/findings of Quality Audit suggest that a focus on plagiarism alone was too limited and that there will be benefit in addressing the broader issue of academic integrity.
Criterion 2.6: Student Placements

There are effective arrangements to assure the quality of student work placements and other forms of work-integrated learning that form part of the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Where appropriate, there are opportunities for students to learn from work placement experience [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p57].

b) Where the program includes student work placements or other forms of work-integrated learning, these are planned and managed as fully-integrated components of the program, including the work-based learning outcomes, and how attainment of these will be addressed.

c) Placement arrangements are fully documented and made available to all the relevant parties.

d) There are effective arrangements to assure the quality of the student’s work-placement experience, including the quality of supervision.

e) There are effective arrangements to evaluate work placements, including in relation to contributing to the program’s goals, and evaluation is used to inform quality improvement.

Criterion 2.7: Assessment Methods, Standards and Moderation

The program has effective arrangements for the assessment of students, to facilitate and demonstrate student achievement, and to ensure that academic standards are maintained.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Assessment procedures for the program adhere to the institution’s assessment regulations and procedures; ensure that academic standards are maintained; and enable different levels of student achievement to be effectively differentiated.

b) Information on the program’s approach to assessment (for example, assessment methods, frequency, criteria, feedback on performance, institutional regulations) is provided to students at the outset of the program.

c) A variety of assessment methods are used; these are clear, effective and reliable and are informed by current best practices for the academic discipline/subject area.

d) Assessment measures effectively students’ achievement of the intended learning outcomes of the program; the assessment method selected are appropriate to the nature of the intended outcomes [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p57].

e) There are clear and appropriate criteria for each grade of student performance; these criteria are communicated to, and understood by, both staff and students [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p57].

f) Feedback to students on their assessment performance is constructive and timely, in order to facilitate students’ learning [based on ROSQA 3.2.6 and attachment 1, p57].

g) There are effective mechanisms to ensure the reliability and fairness of assessment results, including the independent verification of academic standards achieved and internal and external moderation processes.
h) The program’s approach to assessment benefits from periodic review and evaluation, including through consultation with external experts, both locally and internationally.

**Criterion 2.8: Academic Security and Invigilation**

*The security and integrity of the program’s assessment procedures is maintained.*

These normally should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The security and integrity of assessment procedures is assured and there is appropriate independent verification of results [based on ROSQA, attachment 1, p57].

b) The institution’s policies and procedures in relation to academic security and invigilation are clearly communicated to staff and students, as appropriate.

c) Program managers, academic and administrative staff adhere to the institution’s policies and procedures in relation to all aspects of academic security and invigilation.

**Criterion 2.9: Student Retention and Progression**

*The program has effective mechanisms to maintain, monitor and act upon data on student retention, progression and achievement.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program-level data on student achievement, retention, progression and completion rates is recorded and is used to inform annual program monitoring and periodic review.

b) The program has effective mechanisms to identify and support students who are at risk of not progressing academically.

c) The program is able to demonstrate appropriate progression and completion rates, and that students who complete the program have attained the appropriate learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

**Criterion 2.10: Graduate Destination and Employability (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover graduate destinations and employability)**

*There are effective mechanisms to develop graduate employability, and graduate destinations meet students’ and other stakeholders’ expectations and internal and external benchmarks; graduate destinations data and other feedback is used to inform program design, delivery and development.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The program has effective mechanisms to develop graduate employability, and graduate destinations meet stakeholders’ expectations and internal and external benchmarks.

b) The program has mechanisms to record graduate employment and further study destinations data, and uses this data to inform program delivery, development and quality improvement.

c) Feedback from alumni, employers and other stakeholders is used to inform the program design and development of the program.
Standard 3: STUDENT LEARNING BY RESEARCH

The design of the research program meets the requirements of the Oman Qualifications Framework and Oman’s workforce and research and development needs. Research program design is informed by the use of external benchmarks of established good practice for research programs; and the program is regularly monitored and reviewed, including through the use of research student and other stakeholder feedback. Supervisors have the appropriate qualifications, skills and subject knowledge to support research students, and there are mechanisms in place to monitor supervisors’ performance, leading to good quality research supervision that is effective and constructive. Research degree students have adequate access to appropriate resources to support their research progress. The assessment of research degrees is conducted rigorously, fairly and consistently. There are effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate the retention and progression of research students during their program of study, and post-graduation. Research students are provided with ongoing career development opportunities, information and advice to support their needs.

Criterion 3.1: Research Program Design (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not address research program design)

The research program design is aligned with the requirements of the Oman Qualifications Framework and Oman’s workforce and research and development needs, and is informed by the use of external benchmarks of established good practice for research programs; the program is regularly monitored and reviewed, including through the use of research student and other stakeholder feedback.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) In the case of a research degree, the program design meets the requirements of the Oman Qualifications Framework; the program learning outcomes and academic standards are appropriate for the level of the award and distinctly more challenging than undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses in the same discipline [ROSQA].

b) Research degree program design is relevant to Oman’s workforce and research and development needs.

c) The research program design ensures that students receive training in the principles of good research in their discipline as well as in-depth advanced research training.

d) The research program design ensures that students have the opportunity to develop professional and transferable skills.

In alignment with the scope for Institutional Accreditation Stage 1, as set out in the Quality Audit Manual (2008), the focus of this standard is on the quality of student learning by research on the program, and the standard applies to all programs which involve a substantial research component, including the following: Honours year of a bachelor’s degree; Masters degree by research; and PhD.
e) The research program design encourages students to consider the broad context of their research area, including in relation to societal, legal and ethical matters.

f) The research program design is informed by the use of national and international benchmarks of recognised good practice in research program design to ensure the appropriate provision of policies, services, resources and supervision.

g) The research program is regularly monitored and periodically reviewed against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are offered.

h) There are mechanisms in place to collect, evaluate and respond to feedback from those concerned with research degrees, including individual research students and groups of research students, or their representatives.

Criterion 3.2: Supervisors (note: ROSQA program criteria do not address supervisors)

Supervisors have the appropriate qualifications, skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and there are mechanisms in place to monitor supervisors’ performance.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Supervisors are appropriately qualified to undertake supervision, or have equivalent professional/research experience, and have appropriate expertise in the subject discipline area.

b) Academic staff who supervise research students are actively involved in research in their discipline area and have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students, and to monitor their progress effectively.

c) Supervisors receive support and training that they need to provide high quality supervisory support for their students.

d) There are arrangements in place to monitor the performance of supervisors, including through the use of student feedback, in order to promote improvement in the quality of research student supervision.

Criterion 3.3: Postgraduate Supervision (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not explicitly include postgraduate supervision)

There is effective and constructive research supervision.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Individual supervisors have sufficient time and resources to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

b) Each research student has a supervisory team which includes, as a minimum, a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact and support.

c) The institutions regulations and codes of practice for research degrees are readily available to all staff and students, and are written in a clear language understood by all users. These are supplemented by accessible, subject-specific guidance at the level of the department/school/faculty.

d) There are clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research students’ progress and their development needs, including formal reviews of students’ progress at
different stages. Research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are aware of the progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping formal records of the outcomes of progress meetings and related activities.

**Criterion 3.4: Student Research Support (note: the ROSQA criteria do not explicitly cover student research support)**

*Students undertaking research degrees are appropriately qualified and prepared to do so, and have adequate access to appropriate physical, learning, information and other resources to support their research progress.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) To ensure high quality research training, students accepted onto research degree programs are appropriately qualified and prepared. Clear admission requirements, and a robust admissions process, are in place to attract and recruit high quality applicants.

b) There are established systems for a department/school/faculty to identify and request from the HEI resources needs for its research programs, and for the HEI to consider these demands as part of the resource allocation process.

c) Research students have appropriate and adequate access to laboratory and office space, library and information resources to support their research activities.

d) There are funded opportunities for research students to participate in conferences and other research events.

e) Students on research degree programs are able to participate in the life of a scholarly intellectual community. This community is where high quality research is taking place and provides support for doing and learning about research.

**Criterion 3.5: Thesis Examination**

*Research degrees final assessment criteria and procedures are implemented rigorously, fairly and consistently.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The criteria used to assess research degrees are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners.

b) Research degrees final assessment procedures are clear and governed by the HEIs regulations and guidelines, which set academic standards and are implemented rigorously, consistently and fairly at the program level.

c) Research degrees final assessment procedures include input from an external examiner(s), as set out in the HEI’s regulations and guidelines, and are carried out to a reasonable timescale.

d) The department/school/faculty records, monitors and evaluates student completion rates for research programs, and uses this data to inform its quality improvement of research programs [based on ROSQA, Section 9 Research, p92].
Criterion 3.6: Retention, Graduate Destinations and Employability (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover retention, graduate destinations and employability)

There are effective arrangements to monitor and evaluate the retention and progression of research students during their program of study, and post-graduation. Research students are provided with ongoing information and advice to support their needs.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Student retention and progression rates for research programs are recorded and evaluated, including in relation to appropriate benchmarks, and the findings are used to inform the quality of research degree provision.

b) Research students are provided with career information prior to embarking on their research program, and ongoing career advice is provided to enable students to explore the impact they can have in a wide range of sectors, and so manage their careers.

c) Research student post-program employment and further study rates are recorded and evaluated, including in relation to student ambitions and HEI expectations and appropriate benchmarks.
Standard 4: STAFF RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

Research activity at the program level is managed effectively within a framework of departmental and institutional strategies, policies and plans, and aligns with the formal requirements associated with the HEI’s classification. The research activities of program staff are funded appropriately and enable equitable and quality research outcomes, and there are appropriate arrangements for supporting, monitoring and evaluating program staff’s research performance. Program staff are provided with professional development opportunities in order for them to develop, maintain and enhance their research skills and expertise. There is an effective approach to developing and maintaining research-teaching linkages within the program. Where appropriate, program staff undertake consultancy activities with external parties, in line with the HEIs policies and guidelines, and there is an effective strategy for commercialising any research output at the program level.

Criterion 4.1: Research Planning and Management (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover research planning and management)

Program Research activity is managed within a framework of departmental and institutional strategies, policies and plans.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There is an explicit strategy, policy and plan for program staff research activity; these align with the HEI’s strategic research objectives.

b) The program staff research plan includes appropriate resource allocation (including the allocation of staff time) to support delivery of the plan; the achievement of the plan’s targets is monitored on a regular basis (see also Criterion 4.3 Research Funding Schemes).

c) The department/school/faculty adheres to the HEI’s principles and codes of practice on research integrity and good research conduct; there are clear managerial arrangements for ensuring good research conduct, and an identified senior staff member in the department/school/faculty responsible for ensuring good research conduct (see also Criterion 4.6 Intellectual Property).

Criterion 4.2: Research Performance

There are appropriate arrangements for supporting, monitoring and evaluating program staff’s research performance.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The program staff research plan identifies the ways in which staff research output will be supported and encouraged.

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5 Refer to the Classification of Institutions in ROSQA [http://www.oaaa.gov.om/Framework.aspx#Fm_Institution](http://www.oaaa.gov.om/Framework.aspx#Fm_Institution)
b) Program staff’s research activity is regularly monitored and evaluated, including with reference to the HEI’s performance indicators and benchmarks; the evaluation includes consideration of the impact of the research, both within the program/department/school, and more widely [based on ROSQA].

c) Individual program staff’s research output is considered in performance planning and review and in promotion criteria (see also Criterion 8.6 Performance Planning and Review).

**Criterion 4.3: Research Funding Schemes**

*The research activities of program staff are funded appropriately and enable equitable and quality research outcomes.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are adequate facilities, equipment and other resources to deliver the strategy for program staff research (see also Criterion 4.1 Research Planning and Management) [based on ROSQA 9.3].

b) There are clear policies which set out the ownership of, and responsibility for, facilities, equipment and other resources obtained through research grants, commissioned research or other ventures with industry, and other stakeholders [based on ROSQA 9.3.4].

c) Program staff have opportunities to apply for internal and external research grants, and are given assistance to do so.

**Criterion 4.4: Consultancy Activities**

*Where appropriate, program staff and research students undertake consultancy activities with external organizations or individuals, in line with the HEIs policies and guidelines.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) A culture of entrepreneurship is actively encouraged in program staff and research students within the context of the department/school/faculty research strategy and policy, and the HEIs research strategy and policies [based on ROSQA 9.2.4]

b) Cooperative research activities between the program staff and other academic institutions, governmental and non-governmental bodies, industry or organizations is actively encouraged [based on ROSQA 9.1.4].

c) Program staff and, where applicable, research students, adhere to the HEIs policies and guidelines regarding consultancy activities.

d) Consultancy activities undertaken by program staff and research students make a positive contribution, directly or indirectly to the provision of the program.

**Criterion 4.5: Ethics and Bio-safety (note: the ROSQA criteria do not cover ethics and bio-safety)**

*Any research undertaken which involves ethical (human, animal, genetic) or bio-safety considerations, is appropriately controlled and managed, and adheres to the HEIs policies and codes of practice.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:
a) Any research activity undertaken by program staff and postgraduate students is governed by, and adheres to, the HEIs policies, procedures and codes of conduct regarding research ethics and bio-safety.

b) All proposed research projects undertaken by staff or students which involve ethical or bio-safety considerations are subject to the approval of the HEI’s high-level committee established to monitor compliance in these matters; research students are provided with appropriate support and training in preparing their applications to this committee.

Criterion 4.6: Intellectual Property (note: the ROSQA criteria do not cover intellectual property)

Program staff and postgraduate research students adhere to the HEIs intellectual property policies, and have appropriate training to support them in doing so.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program staff and postgraduate research students have appropriate training, so that they are aware of and understand the HEIs intellectual property policies.

b) In undertaking research, program staff and postgraduate research students adhere to the HEI’s intellectual property policies, and to Royal Decree 65/2008 (see also Criterion 2.5 Academic Integrity).

Criterion 4.7: Professional Development for Research (note: the ROSQA criteria do not address professional development for research)

Program staff are provided with professional development opportunities in order for them to develop, maintain and enhance their research skills and expertise.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Research-active program staff and research students have the opportunity to participate in regular research training and development, including in relation to good research conduct.

b) Teaching staff who are at an early career stage are supported in the development of their research, through mechanisms such as mentoring, inclusion in project teams and assistance in developing research proposals.

c) Program staff research training needs are considered as part of staff performance planning and review, and resources are allocated accordingly (see also Criterion 8.6 Performance Planning and Review).

d) Program staff take a proactive role in their own researcher development.

Criterion 4.8: Research Commercialisation (note: ROSQA criteria do not refer to research commercialisation)

There is an effective strategy for commercializing any research output at the program level.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) A culture of entrepreneurship is actively encouraged among program staff and research students, informed by the HEI’s commercial strategy, where applicable [based on ROSQA 9.2.4].
b) The department/school/faculty has a strategy for capitalising on the expertise of program staff and postgraduate students in providing services externally and in generating funds [based on ROSQA 9.2.2].

Criterion 4.9: Research-Teaching Nexus (note: the ROSQA criteria do not address research-teaching nexus)

*There is an effective approach to developing and maintaining research-teaching linkages within the program.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The interaction between staff research and teaching is reflected in the curriculum and in teaching and learning approaches, with staff encouraged to include in the program information about their research activities, together with other significant research developments in the field.

b) Where relevant, there should be opportunities for research students to participate in joint research projects with staff.

c) The interaction between staff research and teaching supports and encourages students in their development of scholarship and research.
Standard 5: INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There is an effective industry and community engagement plan at the program level, which is informed by the wider HEI engagement plan, and program staff have opportunities to contribute to the implementation of those plans. There are effective relationships with industry and employers; the professions, including professional bodies (where relevant); and other professional stakeholders. There are effective relationships with other education providers and with alumni at the program level, leading to mutual benefits. There are also positive and effective relationships at the program level with the community at large.

Criterion 5.1: Industry and Community Engagement Planning and Management (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not address industry and community engagement planning and management)

There is an effective program-level industry and community engagement plan, which is effective in directing industry and community engagement.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The program-level industry and community engagement plan is informed by the wider HEI industry and community development plan; the program-level plan identifies key industry and community stakeholders, and sets out a systematic approach to how it engages with these stakeholders.

b) Program staff are aware of both the program/department industry and community engagement plan and the HEI's wider industry and community engagement plan, and can identify how they can contribute individually and collectively to those plans.

c) The implementation of the program/department industry and community engagement plan is regularly evaluated, using identified criteria, including staff participation, and considers the benefits of industry and community engagement activities.

Criterion 5.2: Relationships with Industry and Employers (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not address relationships with industry and employers)

There is an effective relationship at the program level with industry and employers.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program development is based on the needs of a range of relevant stakeholders, including industry and employers; program objectives and learning outcomes identify the career and professional attributes that the program is preparing graduates to achieve (see also Criterion 2.1 Graduate attributes and student learning outcomes; and Criterion 3.1 Research program design).

b) Industry and employer stakeholders are actively involved in the planning and design of the curriculum, and in the monitoring and review of the program; there are formal processes for gathering feedback, such as advisory groups and/or other forms of engagement and ongoing dialogue (see also Criterion 2.2 Curriculum).
c) Program design and delivery facilitates opportunities for students to make links with industry and employers (for example, guest lecturers from relevant organizations; career days; practical training; work placements and other workplace exposure) (see also Criterion 2.6 Student placements).

d) There are opportunities for program staff to make links with industry and employers, in doing so contributing their expertise to relevant partners in industry, business and government (through, for example, consultancy; company board membership; relevant research and development; delivery of executive education courses). These opportunities also contribute to individual staff member's continuing professional development (see also Criterion 4.4 Consultancy activities; and Criterion 4.8 Research commercialisation).

e) The effectiveness of the relationship with industry and employers at the program level is regularly reviewed, using a range of established feedback mechanisms, in order to continue to support and develop these relationships.

Criterion 5.3: Relationships with Professions (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not address relationships with the professions)

The program has effective relationships with the professions, including professional bodies, where relevant, and other professional stakeholders.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Where applicable, professional bodies relevant to the program are identified, and actively used as external reference points; program design and delivery considers professional accreditation requirements, including legislative and licensing requirements, and accepted international norms (see also Criterion 2.1 Graduate attributes and student learning outcomes; and Criterion 3.1 Research program design).

b) Professional practitioners, where relevant, are actively involved in the planning and design of the curriculum, and in the monitoring and review of the program; there are formal processes for gathering feedback, such as advisory groups and/or other forms of engagement and ongoing dialogue (see also Criterion 2.2 Curriculum).

Criterion 5.4: Relationships with other Education Providers (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover relationships with other education providers)

There are effective relationships with other education providers at the program level, leading to mutual benefits.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) At the program level, the approach to achieving effective relationships with other education providers is informed by the wider HEI strategy.

b) At the program level, there are effective relationships with other education providers, to promote opportunities of mutual benefit (for example, joint program or service agreements; articulation agreements; informal collaborative activities; resource sharing).

c) The effectiveness of the relationship with other education providers is regularly reviewed, using a range of established feedback mechanisms, in order to continue to support and develop these relationships.
 Criterion 5.5: Relationships with Alumni (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover relationships with alumni)

There are positive, and mutually beneficial, relationships with alumni at the program level. These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) At the program level, there is effective use made of the HEI’s formal arrangements for alumni (for example, an alumni association; an alumni database).

b) There are active linkages and interaction with alumni at the program level, to mutual benefit.

c) Alumni are encouraged to play a role at the program level, for example, in preparing current students for their professional future; in providing linkages with industry and the professions; and in contributing to the ongoing development of the program.

d) The effectiveness of the relationship with the program’s alumni is regularly reviewed, using a range of feedback mechanisms, in order to continue to support and develop this relationship.

 Criterion 5.6: Relationships with the Community at Large

There are positive and effective relationships at the program level with the community at large. These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The approach at the program level to relationships with the community at large are consistent with the HEI’s strategy and policy, and appropriate for the knowledge and skills of teaching staff and students on the program.

b) Program staff are aware of the HEI’s and program’s community agendas, and have structured opportunities to contribute to the design and delivery of these agendas.

c) Relationships with the community draw on community expertise to support the development and delivery of the program.

d) At the program level, there are effective relationships with schools in the area, so as to provide information about higher education and career opportunities; and to offer other forms of support and assistance to schools [based on ROSQA].

e) The effectiveness of relationships with the community at large is periodically reviewed, using a range of established feedback mechanisms, in order to continue to support and develop these relationships.
Standard 6: ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

There are effective systems in place for the planning and management of academic support services, so as to ensure that these services are appropriate and adequate for program student and that they facilitate students’ achievement of the program’s learning outcomes. There are also effective arrangements in place for the registration and enrollment of program students and for the maintenance and use of students’ records. There are a range of academic support services and facilities available for, and accessible to, program students (library and information services; information and learning technology services; academic advisory system; learning support services; teaching resources) and these are appropriate and adequate to support student learning on the program.

Criterion 6.1: Academic support services planning and management (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover academic support services planning and management)

There are effective systems in place for the planning and management of academic support services, so as to ensure that academic support services for program students are appropriate and adequate, and facilitate students’ achievement of the program’s learning outcomes.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Planning and management at the program level includes the identification of students’ academic support services needs; the delivery of these services; and the evaluation of the effectiveness of these services. Planning takes into account the specific needs of students in non-standard modes of study and/or studying in different locations.

b) Planning and management of academic support services at the program level are informed by higher level strategic and operational planning of academic support services and also contribute to management and development of the HEI’s academic support services.

c) Academic support services at the program level support students’ achievement of the program’s educational goals and learning outcomes.

d) The adequacy and effectiveness of academic support services are reviewed annually at the program level, using feedback from all relevant stakeholders, including the program’s students, so as to encourage quality improvement.

Criterion 6.2: Registry (enrolment and student records) (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover Registry)

There are effective arrangements in place for the registration and enrolment of the program’s students. Program staff have appropriate access to the HEI’s student records system, and adhere to the HEI’s policies relating to the use of that system.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are effective arrangements in place for the registration and enrolment of program students, with any program-specific arrangements aligning with those of the HEI. Student satisfaction with registration and enrolment is surveyed as part of the program’s monitoring and review processes.
b) Program staff adhere to the HEI’s policies governing the collection, maintenance, disposal and security of student records.

c) Program staff have appropriate access to students’ records and the HEI’s student record management system, while also maintaining the confidentiality of individual student information.

d) Program staff have appropriate access to aggregated student statistical data for the purpose of program planning, reporting and quality assurance and improvement activities.

Criterion 6.3: Library

*The library and other related information services and resources are appropriate and adequate to support student learning on the program, and are regularly evaluated to ensure the quality improvement of the services and resources, including their ongoing currency.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Library and other information services and resources are appropriate and adequate for the program, and support the program’s approach to teaching, learning and, where appropriate, research. These resources are sufficient in quality, depth, diversity and currency to meet the needs of all staff and students on the program and to enable students to achieve the program’s learning outcomes [based on ROSQA pp75-76].

b) Program staff have opportunities to input to the library’s resource acquisition planning.

c) The library is managed in such as way that the program’s students and staff have adequate access to its resources when required, regardless of where they are located.

d) Program students, including distance and/or blended learning students, have appropriate access to electronic and online learning resources, and to inter-library loans [based on ROSQA 3.6.5 and pp75-76].

e) Program students receive appropriate and adequate support to develop the skills needed to make effective use of the library facilities and learning resources. This includes support in the development of students’ digital literacy, so that students can source information effectively online and in a virtual learning environment [based on ROSQA p77].

f) Program students and staff have the opportunity to provide feedback on the quality of the library and other information services and resources. This feedback contributes to the regular evaluation of library facilities and resources, leading to quality improvement.

g) Effective implementation of the HEI’s policies and procedures at the program level ensures that the infringement of copyright of materials is avoided, in line with national laws (see also Criterion 4.6 Intellectual property).

Criterion 6.4: Information and Learning Technology Services

*Information and learning technology services are appropriate and adequate to support student learning on the program, and are regularly evaluated to ensure the quality improvement of these services.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Information and learning technology services are appropriate and adequate for the program, and support the program’s approach to teaching, learning and, where appropriate, research.
These services are adequate to meet the needs of all program staff and students and enable students to achieve the program’s learning outcomes [based on ROSQA pp75-76].

b) Program students receive appropriate and adequate support to develop the skills needed to make effective use of learning technology services. This includes support in the development of students’ digital literacy, so that students can work effectively online and in a virtual learning environment [based on ROSQA p77].

c) Information and learning technology services are accessible and inclusive and cater for a wide range of potential student requirements, including access to assistive technologies, where appropriate.

d) The program’s approach to teaching and learning includes the use, where appropriate, of an intranet and/or learning platform, and this is used effectively to support interactive learning.

e) Program staff and students are supported in the safe use of the internet and virtual learning environments, and are aware of the HEI’s policies/codes of conduct on the appropriate use of the internet [based on ROSQA 6.5.7].

f) Effective implementation of the HEI’s policies and procedures at the program level ensures that the infringement of copyright of software is avoided, in line with national laws (see also Criterion 4.6 Intellectual property).

g) Program students and staff have the opportunity to feedback on the quality of the information and learning technology services. This feedback contributes to the regular evaluation of, information and learning technology services leading to quality improvement.

Criterion 6.5: Academic Advising

There is an effective formal academic advisory system in place for students on the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There is a formal system of academic advising in place, so that there are regular opportunities for individual program students to discuss with their adviser issues about their academic progress [based on ROSQA p57].

b) Advisers are appropriately trained to carry out their advisory role and when to refer students to others, and to whom. The number of advisees allocated to an advisor is appropriate for effective advising and in relation to the advisor’s other responsibilities.

c) Advisers have appropriate access to students’ records in order to undertake their adviser role; in doing so, advisers adhere to the HEI’s policies and/or codes of conduct regarding confidentiality of academic or personal issues (see also Criterion 6.2 Registry (enrolment and student records)).

d) In addition to formal advisor support for students, teaching staff are available at sufficient scheduled times for consultation and advice to students; teaching staff are familiar with the HEI’s support services for students, and are able to refer them to these services as appropriate [based on ROSQA 3.2.1].

e) The academic progress of individual students on the program is monitored and assistance and support is provided to those students exhibiting poor academic performance (see also Criterion 6.6 Student learning support) [based on ROSQA 3.2.4].
f) The academic advising arrangements for the program’s students are regularly reviewed, including through the use of student feedback, to assure and improve their effectiveness.

**Criterion 6.6: Student Learning Support**

*Student learning support services and resources are appropriate and effective in supporting students on the program.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are effective mechanisms for identifying the learning needs of program students, and for planning and delivering student learning support services and activities appropriate to meet those needs (see also Criterion 6.5 Academic advising).

b) There are appropriate preparatory and orientation activities to help prepare students for higher education study.

c) Program students have support to develop their academic skills (for example, numeracy; writing and referencing; research) through the provision of extra-curricular services.

d) Where student peer support networks exist, these are supported and evaluated for their effectiveness in supporting student learning.

g) Student learning support services and activities for program students are regularly reviewed, including through the use of student feedback, to assure and improve their effectiveness [based on ROSQA].

**Criterion 6.7: Teaching Resources**

*Teaching resources are appropriate and adequate for the effective delivery of the program.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are effective systems for teaching resource allocation to ensure the sustainability, maintenance and improvement of teaching resources for the program [based on ROSQA attachment 1, p58].

b) Teaching resources are appropriate and adequate to meet the needs of the program, including the program’s approach to teaching, learning and, where applicable, research; the facilities provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and/or professional development, and foster staff-student interaction; where required, there are the necessary specialist facilities (for example, laboratories; workshops; practice rooms).

c) Where applicable, specialist facilities are of good quality; adequately stocked with equipment and supplies; and supported by appropriately qualified technical staff.

d) There are adequate learning spaces and facilities to support informal learning and private study.

e) The physical, social and virtual learning environments are safe, accessible, supportive and reliable for every program student, and the environment and facilities meet Omani health and safety requirements (see also Criterion 1.12 Health and Safety; and Criterion 6.4 Information and learning technology services) [based on ROSQA 6.2.1].

f) The quality and effectiveness of teaching resources are regularly reviewed, including through the use of staff and student feedback, to assure and improve their effectiveness [based on ROSQA 6.2.4].
Standard 7: STUDENTS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

There are effective systems in place for the planning and management of support services for program students, including the analysis of the student body’s demographic profile, so as to ensure that student support services for students are appropriate and adequate. A positive and constructive climate is maintained for students on the program, including through opportunities for students to make their views known, and for this to contribute to the quality improvement of student learning, and support services and facilities. Program students are given clear and accurate advice and guidance on their rights and responsibilities, and on the HEI's student disciplinary regulations and procedures. Program students have access to a wide range of good quality services and facilities, which are appropriate to meet their needs and include: career and employment services; financial advice and support; medical and counseling facilities; social and recreational services and facilities; and, where applicable, accommodation, catering and transportation.

Criterion 7.1: Students and Student Support Services Planning and Management (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover students and student support services planning and management)

There are effective systems in place for the planning and management of student support services, so as to ensure that support services for program students are appropriate and adequate.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Planning includes the identification of support needs of program students, including taking into consideration the demographic profile of students; service delivery; and the evaluation of the effectiveness of these services. Planning takes into account the specific needs of students in non-standard modes of study and/or studying in different locations.

b) The identification of the needs of program students informs the wider strategic and operational planning of student support services at the department/school/faculty and HEI levels.

c) The adequacy and effectiveness of student support services are reviewed annually at the program level, using feedback from a range of relevant stakeholders, including the program students, so as to encourage quality improvement.

Criterion 7.2: Student Profile (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover student profile)

The student profile of the program is critically analysed to inform the delivery of services and facilities to meet current student needs, and to inform longer-term planning and development.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:
a) A comprehensive range of profile data is collected for program students, including by cohort and mode of study, by gender and by other key demographic characteristics.
b) Student profile data for the program (including trend data) is critically analysed to inform the delivery of services and facilities to meet current students’ needs, and also to inform longer-term planning and development.

Criterion 7.3: Student Satisfaction and Climate
A positive and constructive climate is maintained for program students, including through opportunities for students to make their views known, and for this to contribute to the quality improvement of learning opportunities, services and facilities.
These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:
a) There are arrangements at the program level for effective representation of the student voice; these arrangements adhere to the HEI’s policy on student representation, and provide the opportunities for all students’ views to be heard.
b) There are formal mechanisms for program students to air grievances and make a complaint about the quality of learning opportunities and/or student support services; students are given clear and accurate advice and guidance on the HEI’s code of conduct for student grievances (see also Criterion 1.11 Student Grievance Procedure).
c) There are structured opportunities for students to give feedback their individual views on the quality of learning opportunities and student support services (for example, through student surveys). The analysis of this feedback is made available to stakeholders and is used to inform quality improvement [based on ROSQA 4.1.5].
d) There are opportunities for program students to participate in activities that make a positive contribution to their learning experience (for example peer counseling; co-curricular activities; community engagement).

Criterion 7.4: Student Behaviour
Program students are given clear and accurate advice and guidance on their rights and responsibilities, and on the HEI’s student disciplinary regulations and procedures.
These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:
a) Program students are given clear and accurate advice and guidance on their rights and responsibilities, as set out in the HEI’s code of conduct and/or regulations [based on ROSQA 4.4.1].
b) Program students are given clear and accurate advice and guidance on the HEI’s regulations and procedures in the case of the breach of student discipline and/or inappropriate student behavior, including advice on the HEI’s appeals procedure. [based on ROSQA 4.4.2].
c) Data on breaches of student discipline and/or inappropriate student behavior is considered as part of program periodic review, so as to enable program managers to address any systemic issues that require attention.
Criterion 7.5: Career and Employment Services (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not cover career and employment services)

There are appropriate and adequate career and employment services to assist students on the program in preparing for employment and planning their career routes.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There is a range of career education, information, advice and guidance available to program students, and information on these services is provided to students at the outset of their studies.

b) Career and employment education, information, advice and guidance is provided to program students by staff qualified and skilled to do so, and who are appropriately supported and resourced.

c) Where career education is embedded in the program’s curriculum (including through work placements), the intended learning outcomes contribute to the aims and objectives of the program; clearly identify knowledge, understanding and skills; and are assessed appropriately (see also Criterion 2.1 Graduate Attributes and Student Learning Outcomes; Criterion 2.6 Student Placements; and Criterion 2.10 Graduate Destination and Employability).

d) Program students understand how the knowledge, understanding and skills acquired during the program of study are intended to be of use to them in their career plans.

e) Program staff and career and employment services staff understand their individual responsibilities for encouraging students to engage with careers and employment services and activities.

f) Program monitoring and periodic review includes evaluation of career and employment services for program students.

Criterion 7.6: Student Finances

Program students benefit from the HEI’s sound management of student finances, including opportunities to access financial aid and advice.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program students benefit from the HEI managing effectively, fairly and transparently all matters relating to student finances.

b) Where the HEI offers financial aid, including scholarships, program students have the opportunity to apply for such aid, on the basis of published criteria.

c) Program students can access financial counseling services, for support and advice [based on ROSQA 4.6.3].

d) Program monitoring and periodic review includes evaluation of student financial aid and services.

Criterion 7.7: Accommodation, Catering and Transportation

Program students have access to good quality accommodation, catering and transportation arrangements (as applicable), which are effectively managed by the HEI and meet Omani health and safety requirements.
These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program students have access to catering services and facilities which are culturally appropriate, healthy, affordable and which meet Omani health and safety requirements.

b) Where provided, transportation services approved by the HEI are appropriate for the needs of program students. The services are governed by the HEIs policies and procedures, which are effective in ensuring that the transportation services meet Omani health and safety requirements.

c) Where provided, accommodation services approved by the HEI are appropriate for the needs of program students, including ensuring that cultural norms are respected. The services are governed by the HEIs policies and procedures, which are effective in ensuring that accommodation meets Omani health and safety requirements, and the general well-being of the residents [based on ROSQA 4.3.1].

d) There are arrangements in place to gather feedback from program students on the quality and appropriateness of accommodation, catering and transportation facilities and services, and this feedback is used to ensure quality improvement

**Criterion 7.8: Medical and Counseling facilities**

*Program students have access to good quality medical and counseling facilities, which meet their specific needs.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are effective arrangements in place to identify the welfare needs of program students for medical and counseling facilities (for example, personal, psychological or health problems), and a range of appropriate professional services to meet those needs.

b) Specialist professional services, such as medical services and student counseling, are provided by staff with appropriate qualifications and experience [based on ROSQA 4.2.3].

c) There are arrangements in place to gather feedback from program students as part of an evaluation of the usefulness and appropriateness of medical and counseling facilities, and this feedback is used to ensure quality improvement [based on ROSQA 4.2.4].

**Criterion 7.9: International Student Services**

*International students on the program have access to good quality support services which meet their particular needs.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The orientation and induction arrangements for new program students include specific support activities to meet the needs of international students, to help them to adjust to study in Oman and to improve the quality of their educational experience.

b) There are appropriate and adequate support services to meet the ongoing needs of international students, including languages and learning support services.

c) There are arrangements in place to gather feedback from international students on usefulness and appropriateness of international students’ support services and facilities, and this feedback is used to ensure quality improvement.
Criterion 7.10: Social and Recreational Services and Facilities (note: ROSQA program criteria do not cover social and recreational services and facilities)

Program students have access to appropriate social and recreational services and facilities which are effective in supporting their well-being, personal development and achievements.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Program students have access to, and are encouraged to participate in, the HEI’s social and recreational facilities and activities, which align with the institution’s Mission, and the characteristics of the student body.

b) Social and recreational facilities are culturally appropriate for program students, including opportunities for religious observance.

c) Where applicable, program staff and students are aware of the HEI’s policies and procedures regarding its supervision of such social and recreational facilities and activities.

d) There are arrangements in place to gather feedback from the program students as part of an evaluation of social and recreational services and facilities, and this feedback is used to ensure quality improvement.
Standard 8: STAFF AND STAFF SUPPORT SERVICES

**Human resources planning and management at the program level contributes to the effective delivery of the program.** The staff profile is appropriate for the effective delivery of the program, and reflects the HEI’s Omanisation plan. The recruitment, selection and induction of program staff ensures that new staff are appropriately qualified, experienced, competent and prepared for their roles. Program staff benefit from having clearly defined roles and responsibilities and an appropriate workload, against which their performance is regularly evaluated, and their professional development needs identified and addressed. Program staff have appropriate opportunities to apply for promotion and other rewards. There is a positive organisational climate for staff at the program level.

**Criterion 8.1: Human Resources Planning and Management**

*Human resources planning and management at the program level contributes to the effective delivery of the program.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There is appropriate delegation of authority for human resources planning and management to program/department/school managers, and program staff are managed effectively (see also Criterion 1.3 Management) [based on ROSQA 8.1.4].

b) Staffing requirements for the program are reviewed regularly through a formal planning process, and are informed by and contribute to human resources planning at the HEI level.

c) Program staff are provided with a staff handbook (or have access to other media) which sets out the HEI’s human resources policies and procedures.

**Criterion 8.2: Staff Profile**

*The staff profile (including both teaching and administrative staff) is appropriate for the effective delivery of the program.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The number, qualifications, experience and competencies of program teaching staff is sufficient for supporting the effective implementation of the program [based on ROSQA 8.1.1].

b) Teaching staff are proficient in the language of instruction in the program.

c) Teaching staff meet the requirements of any relevant governing authorities, professional bodies, or affiliate HEIs.

d) The balance of part-time and full-time teaching staff is appropriate for the effective delivery of the program; adheres to any HEI stipulations and/or policies on part-time staff; and is in accordance with national laws.

e) There are sufficient, and appropriately qualified or experienced, administrative staff to support the effective implementation of the program and to ensure the good management and deployment of resources (see also Criterion 1.4 Management).
f) The overall profile of staff who contribute to the delivery of the program is appropriately diverse to meet the aims of the program and the HEI’s Mission (for example, age structure; gender balance; cultural and educational backgrounds) [based on ROSQA 8.1.1].

Criterion 8.3: Recruitment and Selection (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include recruitment and selection)

The recruitment and selection of program staff is undertaken according to the HEI’s policies and procedures, and ensures that new staff are appropriately qualified, experienced and competent.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The recruitment and selection of program staff is undertaken according to the HEI’s policies and procedures.

b) The recruitment and selection of program staff is undertaken in a timely manner, in order to safeguard the effective delivery of the program.

c) Staff appointed to the program are appropriately qualified, and have the minimum necessary levels of experience and competencies.

d) The recruitment and selection of program staff is evaluated periodically as part of the program’s review processes.

Criterion 8.4: Induction

There are effective induction activities to support new staff appointed for the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) New program staff are given an effective orientation to the HEI, including its Mission and priorities [based on ROSQA 8.2.9].

b) A formal induction program of activities ensures that new staff have an effective orientation to the program and are thoroughly prepared for their responsibilities.

c) The effectiveness of the induction program is periodically reviewed, including through the use of feedback from recently appointed staff.

Criterion 8.5: Professional Development (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include professional development)

Program staff have opportunities to undertake appropriate professional development activities, and these activities support the effective delivery of the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) All staff involved in the delivery of the program have the opportunity to participate in professional development activity, provided centrally by the HEI and/or by the department/school; access to these activities is fair and equitable.

b) Program teaching staff are encouraged to reflect on their professional practice (including considering feedback from students on teaching quality) and to undertake professional development which ensures their knowledge and skills are appropriate and up to date (see also Criterion 8.6 Performance planning and review).

c) There is an adequate budget (and other resources) to support the professional development needs of program staff.
d) Where research students have the opportunity to undertake teaching duties (for example assisting with practical sessions and tutorials; offering technical support), they receive appropriate training, support and mentoring, for their own professional development, and also to safeguard the experience of students they are teaching; the extent to which graduate teaching assistants undertake teaching duties also takes account of their other academic responsibilities.

e) Program staff have opportunities to provide feedback on professional development activities, in doing so contributing to the review and planning of professional development provision.

**Criterion 8.6: Performance Planning and Review (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include performance planning and review)**

*Program staff benefit from having clearly defined roles and responsibilities and an appropriate workload, against which their performance is evaluated regularly, and professional development needs identified.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Each individual member of program staff is clear about their roles and responsibilities, workload and other expectations, as established with their line manager.

b) Program managers (or other managers, as appropriate) ensure that the workload allocation of program staff is reasonable and equitable, and includes consideration of teaching, research, managerial, administrative and any other responsibilities.

c) Each member of program staff undertakes a regular performance review with their line manager, in accordance with the HEI’s policy and procedures; this is an opportunity for both review of performance, and to identify staff’s professional development needs (see also Criterion 8.5 Professional Development) [based on ROSQA 8.3.5].

**Criterion 8.7: Promotion and Other Incentives**

*Program staff have appropriate opportunities to apply for promotion and other rewards, with reference to the HEI’s policies and procedures for promotion and other incentives.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The promotion of program staff, and the provision of other incentives, is governed by the HEI’s promotion policy and processes. In the case of teaching staff, criteria may include: quality of teaching; research and scholarly activity; performance improvement; service to the HEI; and service to the community [based on ROSQA 8.3.4 and 10.1.2].

b) Recognition and reward through promotion, salary increase or other remuneration is based on equitable work distribution and merit, using clear and transparent policies and procedures.

c) For the academic promotion of program staff (for example, Professorships), the department/school is guided by national and international expectations and best practice.

**Criterion 8.8: Severance (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include severance)**
The severance of any program staff member is undertaken in accordance with the HEI's policies and procedures for severance.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The severance of any program staff member is undertaken in accordance with the HEI’s policies and procedures for severance, and in keeping with Oman's labour laws.

b) The severance of any program staff member is undertaken with due regard to the principles of fairness, transparency and equity of treatment, and any such staff have full access to the HEI’s appeals process.

Criterion 8.9: Staff Organisational Climate and Retention (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include staff organizational climate and retention)

There is a positive organisational climate for program staff, and this is reflected in staff recruitment and retention; program staff have the opportunity to contribute to the evaluation and ongoing improvement of the organizational climate.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) A positive environment for program staff is created and sustained through a range of processes and activities, provided at both the HEI and program levels, which attracts and retains good quality staff.

b) Program staff have the opportunity to participate in staff surveys and other feedback mechanisms, and in doing so contribute to the evaluation of the organisational climate and identifying areas for improvement. Staff are informed of actions implemented in response to their feedback.

Criterion 8.10: Omanisation (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include Omanisation)

There is an effective plan in place for the Omanisation of the program staff team, and the plan impacts positively on the provision of the program.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The processes for the recruitment, selection and appointment of program staff takes due regard of the HEI’s strategy, plan and targets for the Omanisation of its workforce (see also Criterion 8.3 Recruitment and selection).

b) As part of the department/school planning process, there is a program-level plan for the Omanisation of the program staff team, which includes identifying the positive impact of Omanisation on the provision of the program.

c) The department/school Omanisation plan ensures the retention and development of Omani staff with appropriate qualifications, experience and skills for the delivery of the program (see also Criterion 8.5 Professional development; and Criterion 8.9 Staff organisational climate and retention).

d) There are effective arrangements in place at the program level for evaluating the implementation of the department/school's Omanisation plan.
Oman Academic Accreditation Authority

Standard 9: GENERAL SUPPORT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The provision of general support services and facilities is adequate to meet the needs of the program, and maintenance and improvement of these services and facilities is informed by staff and student feedback. The program’s public relations and marketing activities reflect high ethical standards and are relevant for the information needs of prospective students, other stakeholders and the public. Communication arrangements at the program level are effective and constructive, and facilities management is also effective in meeting the needs of the program.

Criterion 9.1: General Support Services and Facilities Planning and Management

The provision of general support services and facilities is adequate to meet the needs of the program, and maintenance and improvement of these services and facilities is informed by staff and student feedback.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) There are effective mechanisms in place to ensure that the needs of the program inform the HEI’s master plans for the maintenance, capital, development, equipment acquisition, servicing and replacement of general support services and facilities [based on ROSQA 6.1.1].

b) The general support services and facilities are of adequate quality and support the program staff and students; there is an effective strategy for evaluating the adequacy of these services in relation to their needs.

c) Program staff and students are consulted as part of the HEI’s formal processes for planning and managing general support services and facilities, and their feedback informs ongoing quality improvement [based on ROSQA 6.2.4].

Criterion 9.2: Public Relations and Marketing (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include public relations and marketing)

The program’s public relations and marketing activities reflect high ethical standards and are relevant for prospective students, other stakeholders and the public.

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Prospective students to the program have access to objective information about the program, including the academic environment in which they will be studying, and the support that will be made available to them.

b) Program promotional materials and activities meet high ethical standards and are up-to-date, accurate, clear, and relevant for prospective students, other stakeholders and the public.

c) Public relations and marketing materials and activities for the program are periodically reviewed to ensure their ongoing appropriateness and effectiveness.
Criterion 9.3: Communication Services (note: the ROSQA program criteria do not include communication services)

*Communication arrangements at the program level are effective and constructive.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) Communication arrangements in place between program staff and students are effective and constructive.

b) Communication arrangements between the program team and the wider department/school and HEI communities are effective and constructive.

c) The use of Arabic and/or English in all program documentation is consistent with the HEI’s language policy.

d) The effectiveness of program communications among and between different communities is periodically reviewed as part of quality assurance and improvement activities.

Criterion 9.4: Facilities Management

*Facilities management is effective in meeting the needs of the program, and its students and staff.*

These indicators should normally be satisfied for a program to meet the criterion:

a) The physical facilities, grounds and landscaping together provide an environment which makes a positive contribution to staff and students’ experience on the program [based on ROSQA 6.1.2].

b) Facilities and grounds meet health and safety requirements with adequate provision for the personal safety and security of staff and students on the program (see also Criterion 1.12 Health and Safety) [based on ROSQA 6.2.1].

c) There are opportunities for the needs of the program, and staff and student feedback to inform the HEI’s ongoing schedule of maintenance and refurbishment.
Appendix A: Benchmark organisations


Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS; Australia), The National Code for Registration Authorities and providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2007); Part D Standards for registered providers:

Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA; UAE), Procedural Guidelines for Initial Accreditation (2011); procedural Guidelines for Renewal of Accreditation (2011); Standards for Licensure and Accreditation (2011):

- **Standard 1:** CAA standards 1 Mission, organization and governance; 2 Quality assurance; 3 The education program; 6 learning resources; 7 Physical resources; and 8 Fiscal resources.

- **Standard 2:** CAA standard 3 The education program

- **Standard 3:** CAA standard 3 The education program

- **Standard 4:** CAA standards area 10 Research and scholarly activity

- **Standard 5:** CAA standard 11 Community engagement

- **Standard 6:** CAA standards 5 Students; 6 Learning resources; and 7 Physical resources

- **Standard 7:** CAA standard 5 Students

- **Standard 8:** CAA standard 4 Faculty and professional staff

- **Standard 9:** CAA standards 7 Physical Resources and 9 Public disclosure and integrity

EFMD Programme Accreditation System (2013), The EFMD Accreditation for International Degree Programmes in Business and Management; EPAS Standards and Criteria:

- **Standard 6:** EPAS standard Chapter 1.2 Resources and facilities

- **Standard 7:** EPAS standard Chapter 1.2 Resources and facilities

- **Standard 8:** EPAS standards Chapter 1.3 Faculty

- **Standard 9:** EPAS standards Chapter 1.2 Resources and facilities

The EFMD Accreditation for International Business School, (2013), EQUIS Standards and Criteria:
Standard 4: EQUIS standards Chapter 5 Research and development

Standard 9: EQUIS standards Chapter 7 Resources and administration

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), (2009), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; Part 1: European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions:

Standard 1: ENQA standards 1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance; and 1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

Standard 6: ENQA standards 1.5 Learning resources and student support

Standard 8: ENQA standards 1.5 learning resources and student support


Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), (2008), Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation:

Standard 1: MQA standards 1 Vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes; 2 Curriculum design and delivery; 6 Educational resources; 7 Program monitoring and review; 8 Leadership, governance and administration; and 9 Continual quality improvement.

Standard 2: MQA standards 1.2 Learning outcomes; 2 Curriculum design and delivery and 4

Standard 4: MQA standard 6 Educational resources

Standard 5: MQA standards 2.5 Linkages with external stakeholders; and 4.6 Alumni

Standard 6: MQA standards 6.1 Physical facilities; and 8.4 Academic records

Standard 7: MQA standards 4.4 Student support and co-curricular activities; and 4.5 Student representation and participation

Standard 8: MQA standards 5 Academic staff; and 8 Leadership, governance and administration

National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA; Saudi Arabia), (2009), Standards for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education Programs:
Oman Academic Accreditation Authority

Standard 1: NCAAA standards 1 Mission, goals and objectives; 2 program administration; 3 management of program quality assurance; 4 Learning and teaching; 5 Student administration and support services; and 8 financial planning and management.

Standard 2: NCAAA standard 5 Student administration and support services.

Standard 3: NCAAA standard 10 Research

Standard 4: NCAAA standard 10 Research

Standard 5: NCAAA standard 11 Relationships with the community

Standard 6: NCAAA standards 4 Learning and teaching; 5 Student administration and support services; and 6 Learning resources

Standard 7: NCAAA standard 5 Student administration and support services

Standard 8: NCAAA standards 4 Learning and teaching; and 9 Employment process

Standard 9: NCAAA standard 7 Facilities and equipment

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, UK), UK Quality Code for Higher Education:

Standard 1: Chapters A3 The programme level; B8 Programme monitoring and review; B9 Academic appeals and student complaints; B10 Managing higher education provision with others (2012).

Standard 2: Chapters A3 Setting and maintaining threshold academic standards: the programme level; A6 Assessment of intended learning outcomes; B1 programme design and approval; B2 Admissions; B3 learning and teaching; B4 Enabling student development and achievement; B6 Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning; B8 programme monitoring and review; B9 Academic appeals and student complaints; B10 managing higher education provision with others.

Standard 3: Chapter B11 Research degrees

Standard 6: Chapters B3 learning and teaching; and B4 Enabling student development and achievement

Standard 7: Chapters B4 Student support, learning resources and careers education, information, advice and guidance (in use until December 2013); B5 Student engagement; and B9 Academic appeals and student complaints

Standard 8: Chapters B3 learning and teaching; and B4 Enabling student development and achievement (in use from December 2013 onwards).
Standard 9: Chapters B2 Admissions; B# Learning and teaching; and Part C Information about higher education provision


Supreme Education Council Higher Education Institute (SECHEI), (2011), Licensing and Accreditation Standards for Higher Education Institutions in Qatar; Chapter IV Students.

Tertiary Education Quality Assurance Agency (TEQSA; Australia), (2011), Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2011; Chapter 3 Provide Course Accreditation Standards, standards 1-6.

**Standard 1:** TEQSA standards 1 ‘Course design is appropriate and meets the qualification standards’; and 6 ‘Course monitoring, review, updating and termination are appropriately managed’.

**Standard 2:** TEQSA standards 1 ‘Course design is appropriate and meets the qualification standards’; and 3 ‘Admission criteria are appropriate’.