QAC AUDIT’S FOCUS AREAS:

REVIEW QUESTIONS
(from QAC Audit Manual, Annex A.3)

The following list illustrates the kind of questions which might be asked in each of the audit focus areas. The list is indicative rather than prescriptive or exhaustive.

In their internal review, all programme heads and course coordinators are requested to address as many of these questions as possible (esp. those in italics), and to add any further information they deem relevant under each focus area.

1. Articulation of appropriate objectives
   o What overall objectives is the institution trying to achieve?
   o Are these appropriate to its agreed role?
   o What student learning outcomes are expected, and how are they measured? What are the performance indicators, benchmarks or other reference points?
   o Are the desired objectives communicated and understood throughout the institution?
   o Do individual programmes specify desired learning outcomes (e.g. graduate attributes)?
   o Are programme objectives consistent with institutional objectives?

2. Management, planning and accountability
   o What is the organisational framework within which teaching and learning is managed? Is it effective? How does the institution know?
   o What are the responsibilities and accountabilities for delivering outcomes?
   o How does the institution measure performance against plan?
   o What are the communication and reporting mechanisms? Are they effective?
   o How do students participate in planning and management for learning?

3. Programme development and approval processes
   o What are the criteria for introducing new programmes? Are they consistent with the institution’s role?
   o How are the rationale and expected outcomes for new programmes articulated? Who approves them?
   o What external input is there to programme planning and development, including curriculum?
   o How are planned learning experiences, including out of class experiences, related to desired learning outcomes?
o What processes are in place to check that resources (e.g. staff, library, IT, laboratories) are available, and that the delivery mode and assessment are appropriate to the desired outcomes?

o Is there adequate internal consultation (e.g. to prevent duplication)?

o What processes govern the programme change processes?

o How are programmes made up of courses, to produce a coherent, integrated whole?

4. Programme monitoring and review

o How does the institution know that programmes are delivering the desired student learning outcomes? Does it use external references or benchmarks?

o What are the frequency, scope and process of programme review? What are the criteria for programme continuation?

o What data is used in monitoring and review (e.g. student demand and entry qualifications, student feedback, employer feedback, employment data, graduate destinations)?

o What external input is there?

o How does the institution make improvements to the programme?

5. Curriculum design

o How does curriculum design relate to desired student learning outcomes?

o What external input or reference points are used?

o How are curricula systematically updated?

6. Programme delivery, including resources, teaching mode, and the student learning environment

o Are sufficient resources (e.g. staff, library, IT, laboratories) applied to the achievement of programme outcomes?

o Are the learning environment and the modes of delivery geared to desired learning outcomes?

o How do student support services measure their effectiveness? How do they ensure that their activities are aligned to institutional goals? How do they obtain and use student feedback?

7. Experiential and other out of classroom learning (e.g. leadership development, overseas exchange, work-integrated learning, service learning)

o How does this form of learning contribute to desired student learning outcomes?

o How is the learning experience designed? What are the inputs?

o Are appropriate resources applied to delivering and supporting the experience?
How are the effects of the learning experience evaluated?
What processes lead to improvement?
How is out of classroom learning integrated with curricular learning? What evidence is there of effective integration?

8. Assessment
Does the institution have an assessment policy which addresses issues such as equity, accuracy and student workload? Is it widely implemented and effective?
Is assessment designed to evaluate and enhance students’ achievement of desired learning outcomes?
How is out of classroom learning assessed?
What processes are in place to detect and handle plagiarism or fraud? Are they effective?
What external checks or reference points are used? Are they effective?

9. Teaching quality and staff development
How is teaching quality assessed?
How is student feedback obtained and used?
Are inexperienced staff offered an introduction to teaching? Is it mandatory? Is it effective?
What other teaching development activities or opportunities are offered? How are they supported by the institution? Are they effective? What is the take-up rate?
How is teaching informed by staff’s research or professional activities?
What support is available to staff for the effective delivery and assessment of in-class and out of class learning?
How is the teaching performance of individual staff monitored and enhanced? How does teaching performance affect promotion?

10. Student participation
What opportunities are there for students to participate in programme planning, monitoring and review? Do relevant organisational structures (e.g. department/faculty committees) have student members?
Are there processes for systematically obtaining and using student feedback on courses, programmes and teaching?
Are there processes for systematically obtaining and using student feedback on support services?
11. Activities specific to research degrees

o What learning outcomes does the institution expect from research degree programmes? Are there any external reference points?

o What criteria are used for admission to research degree programmes? How are they established and are they appropriate?

o What resources are provided to research students? How does the institution know these are sufficient?

o How does the institution appoint supervisors and monitor the quality of supervision?

o How is the progress of research students monitored? How are problems identified and handled?

o What are the examination processes? What is the external involvement?

o How does the institution foster and monitor an appropriate intellectual climate for research students?