Guidelines for conduct of the study visit

1 code of conduct during the review visit

- Show respect for the reviewed institution and its members.

- Act as a peer evaluator rather than a detective.

- Start the visit by meeting the institution's leader and get approval for the planned review activities.

- Use the institution's resources wisely and only in activities related to the review process. Do not use these resources for personal purposes.

- Judge the institution based only on NAQAAE standards regardless of your own ideologies or experience with quality standards of other QA bodies.

- Make your judgement in light of the institution's declared mission.

- Be objective in your judgement and always support it with solid evidence.

- Do not interfere with any educational activity you observe.

- Do not copy, burrow or keep any of the institution's documents for purposes other than the review process.

- Keep strict confidentiality of all the institution's data, information and documents.

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2- Guidelines for data collection

Data collection during the review visit is achieved through three types of review activities; these are *observation*, *review of documents* and *meetings*. These activities are not exclusive, they rather complement each other to help the reviewer reach an informed judgement; i.e. data related to a single performance indicator can be collected through one or more of these review activities. Multitude of data sources adds credibility to the collected data. Here we provide some guidelines that will help the reviewer to make good use of the review activities for efficient collection of data.

2.1. Observation

Observation is most useful in collecting data about the institution's resources and infrastructure, as well as data related to the performance of a person or a group of persons.

Before conducting any observation activity make sure that you define its' purpose in terms of elements you need to inspect and questions you expect to find answers for.

There are two types of observation, namely guided and random observation.

- Guided observation is intended for a specific facility or resource, that the school highlighted in its self study as a point of strength (e.g. a state of the art research lab), or that is an integral part of a given standard (e.g. observation of the skill lab is an example of guided observation in assessing educational resources).

– Random observation is intended to observe a sample of a large group of items where it is neither feasible nor practical to observe the whole group. In such case select the observed item randomly do not intentionally select the best or the worst element (e.g. in case the school has many lecture halls or exam halls, a representative sample is randomly selected for observation).

2.2. Review of documents

The school usually supplies supportive documents as attachments to its self study; these are reviewed before the visit. Some documents however are too bulky to attach, others are formal documents that must remain in the school confines; these documents are reviewed during the review visit. Examples of documents you can review while evaluating "student assessment" include school bylaws, minutes of school council meetings, minutes of exam committee meetings, exam papers, student portfolios, assessment plans, exam schedules, feedback reports, etc….

In reviewing official documents make sure of the following:

– Review the original ratified documents not copies wherever applicable.

– Check the dates on the document and relate to the information presented by the school.

– Review the latest versions of documents, and if needed compare to older versions to detect changes (e.g bylaws, policies; program and course specifications).

– Make sure you study related documents together (e.g exam papers for a given subject or unit, corresponding model answers, course specification containing the ILOs of that specific subject or unit, corresponding feedback reports).

– Carefully go through the content and compare to:

  ▪ Information presented in the self study

  ▪ Known good practices

  ▪ Actual applications

2.3. Meetings

Meetings serve the reviewer to get information about the opinion of a person or a category of stakeholders through guided interaction. Thus, meetings can be either individual or group meetings.

– Individual meetings are usually conducted with key personnel (e.g the dean, a vice dean, head of the control ..) where the sought information is officially the responsibility of this person. Individual meetings also serve confidentiality and protection for the interviewed person in certain cases (e.g a student, a complaining employee,..)

– Group meetings are conducted with representatives of a given category of stakeholders (Faculty, Students, Employees,..).

Meetings are usually arranged for and documented in the visit schedule in accordance with the school's administration. Emergent meetings are not an unusual event during

the visit, the reviewer needs however to get the permission of the school administration to hold such meetings.

While arranging for and conducting a meeting the following guidelines should be considered:

- A group meeting optimally involves 25-30 representatives of a given stakeholder category.

- Selection bias can be avoided in some cases by using a systematic random sample (e.g. ask the school to arrange a meeting with students ranked 4, 14, 24, 34, etc…in the official student registry list from each batch).

- A group meeting should not interfere with ongoing educational activities and should not exceed an hour in duration.

- A group meeting should not be attended by any person that can intimidate the group (e.g. Faculty in a students' meeting, an administrative or academic leadership in an employees' meeting)

- As a team, prepare for the meeting in advance, compile all questions from all standards and indicators that you find relevant to the involved group. Assign roles; determine who will ask for what and when.

- Take notes and assign one of the review team members to be responsible for drafting the meeting minutes.

- Start the meeting by introducing yourselves and by explaining the purpose of the meeting.

- Encourage the participants to freely express their opinions.

- Anticipate that the school members will be over -efending and enthusiastic about their institution. Do not attack the institution or make accusations or argument.

- Control your reactions in discussions, do not show anger, disappointment, sarcasm, etc..