

# BRIEFING ON MALAYSIA: Quality Assurance in Higher Education

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## I . The Higher Education System

### (1) Jurisdiction over education

The Malaysian education system encompasses education beginning from pre-school to university. It is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education<sup>1</sup>.

### (2) School education system and types of higher education courses

The Education Act of 1996 stipulates that the National Education System shall comprise five levels: pre-school education; primary education; secondary education; post-secondary education; and higher education. The six years of primary education are compulsory education. There are three main streams in upper secondary education: academic (science/arts); technical and vocational; and religious. Students going on to a university or university college are required to complete a 1–2 year pre-university programme (Form 6<sup>2</sup>, Matriculation<sup>3</sup>, or Foundation<sup>4</sup>). A student will therefore typically receive 12-13 years of education in order to be accepted into a university (Table 1).

Institutions of higher education in Malaysia provide courses for awarding certificate, diploma, bachelor, masters, and doctoral qualifications within the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) (see III (1) Table 3 below).

Table 1: Types of educational courses and standard learning years

	Standard years learning	Typical education provider
Pre-school education	1–2	Kindergarten
Primary education [compulsory education]	6	Primary school
Secondary education -Lower secondary -Upper secondary	3 2	Secondary school
Post-secondary education -Form 6 -Matriculation -Foundation	1–2 (Depends on course)	Secondary school Matriculation college, public higher education institution Higher education institution
Higher education -Certificate -Diploma -Advanced Diploma -Bachelor -Masters -Doctoral	1.5-2 2-3 1 3–5 1–2 2–3	College College, University College, University College, University College, University University, University college University, University college University, University college

(Prepared by the NIAD-UE)

### (3) System for establishment of higher education provider

<sup>1</sup> Previously, there were two ministries that have jurisdiction over education in Malaysia. Higher education was under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), which was established in 2004, while pre-higher education (pre-school to secondary education) was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE). Starting from May 2013, both ministries have merged and known as Ministry of Education. The ministry is responsible to oversee all types of education, starting from pre-school education until higher education in Malaysia.

<sup>2</sup> Form 6 is a pre-university programme for students who have completed upper secondary education and intend to go on to a university or university college. It is a 2 year programme where students will have to sit for the national exam, which is the Malaysian Higher School Certificate (in Malay is Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia, STPM). Form 6 is provided by the secondary schools.

<sup>3</sup> Like Form 6, matriculation is a pre-university programme for students who have completed upper secondary education and intend to go on to a university or university college. Unlike Form 6, it is open to ethnic Malays (Bumiputera), and is provided by the matriculation colleges and public higher education institutions.

<sup>4</sup> Foundation is provided by the higher education institutions with degree pathway.

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The establishment of higher education provider is legislated by the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (Act 30) and the Private Higher Education Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555). The polytechnics and community colleges are legislated by the Education Act 1996 (Act 550). The establishment differs according to the types of the institution. For public higher education provider, the establishment is through the act of the parliament. For private higher education provider, the establishment is upon approval by the Ministry of Education.

#### (4) Types and number of institutions of higher education

Public institutions of higher education consist of public universities, polytechnics, community colleges, and teacher training institutes, all of which are government-funded. Private institutions of higher education consist of private universities, university colleges, foreign university branch campuses, and colleges. The number of each type of institution is shown in Table 2. There are over one million students enrolled in all institutions of higher education combined, of which more than 70,000 are foreign students<sup>5</sup>.

Table 2: Types and number of institutions of higher education<sup>6</sup>

(Figures in parentheses are the number included. As of November, 2013)

Type		Institutions	Confer degrees <sup>7</sup>
Public	Universities	20	Yes
	Research universities	( 5)	
	Comprehensive universities	( 4)	
	Focused universities	(11)	
	Polytechnics	32	No
	Community colleges	86	No
Private <sup>8</sup>	Universities	35	Yes
	University colleges	25	Yes
	Foreign university branch campuses	7	Yes
	Colleges	418	No

(Prepared by the NIAD-UE)

Public universities, which are government-funded, are categorized into three groups: research universities, comprehensive universities, and focused universities.

- Research universities are public universities recognized by the national government in 2006 to become leading research and educational institutions. They receive a higher subsidy for research. As of November 2013, there are five research universities: University of Malaya, University of Science, Malaysia, National University of Malaysia, Putra University, Malaysia, and University of Technology, Malaysia.
- Comprehensive universities are public universities that offer a wide range of education in pre-undergraduate, undergraduate, and postgraduate programmes.
- Focused universities are public universities that offer education focused on specific fields such as engineering/technical, education, management, and defense.

Private universities and university colleges are degree granting institutions. Private universities and university colleges are able to confer degrees at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels as well as

<sup>5</sup> See Ministry of Education, "Malaysia Higher Education Statistics 2011"

<sup>6</sup> University needs to have 100 percent homegrown curriculum, at least 80 percent permanent lectures, 30 percent operational cost for R&D, and minimum 20 percent foreign students. University college, on the other hand, needs to have at least 60 percent homegrown curriculum, 60 percent permanent lectures, 10 percent foreign students, and R&D is not compulsory for university college. Homegrown curriculum is 100% developed by the Malaysian higher education institutions themselves. For foreign university's branch campus, the curriculum is from the parent university and they can offer homegrown programme subject to the approval from the parent university.

<sup>7</sup> The Universities and University Colleges Act (1971) stipulates that universities, university colleges, and foreign university branch campuses are institutions that offer pre-university courses, bachelor courses, and graduate (masters and doctoral) courses, and have the power to confer degrees. Institutions of higher education not stipulated in the aforementioned act do not have the power to confer degrees.

<sup>8</sup> Number of institutions listed on the search page for private institutions of higher education ("SENARAI IPTS/LIST OF IPTS") on the website of the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Education. <<http://jpt.mohe.gov.my/menudirektori.php>>

diploma programmes only.

Polytechnics are public non-degree granting higher education provider; Polytechnics provide education with the aim of developing skilled workforce in technical fields.

Community colleges are public non-degree granting institution; Community colleges are educational institutions which provide vocational and technical skills training at level 1-3 MQF (see III (1) Table 3). The community colleges also provide an infrastructure for rural communities to gain skills through short courses as well as providing access to a post-secondary education.

Colleges are private non-degree granting institution; Private colleges can only offer homegrown diploma and certificate level programmes and are allowed to conduct degree programme through collaboration (twinning or franchise) with other established university (local or foreign). Many of this collaboration are with institutions from United Kingdom, United States, Australia and others.

## **II . History of the Malaysian Quality Assurance System**

### Higher education democratization policy

Development of the Malaysian higher education system was influenced by the British system as a legacy of colonialism. Recently, the strategic orientation has been on the democratization of higher education. This has resulted in a quantitative expansion in higher education and greater educational opportunities. These expansion policies are still aggressively addressing issues in Malaysian higher education, even while greater emphasis is being placed on quality assurance.

### 1990s: Development of higher education-related legislation associated with the issue of quality

With the massification of higher education came the problems of pressure on capacity and a decline in the quality of higher education providers. In response to these problems, the government developed higher education-related legislation aimed at ensuring and improving quality. The educational legal reforms began with the Education Act (1996) followed by the University and University Colleges Act (1971, amended 1996) to regulate universities and university colleges and the Private Higher Education Institutions Act (1996) to regulate private institutions of higher education and encourage the establishment of local private universities and colleges and branches of foreign universities.

### Development and challenges of the quality assurance system

Development of a quality assurance system began in the second half of the 1990s. In 1997, the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)<sup>9</sup> was established based on the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara Act as the quality assurance body for private higher education providers. Meanwhile, quality assurance of public universities was left to their internal quality assurance mechanisms but regularly monitored by the government's Quality Assurance Division (QAD) established since 2002.

However, this dualistic system, differing depending on whether an institution was public or private, resulted in decentralization of quality control and assurance. At the same time, the situation surrounding higher education at the time was marked by the rise of the skills education sector and a heightened need for a uniform quality assurance framework and human capital development. There was a serious call for higher education restructuring to streamline this development.

### Establishment of a quality assurance agency and introduction of a national qualifications framework

In 2007, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) was established based on the MQA Act, merging LAN and QAD and centralizing the control and assurance of quality for both public and private institutions of higher education into a single agency. Furthermore, a national qualifications framework, the development process of which began in 2002, was officially introduced in 2007 as the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), and the MQA was given responsibility for the implementation of the MQF as a basis for quality

<sup>9</sup> National Accreditation Board (NAB) in English.

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assurance of higher education and as the reference point for the criteria and standards for national qualifications.

### Increasing emphasis on quality assurance in national mid- to long-term development plans

Reform trends in Malaysia's quality assurance system can be seen from the perspective of national development planning. The 10th Malaysian National Development Plan (2011-2015), for example, calls for enhancing the quality of education through the revamping of the education system at all levels, including higher education, in order to reinforce the goal and strategy of building a foundation for the development of human capital.

### III. National Quality Assurance System

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), which sets out the levels of academic and vocational qualifications that can be earned after secondary education, forms the basis of Malaysia's quality assurance system. The MQA has developed and published codes of practice<sup>10</sup>, which prescribe quality assurance practices and standards, as well as Guidelines to Good Practices (GGPs) as tools to enhance the effectiveness of the MQF and reinforce educational institutions' internal quality assurance system. Evaluations (accreditation and audit) implemented by the MQA are conducted to ensure the level of education as prescribed by the MQF and the codes of practice are being maintained. Accredited programmes and qualifications (i.e. certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, or degrees) are registered in the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR)<sup>11</sup>. MQA Act 2007 provides that the MQA shall establish and maintain this national register.

#### (1) National qualifications framework

The Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) is a national framework that classifies all qualifications and academic levels in post-secondary education<sup>12</sup> hierarchically based on a set of criteria that are approved nationally and benchmarked against international best practices. MQF includes not only qualifications of academic education but also qualifications of skills education and vocational education and supports diverse pathways for learners. All qualifications conferred in post-secondary education must conform to the MQF.

The MQF divides qualifications in Malaysia into eight levels (Table 3) and specifies the levels of learning outcomes and minimum credit required (Table 4) as well as the number of notional learning hours per credit<sup>13</sup>. All qualifications conform to the MQF with the intention of enabling comparison to other qualifications, facilitating recognition, and promoting student mobility. Regarding learning outcomes in particular, the MQF clearly specifies the levels required for each qualification in the eight domains listed below.

Eight domains of learning outcomes:

1. Knowledge;
2. Practical skills;
3. Social skills and responsibilities;
4. Values, attitudes and professionalism;
5. Communication, leadership and team skills;
6. Problem solving and scientific skills;
7. Information management and lifelong learning skills; and
8. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills.

<sup>10</sup> Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA) and Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA).

<sup>11</sup> MQR contains information on programmes, qualifications, higher education providers, accredited under the MQA Act. <<http://www.mqa.gov.my/mqr/english/eperutusan.cfm>>

<sup>12</sup> However, pre-university courses (Form 6, Matriculation, and Foundation) are not included.

<sup>13</sup> In Malaysia, 40 hours of notional student learning time is valued as one credit. Learning time includes the time spent in lecture, tutorial, seminar, practical, self-study, retrieval of information, fieldwork, as well as preparing for and sitting of an examination.

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Learning outcomes in each qualification are referenced whenever looking at educational quality and level and are used in curriculum design, establishment of credit hours, and the evaluation of student achievement. Additionally, learning outcomes can be achieved through various channels besides formal learning, and a feature of the Malaysian system is that learning outcomes achieved through experiential learning, including non-formal learning and learning outside of school, can be assessed and recognized in the system of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

Table 3: Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF): Sectors and levels of qualifications

[Adapted from] *Malaysian Qualifications Framework*, p.13

Level	Sectors			Lifelong Learning
	Skills	Vocational and Technical	Higher Education (Academic)	
8			Doctoral Degree	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)
7			Masters Degree	
			Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma	
6			Bachelors Degree	
			Graduate Certificate & Diploma	
5	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	Advanced Diploma	
4	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	
3	Skills Certificate 3	Vocational and Technical Certificate	Certificate	
2	Skills Certificate 2			
1	Skills Certificate 1			

Table 4: Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF): Minimum credit<sup>14</sup>

[Adapted from] *Malaysian Qualifications Framework*, p. 14

MQF Level	Qualification	Minimum credit
8	Doctoral	No given credit value
7	Research Masters	No given credit value
	Fully or Partly Taught Masters	40
	Postgraduate Diploma	30
	Postgraduate Certificate	20
6	Bachelors Degree	120
	Graduate Diploma	60
	Graduate Certificate	30
5	Advanced Diploma	40
4	Diploma	90
1-3	Certificate	60
	Skills Certificate	According to skills and levels

### (2) Codes of practice

The MQA has codes of practice that prescribe quality assurance practices on the criteria and standards for higher education in Malaysia. These codes were designed through a series of consultations with domestic stakeholders and benchmarked against international best practices with the MQA as the main entity in this effort.

There are two codes of practice: the Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA) and the Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA). The codes provide a guideline of general requirements in the nine

<sup>14</sup> 40 hours of notional student learning time is valued as one credit. Learning time includes the time spent in lecture, tutorial, seminar, practical, self-study, retrieval of information, fieldwork, as well as preparing for and sitting of an examination.

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areas of evaluation listed below.

Areas of quality evaluation in programme accreditation and institutional audit are:

1. Vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes;
2. Curriculum design and delivery;
3. Assessment of students;
4. Student selection and support services;
5. Academic staff;
6. Educational resources;
7. Programme monitoring and review;
8. Leadership, governance and administration; and
9. Continual quality improvement.

Quality standards established for each area are expressed in two ways according to the expected level of attainment: (1) benchmarked standards, which are standards that “**must**” be met; and (2) enhanced standards, which are standards that “**should**” be met. The codes of practice were made with the intention to be used as guidance for internal quality review to be conducted by the higher education provider and external evaluation to be conducted by the MQA.

### **(3) External evaluation**

External evaluations in Malaysia consist of Provisional Accreditation and Full Accreditation. Provisional Accreditation indicates that the programme has fulfilled the minimum requirement for it to be offered for consumption by learners. It is also a condition for a programme to be approved by the Ministry of Education. Full Accreditation following a programme audit by an external MQA panel of auditors, stating that the programme has met the relevant programmes’ standards, in compliance with the requirements of the MQF observing all aspects of Good Practice as advocated through MQA’s Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA). Another type of external evaluation is the Institutional Audit. The Institutional Audit could be comprehensive or thematic. It could take the form of periodic academic performance audit on the higher education provider or to establish the continuation or maintenance of programme accreditation status. These evaluations are on voluntary basis. Nevertheless, obtaining accreditation can be mandatory by the government policy, eligibility for student loan and to get recognition by the government. Table 5 illustrates the summary of the external evaluation carried out by the MQA.

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Table 5: Types of external evaluations by the MQA

	(a) Provisional Accreditation	(b) Full Accreditation	(c) Institutional Audit	
			Maintenance Audit	Thematic Audit
Purpose	An evaluation to determine whether the programme proposals from the higher education provider met the minimum standards, before the programme is being offered.	An evaluation to determine that the programme on delivery has met all the criteria and standards set for the purpose of Full Accreditation.	Periodic audit conducted after gaining the Full Accreditation status.	An audit for purpose of verifying data, public policy input or for rating of institutions and programmes as follows: 1) Academic Performance Audit 2) Self-accreditation status 3) Rating 4) Discipline Rating
Evaluation timing	Before programme is being offered.	First cohort of students reaches their final year.	At least once in five years after programme accreditation status is granted.	As and when necessary.
Type	Programme-based	Programme-based	Institution-based (by faculty or across faculties)	
Evaluator	MQA	MQA	MQA	MQA
Process	1. Submission of documents by higher education provider. 2. Documentation review by MQA's panel of assessors. 3. Decision by MQA Accreditation Committee.	1. Self-review by higher education provider. 2. Submission of documents by higher education provider. 3. Documentation review and evaluation visit by MQA's panel of assessors. 4. Decision by MQA Accreditation Committee.	1. Self-review by higher education provider. 2. Submission of documents by higher education provider. 3. Documentation review and evaluation visit by MQA's panel of assessors. 4. Decision by MQA Audit Committee.	Depending on the theme of the audit
Cycle	/	Evaluation is being carried out only once, which is when the first cohort of students reaches their final year. The Full Accreditation is perpetual; no expiry date.	At least once in five years.	/

(Prepared by the NIAD-UE)

### a) Provisional Accreditation

#### - Purpose

The purpose of Provisional Accreditation is to determine whether the minimum requirements to conduct the programme have been met by the higher education provider in respect of the nine areas (see III (2) above), especially the curriculum design, prescribed in the Code of Practice. The higher education provider uses the report from the Provisional Accreditation exercise as one of the requirements to seek approval from the Ministry of Education to offer the programme, and, on obtaining it, to commence the programme.

#### - Process

##### 1) Submission of documentation related to the programme

The applicant must prepare documentation based on the form indicated by the MQA, form MQA-01, consisting of: (1) general information on the applicant; (2) programme description (name, MQF level, duration of study, etc.); and (3) Programme standards and criteria of which attainment is shown in the Code of Practice.

##### 2) External programme evaluation by the MQA

A Panel of Assessors (POA) organized by the MQA carries out Provisional Accreditation. The POA submits an evaluation report to the MQA after analyzing the documents prepared by the programme provider. A site visit may be conducted if necessary.

##### 3) Decision and use of results

Provisional Accreditation is granted if, after deliberation by the MQA Accreditation Committee based on the evaluation report; it is judged that the standards have been met. The MQA will inform the Ministry of Education on the report of the evaluation for further action; the ministry will decide whether or not to grant the approval to run the programme based on the evaluation report of Provisional Accreditation by the MQA. The institution has to reapply for provisional accreditation in the case of refuse of provisional accreditation.

The provisional accreditation report will be made available to the institutions involved. The provisional accreditation report is also used as one of the review documents submitted by the higher education provider during review conducted by the Ministry of Education for programme approval.

### b) Full Accreditation

#### - Purpose

The evaluation for Full Accreditation is conducted when the first cohort of students reaches their final year. The purpose of Full Accreditation is to ensure that the programme conducted has met the set of standards in respect of the nine areas of evaluation prescribed in the Code of Practice, and is in compliance with the MQF. Full Accreditation is granted if the standards, etc., are met.

#### - Process

##### 1) Self-Review (Internal Quality Audit) and documentation submission

The programme provider must prepare documentation based on the form indicated by the MQA, form MQA-02, consisting of: (1) general information on the programme provider; (2) programme description (name, MQF level, duration of study, etc.); (3) Programme standards and criteria of which attainment is shown in the Code of Practice; and (4) a Self-Review Report. The programme provider conducts a self-assessment when preparing the Self-Review Report.

##### 2) External programme evaluation by the MQA

A Panel of Assessors (POA) organized by the MQA carries out Full Accreditation. The POA submits an accreditation report to the MQA after analyzing the Self-Review Report and other documentation prepared by the programme provider and conducting a site visit.

##### 3) Decision and use of results

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Full Accreditation is granted if, after deliberation by the MQA Accreditation Committee based on the accreditation report, it is judged that the standards have been met. If, on the other hand, accreditation is denied or there is no expectation for rectification of the reasons for rejection, the MQA will inform the Ministry of Education accordingly for its necessary action<sup>15</sup>. The programme provider uses the accreditation report for continual quality improvement.

The MQA has appropriate methods and policies for appeal where the higher education provider can forward a request for consideration of a decision. The provision for appeal is provided for under the MQA Act. The higher education provider may appeal in writing to the Minister of Education within thirty days from the date on which the refusal or revocation is served on the institution.

### **\* Accreditation of professional degree programmes**

Generally, programmes leading to a professional degree are evaluated by a Joint Technical Committee organized by the MQA and the professional body against standards established by the professional body. A programme that receives accreditation usually receives both accreditation from the MQA and recognition from the professional body. In the field of engineering, for example, the Engineering Accreditation Council, which comprises representatives from the Board of Engineers Malaysia, the MQA, and other organizations, performs programme accreditation for engineering degree courses. Fields in which programmes are accredited in this way include, in addition to the engineering programme, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, architecture and several others.

### **c) Institutional Audit**

#### **- Purpose**

Institutional Audit takes many forms depending on the purpose of the audit, including audits for the purpose of determining the continuation of programme accreditation status (called maintenance audit) and audits for the purpose of periodic review of the institution's academic activities and performance. The thematic audit is being carried out for purposes, such as; Academic Performance Audit, Self-accreditation status, Rating, and Discipline Rating. The form for documents submitted by the institution to the MQA is the same in each type of audit, but the commendations, affirmations and recommendations in the Audit Report prepared by the Audit Panel are different depends on the purpose of the audit. An audit could be done by faculty or across faculties.

#### **- Process for Maintenance Audit**

##### **1) Self-Review (Internal Quality Audit)**

The institution to be audited must prepare documentation based on the form indicated by the MQA, form MQA-03 (Self-Review Portfolio), consisting of: (1) general information on the institution; (2) Programme standards and criteria of which attainment is shown in the Code of Practice; and (3) a Self-Review Report.

##### **2) MQA Institutional Audit (External Quality Audit)**

A Panel of Auditors organized by the MQA carries out the Institutional Audit. The Panel analyzes the Self-Review Report and other documentation prepared by the institution, conducts a site visit, and then submits an Institutional Audit Report to the MQA.

##### **3) Decision and use of results**

After deliberation by the MQA Audit Committee based on the Institutional Audit Report, a decision is made to maintain or cease an accreditation status of a programme, and the report indicates the status of quality and the points needing improvement. The report is sent to the institution for use in continuous quality enhancement.

#### **- Process for Thematic Audit**

<sup>15</sup> The necessary action taken by the Ministry of Education, may include: To hold the renewal of the approval to run the programme; or to stop new intake of student.

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### 1) Self-Review (Internal Quality Audit)

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### 2) MQA Institutional Audit (External Quality Audit)

A Panel of Auditors organized by the MQA carries out the Institutional Audit. The Panel analyzes the Self-Review Report and other documentation prepared by the institution, conducts a site visit, and then submits an Institutional Audit Report to the MQA.

### 3) Decision and use of results

The results are being used to verifying data, public policy input or for rating of institutions and programmes, depending on the theme of the audit. The report is also being submitted to the Ministry of Education. It result may also be used to grant the self-accreditation status to the higher education provider.

#### **\*Self-accreditation status and the thematic audit for gaining its status**

One type of institutional thematic audit is for the purpose of obtaining self-accreditation status. The Ministry of Education confers self-accreditation status on educational institutions with excellent internal quality assurance capability. Such status gives the educational institution the power to establish programmes and the responsibility to accredit its own programmes. Thus far the Ministry of Education has granted self-accreditation status to nine universities<sup>16</sup> as of June 2013.

The process for obtaining self-accreditation status involves the higher education provider first undergoing a self-accreditation audit by the MQA. The Ministry of Education then confers a self-accreditation status to the institution based on the audit results.

Self-accredited institutions submit all of their self-accredited programmes to the MQA in order to be registered in the MQR. There is no evaluation done by the MQA in this process. Once a higher education institution obtains self-accreditation status, the institution need to send its self-review report to the MQA once in two years.

#### **<<Evaluation fee>>**

The MQA charges the higher education provider for the accreditation services it provides. The fees are fixed and charged based on the accreditation and qualification's level and field of study. The fee structure is based on an aggregated cost of honorarium and travelling expenses of the assessors and management cost. All fees are required to be paid in full during submission of application, thus minimizing the probability of bad debts. Table 6 illustrates the fee structure imposed by the MQA to the higher education providers.

Table 6: Fees for external evaluations by the MQA<sup>17</sup>

1 RM = about 31 yen (as of March 2014)

Provisional Accreditation	Certificate	RM 3,500
	Diploma, Advanced Diploma	RM 4,000
	Graduate Certificate & Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma	RM 5,500
	Bachelor, Masters, Doctoral	RM 7,500
Full Accreditation	Certificate	RM 6,500
	Diploma, Advanced Diploma	RM 7,000

<sup>16</sup> Five public universities (Universiti Malaya, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia) and four foreign university branch campuses (Monash University Sunway Campus, the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, Curtin University of Technology Sarawak Campus, and Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus).

<sup>17</sup> Application forms for external evaluations can be downloaded from the "Forms & Submission of Applications" section of the MQA website: <<http://www.mqa.gov.my/>>. The fee is indicated on each application.

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		Graduate Certificate & Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate & Diploma		RM 8,500
		Bachelor, Masters, Doctoral	Medical	RM 25,000
			Pharmacy, dentistry, optometry	RM 18,000
			Other	RM 10,000
Institutional Audit <sup>18</sup>	Maintenance Audit			No specific fee
	Academic Performance Audit and audit for Self-accreditation status	Fewer than 50 programmes		RM 30,000
		50–100 programmes		RM 40,000
		More than 100 programmes		RM 50,000

(Prepared by the NIAD-UE)

#### **(4) Malaysian Qualifications Register**

Programmes accredited by the MQA are registered in the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR). The MQR is a publicly available database managed by the MQA. It contains information including the name and address of higher education providers, basic information on programmes, and the name, field, and level of qualifications, among other information. The MQR helps promote degree recognition and credit transfer in and outside Malaysia by providing this kind of information in an integrated manner to students, parents, employers, funding agencies, and other stakeholders.

#### **IV. Challenges of the Quality Assurance System and Future Policy**

The quality assurance system and MQF are equally applied to all public, private higher education providers, which also includes the polytechnics, community colleges and others.

The current quality assurance system aims for enhancing the higher education providers while addressing the autonomy and accountability of the institutions. It is also addresses on strengthening the internal quality assurance system and focused periodic audit. These require continuous discussions among government, higher education providers, quality assurance body and professional bodies with the view towards balancing the policies roles and responsibilities. It is also important to promote and enhance community understanding of these quality assurance policies and practices. As evaluation are increasingly emphasized on the quality of the graduates, it is essential to obtain continuous understanding and support from the educational industry and other key stakeholders.

It is a shared responsibility between the MQA as a quality assurance body and the higher education providers in order to effectively enhance quality of higher education through good quality assurance practices.

(Written by the MQA)

<sup>18</sup> Generally the cost for Institutional Audit depends on the type of evaluations and the number of programme evaluated. There is no specific fee imposed to the institution for the Maintenance Audit.

**Overview of Malaysian Qualifications Agency**

- Name: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
- Established: 2007 (The MQA was established by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act through the merger of the National Accreditation Board and the government's Quality Assurance Division.)
- Type: Statutory body
- Headquarters: Petaling Jaya (city adjacent to Kuala Lumpur), Malaysia
- Head: Dato' Prof. Dr. Rujhan bin Mustafa Dato' Dr. Syed Ahmad Hussein (Chief Executive Officer (CEO))
- Purpose: Implementation of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) as a basis for Malaysia's higher education quality assurance system, monitoring and overseeing quality assurance practices, and accreditation of national higher education
- Organization: Comprised of 300 staff members under the CEO. The MQA has as many as 1,600 registered auditors or assessors. It has a Council, evaluation committees, and standards setting groups as management and operations organizations. Council members are appointed by the Honourable Minister of Education and have functions including approving policies and plans relating to accreditation. Evaluation committees are established for each type of evaluation. Accreditation Committees are independent of the Council and have the power to make decisions about accreditation.
- Main functions:
- To implement the MQF as a reference point for Malaysian qualifications;
  - To develop standards and credits and all other relevant instruments as national references for the conferment of awards with the cooperation of stakeholders;
  - To quality assure higher education providers and programmes;
  - To accredit programmes that fulfil the set criteria and standards;
  - To facilitate the recognition and articulation of qualifications; and
  - To maintain the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR)
- International organization membership:
- Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
  - International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
  - ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN)
  - Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (AQAAIW)
- Website: <http://www.mqa.gov.my/>

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