

Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE)

Introduction to PREE

Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE) is a comprehensive quality assurance mechanism developed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of Pakistan, in collaboration with QAA-UK, as part of the Revamped Quality Assurance Framework (PSG-2023). PREE aims to evaluate and enhance the quality of academic programs at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan, ensuring they meet both international benchmarks and local contextual needs. It serves dual purposes: providing accountability to stakeholders (students, employers, and the public) and fostering continuous improvement in higher education.

PREE is designed to assess programs at the graduate level (Levels 7 and 8 of the National Qualifications Framework of Pakistan) and operates through structured internal and external review processes. It promotes a “quality culture” within HEIs by integrating self-assessment and external evaluation, focusing on program effectiveness, student learning experiences, and academic standards.

Types of PREE

PREE is implemented in two distinct but complementary forms, each targeting a specific aspect of quality assurance at the program level:

PREE for Internal Quality Assurance (PREE for IQA)

Description: This is a self-assessment process conducted by the academic program within an HEI. It encourages program to evaluate their performance against predefined PREE standards, fostering a culture of self-reflection and improvement.

Purpose: To ensure programs internally monitor and enhance their quality, aligning with institutional goals and the Quality Assurance Framework.

Process: Involves a program team preparing a Self-Assessment Report (SAR), overseen by the Institutional Quality Assessment and Effectiveness (IQAE) office, with steps including evidence collection, action planning, and follow-up monitoring.

Frequency: Conducted routinely, typically annually or as per the assessment cycle determined by the institution.

PREE for External Quality Assurance (PREE for EQA)

Description: This is an external review process managed by QAA, involving a panel of peer reviewers who assess graduate-level programs (Levels 7-8) against PREE Standards and Accreditation Council criteria.

Purpose: To provide an independent evaluation of program quality and standards, ensuring accountability and informing the public while encouraging enhancement.

Process: Includes submission of a program self-assessment document, a student submission, desk-based analysis by the review panel, an on-site visit, and a final report with outcomes such as “approved,” “approved with conditions,” or “not approved.”

Summary of PREE Standards

The **PREE Standards** are the core criteria against which programs are assessed under both PREE for IQA and PREE for EQA. These standards, outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework, ensure consistency and quality across academic programs. Below are the eight PREE Standards.

Standard 1: Program Mission, Objectives, and Outcomes

Focus: Ensures the program has a clear mission aligned with institutional goals and defines measurable objectives and learning outcomes.

Expectation: Programs articulate their purpose and ensure outcomes meet academic and professional standards.

Standard 2: Curriculum Design and Organization

Focus: Evaluates the structure, coherence, and relevance of the curriculum to ensure it supports intended learning outcomes.

Expectation: Curriculum is well-designed, up-to-date, and aligned with national and international benchmarks.

Standard 3: Subject-Specific Facilities

Focus: Assesses the availability and adequacy of facilities (e.g., labs, libraries) specific to the program's discipline.

Expectation: Resources are sufficient and accessible to support teaching and learning effectively.

Standard 4: Student Advising and Counselling

Focus: Ensures robust support systems for student guidance, including academic advising and personal counseling.

Expectation: Students receive adequate support to succeed academically and personally.

Standard 5: Teaching Faculty/Staff

Focus: Evaluates the qualifications, expertise, and performance of faculty and staff delivering the program.

Expectation: Faculty are competent, trained, and sufficient in number to meet program needs.

Standard 6: Institutional Policies and Process Control

Focus: Reviews the policies and processes governing program delivery, including quality assurance mechanisms.

Expectation: Clear, effective policies ensure consistent program management and improvement.

Standard 7: Institutional Support and Facilities

Focus: Assesses broader institutional resources (e.g., IT, libraries, study spaces) supporting the program.

Expectation: Institutions provide comprehensive support to enhance the student learning experience.

Standard 8: Institutional General Requirements

Focus: Ensures a research-conducive environment for graduate programs, particularly research degrees, with attention to supervision, facilities, and outcomes.

Expectation: Programs maintain a high-quality research environment aligned with academic and societal needs.

Significance of implementing PREE

PREE integrates global best practices with local solutions, making it a tailored framework for Pakistan's diverse higher education sector. By addressing both internal self-assessment (IQA) and external validation (EQA), it ensures programs are effective, student-centered, and aligned with national and international standards. The eight PREE Standards provide a robust foundation for evaluating and enhancing academic quality, ultimately unlocking the potential for transforming higher education in Pakistan.