Executive Summary

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of Program MIT

Directorate of Quality Enhancement (DQE)

Virtual University of Pakistan

The Virtual University of Pakistan was established in 2002 intending to provide extremely affordable world-class education to aspiring students all over the country regardless of their physical location by alleviating the lack of capacity in the existing universities while simultaneously tackling the acute shortage of qualified professors in the country using free-to-air satellite television broadcasts and the Internet. To pursue this aim, the Department of Computer Sciences is designated to initiate and implement the Self-Assessment process designed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC. The current document summarizes the findings of the self-assessment process for Master of Information Technology (MIT).

The department of Computer Sciences is committed to producing graduates who can develop computer applications/processes to enhance the efficiency & effectiveness of organizations to lead in the global marketplace. The department follows its vision in all of its courses and areas of specialization offered at both Master and Bachelor levels. The department feels satisfied upon completion of the following list of tasks:

1. Development of ***Self-Assessment Report (SAR)*** by Program Team (PT) for MIT program.
2. Conduct of critical review and submission of ***Assessment Report (AR)*** by Assessment Team (AT) for the MIT program.
3. Development of ***Rectification Plan*** by Head of Department.

The tasks were completed according to the set methodology through Program and Assessment Teams nominated by the Rector upon recommendation of the Department.

Methodology

The methodology adopted to complete the whole SAR cycle is described below:

1. A PT was nominated for the program. Initial orientation and training sessions for all the members were arranged by DQE. The composition of PT is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Program Team

Name	Designation
Mr. Said Nabi	Instructor (Computer Science)

2. All the relevant material such as the SAR manual, survey forms, etc. was provided to PT.
3. Continuous support, guidance, and feedback were provided to PT members to prepare the SAR for the said program.

Table 2: Assessment Team

Name	Designation
Ms. Asma Batool	Assistant Professor, CS, Virtual University of Pakistan

4. The SAR developed by PT was forwarded to AT for critical review.
5. After completion of the critical review and assessment of the SAR, AT members visited the department and had a meeting with PT.
6. After the visit, AT submitted a report and feedback form (Rubric Form) to DQE.
7. DQE forwarded the observations & findings of AT report to the Head of the Department for developing a rectification plan.
8. DQE will now monitor the implementation of the Rectification Plan.

Parameters for the SAR:

The SAR is prepared on the following eight (8) criteria prescribed by HEC:

- Criterion 1: Program Mission, Objectives, and Outcomes Criterion
- Criterion 2: Curriculum Design and Organization Criterion
- Criterion 3: Laboratory and Computing Facility Criterion
- Criterion 4: Student Support and Advising Criterion
- Criterion 5: Process Control Criterion
- Criterion 6: Faculty Criterion
- Criterion 7: Institutional Facilities Criterion
- Criterion 8: Institutional Support

Key Findings of the SAR:

Following is the summary of the key SAR findings:

Academic Observations:

1. The evidence of approval of university mission from statutory bodies is not provided. In addition to this, the display of the university's mission is insufficient.
2. The skills identified are mismatched with the PLOs statements. The alignment of PLOs and outcomes is irrational. There is no way to link a single learning outcome with many PLOs at once. Multiple outcomes can be achieved with a single PLO, but the opposite is not true.
3. To achieve the PLOs, assignments, and GDBs are used as a tool whereas assignments are given very low weight in the grading scheme. Moreover, in online learning, no mechanism for detecting plagiarism is available to faculty. Manual detection of cheating undermines the effectiveness of such tools. The department has to address this issue on a priority basis by integrating plagiarism detecting software in VULMS.
4. The standards 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 are either missing or not addressed properly.
5. The nomenclature used to categorize the courses is inappropriate. All courses are labeled as "Compulsory". These should be labeled as per HEC-defined criteria i.e., Foundation, Major.
6. Comparison of Study Schemes with HEC-approved curricula or with those programs offered by top five universities is missing to determine the worth of the program.
7. To engage and incentivized the faculty, the "Productivity Award" is available, and faculty must be encouraged to participate in that competition.

8. Department has a deficiency of updated books and physical libraries relevant to their programs. E-book, E-Journal access/facility should be provided to the faculty members as current access is very limited.

9. The manual of LMS is not available for end-users. How newly enrolled students become familiar with LMS for various activities.

10. Lab manuals must be prepared and available to students for reading in labs.

11. The contributions of the faculty of the CS department in terms of scholarly activities are not provided. It should be maintained and must be provided to AT for evaluation.

12. There are no such guidelines for ethics that are concerned for students to have provided or conveyed to teachers. In the online mode system students miss the opportunity of learning ethics, communication skills, and the experience of the teacher.

Administrative Observations:

1. The research and development policy for faculty members may encourage their active participation in research activities, publication across a variety of panels, co-curricular events, capacity building, etc. to keep them updated with the rapid knowledge generation in the contemporary scenario.

2. There are no collaborative initiatives with reputed National and International universities for exchanging academic resources helpful both for students and faculty.

3. There is a need to maintain a database of Employers via Alumni students serving in various organizations to get their feedback which will be helpful in program assessment and further improvement.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

While analyzing Criteria Referenced Self-Assessment, it has been found that the performance of the department is good but still, many gray areas keep it from performing well. It is reflected in terms of a moderate overall assessment score (73/100) reported by AT. This average score demands that the rectification plan should be implemented immediately.

According to the scorecard, criterion # 8 is rated low and becomes a major reason for this moderate score. The criterion is related to "Institutional Support" and according to AT, labs are there but the implementation of lab work is not done so far which is required for practical exposure of the students. The other criterion like Criterion # 6 ("Faculty) is also relatively low-rated. The early response of AT echoed that they have significant concerns about the following areas:

- The least time is given by the faculty for research and scholarly activities.
- Limited access to digital resources and physical library.

The Need Improvement areas identified during the self-assessment process have been reported to the Head of the respective Department and specific rectifications have also been requested. DQE will follow up on the implementation plan as per the specific time frame.

Prepared by:

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Mubashar Majeed Qadri

Manager, QA

Director DQE: _____

The Rector: _____