

Executive Summary

Program: Associate Degree in Education

Cycle: IV (2025–26)

Transitioning to PREE: The Associate Degree in Education Program's Assessment Milestone

The Associate Degree in Education program underwent its first evaluation under the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) Program Review for Effectiveness and Enhancement (PREE) framework following the completion of the program's fourth self-assessment cycle. This review represents an important milestone in the University's transition from compliance-oriented quality assurance towards an evidence-based framework that emphasizes program effectiveness, educational outcomes, and continuous quality improvement. As part of the University's implementation of the newly introduced PREE framework, the program was evaluated using the customized PREE Workbook developed by the Directorate of Quality Enhancement (DQE), which provides a structured, outcome-based approach to documenting evidence and assessing program performance. Based on the evidence presented and the Assessment Team's evaluation, the program was rated "Approved", achieving a normalized score of 79.43 out of 85 (93.45%), reflecting a sound institutional foundation while identifying opportunities for further strengthening program-level quality assurance and continuous improvement.

PREE Implementation: Process Overview

The review process followed a structured series of stages designed to ensure consistency, transparency, and evidence-based evaluation in accordance with the PREE framework.

- **Initiation of the Review:** The Chairman of the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC) initiated the review cycle by granting anticipatory approval, following which the Program Team (PT) and Assessment Team (AT) (Table 2) were formally constituted and oriented regarding their respective roles and responsibilities.
- **Transformation to an Outcome-Based PREE Workbook:** To support the implementation of the revised PREE framework, the DQE replaced the conventional narrative Self-Assessment Report (SAR) MS Word format with a structured PREE Workbook. The workbook comprises dedicated worksheets for each quality standard, enabling systematic documentation of evidence, assessment against Expected Outcome Indicators (EOIs), improved traceability, and greater consistency in program evaluation.
- **Evidence Collection and Coordination:** Under the new PREE implementation model, the PT's role was reshaped to act mainly as the departmental contact for program-specific information and evidence validation. The designated Quality Manager (QM) from DQE took charge of coordinating evidence collection, working with relevant academic and non-

academic departments, and preparing the PREE Report in close partnership with the PT and departmental focal persons. Evidence collection was centrally managed by the assigned QMs using the institutional data repositories maintained by the QA Officers of DQE.

- **Standard-Based Quality Management:** Rather than assigning an individual QM to a single program, each QM was assigned responsibility for one or two quality standards (Table 1). This approach enabled the development of expertise in standards, promoted consistent interpretation of the PREE framework, and ensured uniform assessment practices across the University. Each QM prepared the assigned sections of the PREE Report in close coordination with the respective PT for program-specific information and validation.

Table 1: Standards Allocation to QMs

Members' Name	Designation	Allocated Standard
Dr. Mubashar Majeed Qadri	Manager Quality	Standard – 1
Ms. Irfana Aalam Ghouri	Manager Quality	Standard – 2, 7
Mr. Muhammad Azeem	Manager Quality	Standard – 3, 4
Mr. Mehboob Ahmed Khartri	Manager Quality	Standard – 5, 6
Syed Naveed Anwer	Quality Assurance Officer	Coordination & Data Compilation

- **Evidence Validation and Report Finalization:** The report was developed using institutional performance data, stakeholder surveys, learning analytics, and supporting documentation to provide a comprehensive overview of program performance. The PREE Report draft was finalized by the assigned QM and then reviewed by the PT to verify its completeness, accuracy, and consistency with the documented evidence. The validated report was then finalized and submitted to the AT for independent evaluation.
- **Panel Review and PREE Judgment:** The AT, comprising a senior faculty representative from the department and an external academic quality expert, independently reviewed the submitted evidence and evaluated the program against the HEC PREE framework. Complementing the AT's review, an independent QA Expert separately evaluated the PREE Report and the new outcome-based PREE Workbook before participating in a joint review session with the DQE and the Head of Department (HoD). The assessment employed the rubric-based evaluation methodology to promote consistency, transparency, and objectivity in applying the PREE judgment criteria. Based on its evaluation, the AT assigned the program an overall judgment of **"Approved."**
- **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):** The completion of the assessment initiated the program's Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) cycle. The findings and recommendations presented in this report provide the basis for identifying improvement priorities and developing a structured implementation plan. The implementation plan was prepared by the

DQE in consultation with the relevant department and will be monitored through the University's quality assurance processes to support continuous program enhancement before the next review cycle.

Table 2: Program & Assessment Teams

Members' Name	Designation	Team	Affiliation	Role
Dr. Munawwar Ahmad	Lecturer	PT	Department of Education, VU	Focal Person
Dr. Sohail Mazhar	Tutor/Instructor	PT	Department of Education, VU	Member
Dr. Hina Amin	Assistant Professor	AT	Department of Education, VU	Lead (Internal)
Prof. Dr. Aamir Hashmi	Professor/Chairman	AT	University of the Punjab, Lahore	Member (External)

Program Review and Exit Meeting

A critical evaluation exit meeting was convened at the Lawrence Road Office (LRO) on July 8, 2026, bringing together the AT and PT, the HOD (Dr. Sumbal Tahir, Assistant Professor), and DQE representatives, including the Director and all other QMs and QA officers, to discuss findings and clarify observations. Following this review, the AT submitted its rubric-based evaluation and detailed report to the DQE. These findings were formally shared with HOD to guide the preparation of an Implementation Plan, which served as the basis for targeted improvements under the CQI cycle.

Panel's Findings Snapshot:

Standard	AT Score	Major Strengths
1	11.79 / 15	- The program is supported by a robust governance framework, documented policies, and structured management processes that ensure QA. - The University has strong teaching, assessment, and QA systems, supported by a mature LMS and centralized processes. - Availability of extensive and reliable institutional data to facilitate evidence-based evaluation and continuous quality enhancement.
2	20 / 20	- Curriculum is adequately aligned with the new undergraduate policy. - comprehensive coverage of core areas.
3	N/A	N/A
4	14.06 / 15	- Systematic module planning and delivery. - Resilient digital learning infrastructure. - Strong documentation of Academic Regulations and student information.
5	19 / 20	- Qualified faculty with strong academic credentials - Positive faculty feedback.
6	10 / 10	- All the academic-related processes are digitized. - Admission dashboard available. - Student progress and credentials can be tracked digitally.
7	4.58/5	- A robust virtual learning environment supported by an effective LMS and ICT infrastructure - Systematic LMS-based monitoring of student participation and performance.
8	N/A	N/A

Innovation in PREE Implementation

AT acknowledged that the transition from the traditional narrative SAR to the structured PREE Workbook represents a notable enhancement in quality review practices. The outcome-based workbook improves the organization of evidence, strengthens transparency in assessment, facilitates systematic evaluation against each EOI, and promotes greater consistency in program reviews across academic offerings.

Thematic Observations & Recommendations:

Governance, Mission Alignment, and Strategic Planning

The program operates under a robust institutional foundation characterized by established governance frameworks, formal academic policies, and approved Program Educational Objectives (PEOs). Centralized management ensures reliable operations, curriculum delivery, and quality assurance, while specialized mechanisms for oversight and stakeholder involvement strengthen the University's capacity to deliver quality education within the Open and Distance Learning environment.

However, current practices remain heavily course-focused rather than program-driven. Program-level governance structures and quality assurance frameworks require further development. The assessment revealed gaps in connecting PEOs directly to the university's broader mission, systematically measuring PEO achievement, establishing program-specific strategic goals, and documenting continuous improvements based on performance data. In this regard, the panel recommended:

- **Adopt a Program-Centric Model:** Shift quality assurance practices from a course-oriented perspective to a holistic, program-level model.
- **Establish Dedicated Governance Bodies:** Form departmental standing committees to oversee long-term program planning, performance tracking, and continuous improvement.
- **Define Strategic Metrics:** Formulate clear program-level goals, key performance indicators (KPIs), and targets.
- **Enhance Cross-Departmental Coordination:** Improve inter-departmental collaboration, workforce planning, and evidence-informed policy reviews to sustain long-term governance.
- **Drive Evidence-Informed Decision-Making:** Integrate institutional data, stakeholder feedback, and evaluation findings directly into strategic planning and policy updates.

Outcome-Based Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement

Teaching and assessment are supported by a mature Learning Management System (LMS), standardized assessment procedures, and extensive data collection. While these tools provide a strong baseline for evaluation, current assessment processes operate primarily at the individual

course level. There is limited evidence showing that Course Learning Outcome (CLO) data is aggregated to measure Program Learning Outcome (PLO) attainment, nor is there sufficient program-level assessment reporting to drive evidence-based improvements.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- Institutionalize an Integrated Assessment Framework: Systematically evaluate, monitor, and report CLO, PLO, and PEO attainment using a blend of direct and indirect assessment methods.
- Produce Consolidated Program Reports: Generate comprehensive assessment reports that aggregate data across courses to guide academic decision-making.
- Integrate CQI into Governance: Embed regular program self-evaluations and internal reviews into Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) cycles and strategic planning, actively tracking the impact of implemented changes.
- Strengthen OBE Alignment: Ensure tight, constructive alignment across curriculum design, course development, teaching strategies, and assessment methods.

Program Performance, Stakeholder Engagement, and Future Development

Supported by resilient digital infrastructure, efficient administrative processes, qualified faculty, and active feedback channels, the program possesses a reliable platform for effective delivery. However, long-term development planning and program-specific performance tracking remain underutilized. Available institutional data is rarely converted into actionable program intelligence, longitudinal trends, employer insights, or structured strategic expansion plans.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- Track Longitudinal Performance: Monitor trends in admissions, student retention, and graduation rates to inform strategic direction.
- Implement a Performance Management Framework: Establish program-specific KPIs and conduct regular longitudinal analyses to support evidence-based management.
- Strengthen External Partnerships: Build structured relationships with employers and alumni to gather feedback and enhance graduate career readiness.
- Measure Broader Impact: Formulate performance indicators to evaluate faculty research, innovation, and community engagement contributions.
- Draft a Development Roadmap: Create a forward-looking Program Development Roadmap aligned with institutional priorities and upcoming accreditation requirements.
- Link Performance Evidence to Growth: Apply performance findings directly to strategic decision-making and continuous program enhancement.

Student Engagement, Support, and Professional Development

The university maintains open channels for student input via course evaluations, online platforms, and surveys, complemented by academic guidance services and student representation on the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC). Despite these avenues, student involvement remains largely consultative. To meet the expectations of the HEC PREE framework, the university needs more structured mechanisms for formal student representation on academic committees, transparent representative selection, capacity building, and clear communication regarding how student feedback leads to action.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- **Formalize Student Representation:** Operationalize frameworks that grant students active, meaningful roles in academic governance and QA committees.
- **Close the Feedback Loop:** Improve communication channels to inform students about specific policy changes and improvements made in response to their feedback.
- **Unify Learner Support Services:** Consolidate academic advising, career guidance, counseling, and personal development into a cohesive student success framework that promotes retention and graduation.
- **Expand Service Evaluation:** Broaden student feedback systems to systematically evaluate advising, mentoring, and administrative support services, using the data for ongoing service upgrades.

Learning Environment, Resources, and Infrastructure

A high-functioning VLE, reliable LMS, and robust ICT infrastructure allow the institution to deliver flexible distance education across varied regions without operational interruptions. LMS tracking provides valuable visibility into student participation. To build on this foundation, the university has opportunities to modernize its digital ecosystem, update multimedia assets, and implement emerging educational technologies.

Nonetheless, the review highlighted opportunities to strengthen the learning environment and support infrastructure, including:

- **Promote Digital Innovation:** Incorporate modern educational tools—including generative AI—and upgrade multimedia learning materials to boost student engagement and learning outcomes.
- **Strengthen Ecosystem Governance:** Conduct periodic reviews, security audits, and evaluations of the LMS, examination platforms, ICT infrastructure, and support systems to maintain reliability and alignment with evolving standards.

- **Ensure Evidence-Based Resource Management:** Maintain thorough documentation, conduct routine infrastructure performance reviews, and implement systematic follow-ups to guarantee the long-term sustainability of digital learning tools.

Faculty Capacity and Scholarly Environment

Qualified and dedicated faculty members maintain instructional quality and ensure alignment with academic standards. However, the assessment noted key opportunities to optimize faculty performance and satisfaction through systematic qualification tracking, workload balancing, structured professional development, and targeted motivational initiatives.

To further strengthen this area, the panel identified opportunities for improvement, such as:

- **Optimize Workload Distribution:** Refine workload policies to strike an effective balance between teaching responsibilities, administrative duties, and scholarly research.
- **Enhance Faculty Recognition & Support:** Strengthen career progression pathways, reward systems, and research support while actively addressing faculty feedback to boost retention and morale.
- **Execute Targeted Development Plans:** Formulate structured Faculty Development Plans rooted in institutional needs assessments, evaluating their effectiveness through measurable indicators to drive ongoing academic quality.

QA Expert's Judgment: Advancing Quality Maturity through Outcome-Based Self-Assessment

Mr. Yousaf Jamil, the QA expert and Director of QEC at Shifa Tameer-e-Millat University (STMU), Islamabad, recognized the effective transformation of the HEC QA Framework into a structured, outcome-based QA Framework, backed by detailed documentary evidence, clear institutional procedures, and a strong evidence repository. This transition from the conventional narrative SAR to the outcome-based PREE Workbook was appreciated as a significant institutional innovation that has strengthened EOI evaluation, traceability, transparency, and consistency in program review.

Using Quality Functional Levels, a key feature of the new QA framework, the expert observed that the current PREE Report predominantly demonstrates achievement of the initial quality levels (Document, Align, and Implement) through documented policies, established processes, and supporting evidence. The review further highlighted the opportunity to advance the QA maturity by strengthening the next levels (Analyze, Improve, and Evaluate). Future program reviews should place greater emphasis on interpreting evidence, analyzing trends, demonstrating how assessment findings inform program enhancement, and evaluating the effectiveness of rectification plans. The expert recognized the transition to an outcome-based QA framework as a significant institutional advancement, enabling a shift from a compliance-oriented approach to an evidence-based enhancement framework that triggers built-in quality improvement interventions.

Strategic Recommendations

- Strengthen PREE Reports by directly connecting evidence to findings, conclusions, improvement strategies, and measurable results.
- Expand trend analysis through greater use of longitudinal performance data and outcome assessments to better demonstrate program effectiveness and continuous quality improvements (CQIs).
- Refocus self-assessment from simply recording compliance toward critically analyzing evidence, evaluating effectiveness, and highlighting the tangible impact of quality improvement initiatives.

Conclusion

The panel concludes that the Associate Degree in Education is supported by a well-established institutional infrastructure, effective academic governance arrangements, comprehensive operational systems, and a strong institutional commitment to quality assurance within the ODL environment. These strengths provide a solid platform for sustaining program quality and supporting future development. Addressing the strategic recommendations will enhance the program's effectiveness, improve its readiness for future accreditation and external quality reviews, and further align institutional practices with the expectations of the HEC PREE framework.

Overall, the panel recognizes the University's commitment to quality enhancement and is confident that continued institutional efforts to achieve program-level quality maturity will further strengthen academic excellence, stakeholder confidence, and the program's long-term sustainability.

Prepared by:

Dr. Mubashar Majeed Qadri
Manager QA & Standard – 1 Coordinator

Reviewed by:

Ms. Irfana Aslam Ghouri
Manager QA & Standard – 2 & 7 Coordinator

Mr. Mehboob Ahmed Khartri
Manager QA & Standard – 5 & 6 Coordinator

Mr. Muhammad Azeem
Manager QA & Standard – 3 & 4 Coordinator

Recommended by:

Dr. Raja Fakhar Ul Inam
Director -DQE, VU