

Executive Summary

Program: BS Mass Communication

Cycle: IV (2025–26)

Transitioning to PREE: The BS Mass Communication Program's Assessment Milestone

The BS Mass Communication 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 with Recommendations", achieving a normalized score of 72.35 out of 85 (85.12%), 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 with Conditions."**
- **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
Ms. Aisha Muhammad Din	Lecturer	PT	Mass Communication, VU	Focal Person
Mr. Arslan Kaleem	Lecturer	PT	Mass Communication, VU	Member
Ms. Saba Sadiq	Lecturer	AT	Mass Communication, VU	Lead (Internal)
Dr. Aemen Khalid	Associate Professor	AT	UMT, Lahore	Member (External)

Program Review and Exit Meeting

A critical evaluation exit meeting was convened at the Lawrence Road Office (LRO) on July 10, 2026, bringing together the AT and PT, the HOD (Dr. Nadia Saleem, 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	11.25 / 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	18.33 / 20	- Curriculum is adequately aligned with the new undergraduate policy. - comprehensive coverage of core areas.
3	N/A	N/A
4	12.81 / 15	- Systematic module planning and delivery. - Resilient digital learning infrastructure. - Strong documentation of Academic Regulations and student information.
5	16 / 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	3.96/5	- 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 relies on a well-grounded institutional framework comprising established policies, centralized academic management, and defined Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) that effectively support Open and Distance Learning (ODL) delivery. However, academic planning and evaluation operate predominantly at the individual course level rather than the program level. The assessment revealed limited operational evidence connecting PEOs to the institutional mission, systematically measuring PEO attainment, executing program-specific strategic plans, or utilizing performance data for continuous improvement. In this regard, the panel recommended:

- Transition from a course-oriented quality assurance approach to an integrated, program-centric model.
- Strengthen departmental governance by establishing standing committees to oversee program planning, monitoring, and enhancement.
- Formulate clear program-level strategic objectives, key performance indicators (KPIs), and targets.
- Enhance cross-departmental coordination, workforce planning, and policy review mechanisms to sustain long-term governance.
- Systematically incorporate performance data, stakeholder feedback, and evaluation findings into strategic planning and academic policy refinement.

Outcome-Based Assessment and Continuous Quality Improvement

Teaching, learning, and assessment are supported by a mature Learning Management System (LMS), standardized evaluation processes, and extensive institutional data collection. Despite these foundational strengths, assessment practices remain siloed within individual courses. Current evidence does not show systematic aggregation of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) into Program Learning Outcome (PLO) achievement, comprehensive program-level assessment reporting, or regular application of evaluation findings toward structural program enhancement.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- Operationalize an integrated outcomes framework to systematically measure, track, and report CLO, PLO, and PEO achievement using direct and indirect measures.
- Produce consolidated program-level assessment reports that synthesize multi-source data to drive evidence-based academic decisions.
- Institutionalize routine program self-evaluations and internal quality reviews, embedding findings into Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) cycles and strategic planning.
- Reinforce Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles by ensuring constructive alignment across curriculum design, instruction, learning activities, and assessment methodologies.

Program Performance, Stakeholder Engagement, and Future Development

A resilient digital infrastructure, qualified faculty, reliable administrative operations, and established feedback channels provide a solid platform for ongoing program execution. However, long-term performance management and strategic development planning at the program level remain underdeveloped. Existing data assets are not consistently converted into actionable program performance metrics, longitudinal trend analyses, employer impact evaluations, or multi-year strategic expansion plans.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- Implement longitudinal performance monitoring across admissions, student retention, and graduation outcomes to inform strategic planning.
- Establish a formal program performance management framework driven by targeted KPIs and longitudinal analysis.
- Expand stakeholder engagement by institutionalizing employer feedback, alumni networks, and industry partnerships to enhance program relevance and graduate employability.
- Define specific metrics to evaluate research outputs, innovation, community engagement, and societal impact generated by the program.
- Formulate a multi-year Program Development Roadmap aligned with institutional priorities and accreditation standards.
- Integrate program performance evidence into decision-making processes to systematically monitor progress and direct quality enhancement efforts.

Student Engagement, Support, and Professional Development

The university maintains established mechanisms for gathering student feedback via course evaluations and survey channels, alongside structured academic guidance and student representation on the Institutional Quality Circle (IQC). Nevertheless, student engagement remains largely consultative rather than participatory. Operational mechanisms for formal student representation on academic committees, transparent selection of student delegates, capacity

building, and closing the feedback loop regarding actions taken remain insufficient under the HEC PREE framework.

The panel, therefore, recommends that the University:

- Formalize student representation across academic governance bodies to enable meaningful participation in decision-making and QA processes.
- Establish transparent communication channels to regularly inform students of actions taken in response to their feedback.
- Consolidate academic advising, career counseling, and personal development into an integrated student success framework that boosts retention and graduate readiness.
- Broaden student-centered QA mechanisms to evaluate advising, counseling, and academic support services, applying findings to drive continuous service improvements.

Learning Environment, Resources, and Infrastructure

A high-performing Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and robust LMS allow the institution to deliver flexible distance education across geographical regions without operational disruption. Automated tracking through the LMS provides reliable visibility into student engagement. To build on this technological foundation, the university can further modernize its digital assets, adopt emerging educational technologies, and strengthen oversight across its technical ecosystem.

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

- Integrate emerging educational technologies—including generative AI—and modernize multimedia learning materials to elevate student engagement and outcome achievement.
- Enhance governance over the digital learning ecosystem through periodic security, adequacy, and performance audits of the LMS, exam tools, and ICT infrastructure.
- Institutionalize evidence-based management of digital infrastructure by maintaining complete documentation, conducting regular resource evaluations, and tracking follow-up actions to ensure system sustainability.

Faculty Capacity and Scholarly Environment

Qualified faculty members drive effective curriculum delivery and ensure alignment with academic standards. However, assessment findings indicate opportunities to optimize operational management by improving qualification tracking, program-level staffing analysis, workload balancing, professional growth tracking, and faculty motivation strategies.

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

- Refine workload management practices to ensure a balanced distribution between instructional duties, administrative responsibilities, and scholarly research.

- Strengthen faculty recognition programs, career advancement pathways, research support, and retention initiatives by acting directly on faculty feedback.
- Establish structured Faculty Development Plans grounded in needs assessments, using measurable performance metrics to evaluate their effectiveness and drive program 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 BS Mass Communication program 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.

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