# Executive Summary
## Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of Program
## Associate Degree Program in Computer Networking
## Directorate of Quality Enhancement (DQE)
## Virtual University of Pakistan

The Virtual University of Pakistan established in 2002 with the aim to provide extremely affordable world class education to aspiring students all over the country regardless of their physical location. The University also aimed to alleviate 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 Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC. The current document summarizes the findings of self-assessment process of Associate Degree Program in Computer Networking program.

The department is committed to producing graduates who can lead organizations towards success and prosperity in the global marketplace. The department follows its vision in all of its courses and areas of specialization that offered at both Masters and Bachelors levels. The department feels satisfied upon the completion of the following list of tasks:

1. The development of *Self-Assessment Report (SAR)* by a Program Team constituted for **Associate Degree Program in Computer Networking**.

2. The conduct of critical review and submission of *Assessment Report (AR)* by an Assessment Team for Associate Degree Program in Computer Networking.

3. Development of a *Rectification Plan* by the Head of Department

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

## Methodology

The following methodology is adopted to complete the whole SAR cycle:

1. A Program Team (PT) was nominated for the program. Initial orientation and training sessions for all members were arranged by DQE. The composition of PT is given below:

### Table 1: Program Team

| Sr.# | Name | Designation |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Mr. Syed Shah Muhammad Shah (Coordinator) | Lecturer (Department of Computer Sciences) |
| 2. | Mr. Akmal Khan | Instructor (Department of Computer Sciences) |

2. All the relevant material such as 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 said program.

4. After completion and submission of the final SAR by PT, an Assessment Team (AT) was formed by the Rector on the recommendation of the Department. Accordingly, a Subject Specialist from other institution was also included. The composition of AT is given below:

**Table 2: Assessment Team**

| Sr.# | Name | Designation |
|------|------|-------------|
| 1. | Mr. Amjad Hussain Zahid | Assistant Professor, The Institute of Management Sciences, Lahore |
| 2. | Ms. Asma Batool | Assistant Professor (Faculty of Science and Technology) |

5. The SAR developed by PT was forwarded to AT for critical review.

6. After completion of critical review and assessment of the SAR, AT members visited the department and had a meeting with PT.

7. After the visit, AT submitted a report and feedback form (Rubric Form) to DQE.

8. DQE forwarded the observations & findings of AT report to the Head of Department for developing a rectification plan.

9. DQE will now monitor implementation of Rectification Plan.

## Parameters for the SAR:

The SAR is prepared on the following eight (8) criteria prescribed by the 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. According to the AT, the objectives and their respective outcomes of the program are lacking assessment attributes.

2. The members of AT are of the view that there is a need to revisit the courses offering order to align courses with program objectives and to make this degree program more practical in nature and compatible with hands-on experience. The revised order is available in AT report.

3. For hands-on practice, specific labs for computer networking are unavailable. The available computer labs are sufficient for routine computing processes.

4. The advanced software like simulators can be used as an alternative and should be installed in all computer labs.

5. University has the limited infrastructure to counsel and advise students but how it is monitored and evaluated, it is not specified yet.

6. According to AT, the required formal career counseling for students is not sufficient. For career counseling of students, seminars and workshops should be organized at least once in a semester and experts from industries and organizations should be invited for live interaction and discussion.

7. In the University, there is no physical library. In addition to this, there is also a shortage of reference books in the digital library. Department has the deficiency of e-resources for the students and faculty.

8. To contribute effectively to scholarly activities and to remain current in their discipline, the faculty is not giving proper time to research.

9. The current working environment in which workstations are installed in a computer lab format is inappropriate for teaching. There is also a shortage of faculty offices.

10. Faculty development incentives are not sufficient; for instance, faculty should be encouraged with flexible timings or with half paid salaries to peruse Ph.D. programs.

## Conclusion and Recommendations:

While analyzing the Rubric Criteria designed by HEC for Self-Assessment, it has been found that performance of the department is satisfactory. It is reflected in terms of moderate overall assessment score (73/100) awarded by AT. However, in the report, need improvement areas are also identified by AT. The average score and need improvement areas require that a rectification plan should be implemented immediately.

According to the scorecard, the criterion # 3 is rated low and become a major reason for this moderate score. The criterion is related to "Laboratories and Computing Facilities" and according to AT, specific labs for computer networking are required for practical exposure of the students. The other criteria like Criterion # 6 (Faculty) and Criterion # 8 (Institutional Support) are also relatively low rated. The early response of AT echoed that they have significant concerns about following areas:

- The absence of any incentive plan to retain quality faculty
- Non-availability of enough Ph.D. faculty members
- 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 self-assessment process have been reported to the Head of respective Department and the specific rectifications have also been requested. DQE will follow up the implementation plan as per the specific time-frame.

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The Rector: _____