Executive Summary

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of Program BA (Mass Communication)
Directorate of Quality Enhancement (DQE)
Virtual University of Pakistan

Virtual University of Pakistan was 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 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 Mass Communication is designated to initiate and implement Self-Assessment process designed by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC. The current document summarizes the findings of self-assessment process of BA Mass Communication program.

The department of Mass Communication is committed to produce graduates who are capable enough to explore media industry in order to meet the challenges of national as well as international market by enhancing efficiency & effectiveness of media tools to lead in global market. Department follows its vision in all of its courses and specializations that are being offered at both Masters' and Bachelors' levels. The department feels satisfaction on the completion of following list of tasks.

- Development of Self-Assessment Report (SAR) by Program Team for BA (Mass Communication) program
- Conduct of critical review and submission of Assessment Report (AR) by Assessment Team for BA (Mass Communication) program
- Development of Rectification Plan by Head of Department

These tasks were completed according to the set methodology through Program and Assessment Teams nominated by the Rector on the recommendation 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 the members were arranged by DQE. The formation of PT is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Program Team

Sr.#	Name	Designation
1.	Ms. Munaza Qamar	Instructor (Mass Communication)
2.	Ms. Hira Farooq	Instructor (Mass Communication)
3.	Mr. Waris Shahzad	Instructor (English)

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 the 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, both Subject Specialist & Technical Expert from other institutions were also included. The formation of AT is given in Table 2:

Table 2: Assessment Team

Sr.#	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Zaeem Yasin *(Subject Specialist)*	Lecturer, Mass Communication Lahore College for Women University, Lahore
2.	Mr. Muhammad Abdullah *(Technical Expert)*	Deputy Registrar, Pakistan Institute of Fashion Design, Lahore
3.	Ms. Aisha M. Din	Lecturer, Mass Communication Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore
4.	Ms. Saba Sadiq	Instructor, Mass Communication Virtual University of Pakistan, Lahore

5. The SAR developed by PT was forwarded to AT for the purpose of 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 SAR:

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

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

Key Findings of SAR:

A summary of the key findings from SAR is given below:

Academic Observations:

1. The learning objectives and outcomes of the programs are not consistent and comprehensive.

2. The curriculum of the program lacks practice and research oriented courses and contents.

3. The evidence of evaluation of different processes like admission, academic assessment, faculty recruitment etc. is not available.

4. The department lacks PhD faculty.

5. Although multiple modes are used to enhance student-teacher interaction, yet the extent to which these modes and interactive sessions are effective is still unestablished.

6. In order to attract and retain faculty, there is a need to encourage capacity building and promote research culture.

7. There is need fill the gap of updated books and physical library relevant to this particular program. Full access to e-books and e-journals should also be provided to faculty.

8. Students' tests and interviews should be conducted at the time of admission to the University.

Administrative Observations:

- Faculty should pay more attention to research oriented scholarly activities by utilizing official time in more proper way.

- There is an intensive demand for break after every semester.

- There is a shortage of offices for faculty.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

While analyzing Criteria Referenced Self-Assessment, it has been found that the performance of the department is very good (71/100 – overall assessment score reported by AT) but there are few gray areas due to which need improvement. The low scores are in Criterion # 1 (Mission and Vision), Criterion # 6 (Faculty), Criterion # 7 (Institutional Facilities) and Criterion # 8 (Institutional Support). The low scores reflect that there is a need to revisit objectives and outcomes of the program, introduction of new courses, better utilization of time by faculty and provide sufficient institutional support to faculty and students. It is necessary that these criteria should be addressed immediately and evaluated periodically. One of the most important aspects emphasized by AT is that separate identity should be provided to the department with a Ph.D. faculty member acting as head of department. Other issues worth addressing include lack of library, privacy, inappropriate office environment (noise, distractors etc.) and lack of offices for faculty.

The Need Improvement areas identified during self-assessment process have been reported to the Head of the 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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Rizwan Saleem Sandhu
Deputy Director, DQE

Advisor DQE: _____

The Rector: _____