Executive Summary

Self-Assessment Report (SAR) of Program BS (IT)

Directorate of Quality Enhancement (DQE)

Virtual University of Pakistan

The Virtual University of Pakistan established in 2002 with 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 Computer Sciences is designated to initiate and implement Self-Assessment process designed by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of HEC. The department is committed to produce graduates who can develop computer applications/processes to enhance efficiency & effectiveness of organizations to lead in global market place. Department follows its vision in all of its courses and specializations that are being offered at both Masters' and Bachelors' levels. The department feels contentment on the completion of following list of tasks.

1. Development of *Self-Assessment Report (SAR)* by Program Team for BS (IT) program
2. Conduction of critical review and submission of *Assessment Report (AR)* by Assessment Team for BS (IT) program
3. Development of *Rectification Plan* by Head of Department

The tasks were completed according to set methodology through Program Teams and Assessment Teams nominated by DQE.

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 formation of PT is given in Table 1:

Table 1: Program Team

Sr.#	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Usman Waheed (Coordinator)	Instructor (Computer Science)
2.	Mr. Noor-ul- Amin	Instructor (Statistics)
3.	Ms. Zakia Mushtaq	Instructor (English)

2. All the relevant material such as SAR manual, different 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 from PT, an Assessment Team (AT) was formulated by Director DQE with the consent of worthy Rector and a Subject Specialist & Expert from outside was also included. The formation of PT is given in Table 2:

Table 2: Assessment Team

Sr.#	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Muhammad Tariq Pervaiz	Assistant Professor (Computer Science)
2.	Dr Fakhar Lodhi	FAST Lahore
3.	Mr. Amer Raza	Instructor (Statistics)

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 team members were made a visit in the department and hold 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 would 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. To make BS (IT) program compliance with HEC current curriculum, many IT courses recommended by HEC need to be included in offered program.
2. The categorization of different courses as core, general, support and main course should be revised as per HEC current categorization.
3. Research projects are lacking diversity due to absence of a mechanism through which industry needs can be identified and in-house solutions can be produced.

4. Need to focus on the area of "Student Support and Advising" by introducing career counseling and third party free of cost online/offline training resources like articles/seminars/video for students

5. Department is lacking highly qualified senior PhDs and subject specialist faculty and this nonexistence of senior faculty resultantly reflects in the form of limited in-depth theoretical expertise in research activities.

6. In order to attract senior faculty members on permanent basis and also to retain current faculty there should be an option of time flexibility.

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

8. University Research funding should be circulated openly to faculty members for capacity building and to make faculty members internationally compatible.

Administrative Observations:

- There must be a periodic auditing for Labs / PVCs.
- There is intensive demand for semester break.
- Non-existence of proper faculty offices & poor office environment is hitting unfavorably and dropping the motivation level of faculty.
- Lack of Infrastructure which include limited space for faculty members.
- Shortage of faculty members which results in over burdening of existing faculty members.
- Demotivated and less satisfied faculty is an alarming situation for university.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

While analyzing Criteria Referenced Self Assessment, it has been observed that Department's performance is satisfactory but still there many gray areas due to which the department is perceived as underperformed. This perception is reflected in terms of moderate overall assessment score (49/100) reported by AT. There are two Criterions responsible for under performance of the department; first is the curriculum of the program and second is institutional support to achieve program's objectives. These Criterions are not as per standards of HEC and these Criterions demand immediate implementation of a rectification plan. The other Criterions like student support, process control and faculty have secured reasonably good scores but still very big margin of improvement is highlighted by AT. One most important aspect emphasized by AT is the fact that department should be led by an individual as a department head who is a PhD or senior subject specialist faculty member. Lack of library, privacy, inappropriate office environment and nonexistence of faculty offices are other serious impediments that need to be rectified.

The deficient areas identified during SAR process have been reported to the HoD of respective department and rectification for each has also been suggested. DQE will follow up the implementation plan as per time frame given by DQE.

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Rizwan Saleem Sandhu

Deputy Director, DQE

Director QEC: _____

Worthy Rector: _____