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Tarikh : 6 Mac 2023

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Tuan,

LAPORAN AKHIR AUDIT PEMATUHAN SWAAKREDITASI UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

Dengan hormatnya saya merujuk kepada perkara tersebut di atas.

2. Sukacita disertakan laporan akhir Audit Pematuhan Swaakreditasi Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) untuk perhatian tuan. Laporan akhir ini disediakan oleh panel auditor berdasarkan maklum balas pihak UPM terhadap draf laporan yang telah dikemukakan sebelum ini.

3. Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia (*Malaysian Qualifications Agency*, MQA) merakamkan setinggi-tinggi penghargaan di atas kerjasama serta komitmen pihak tuan dalam pelaksanaan Audit Pematuhan Swaakreditasi ini.

4. Pihak MQA berharap agar Audit Pematuhan Swaakreditasi yang dilaksanakan ini telah memberi manfaat kepada pihak UPM. MQA juga berharap agar kerjasama erat di antara kita diteruskan pada masa akan datang.

Sekian, terima kasih.

"PENDIDIKAN TINGGI BERKUALITI GLOBAL"

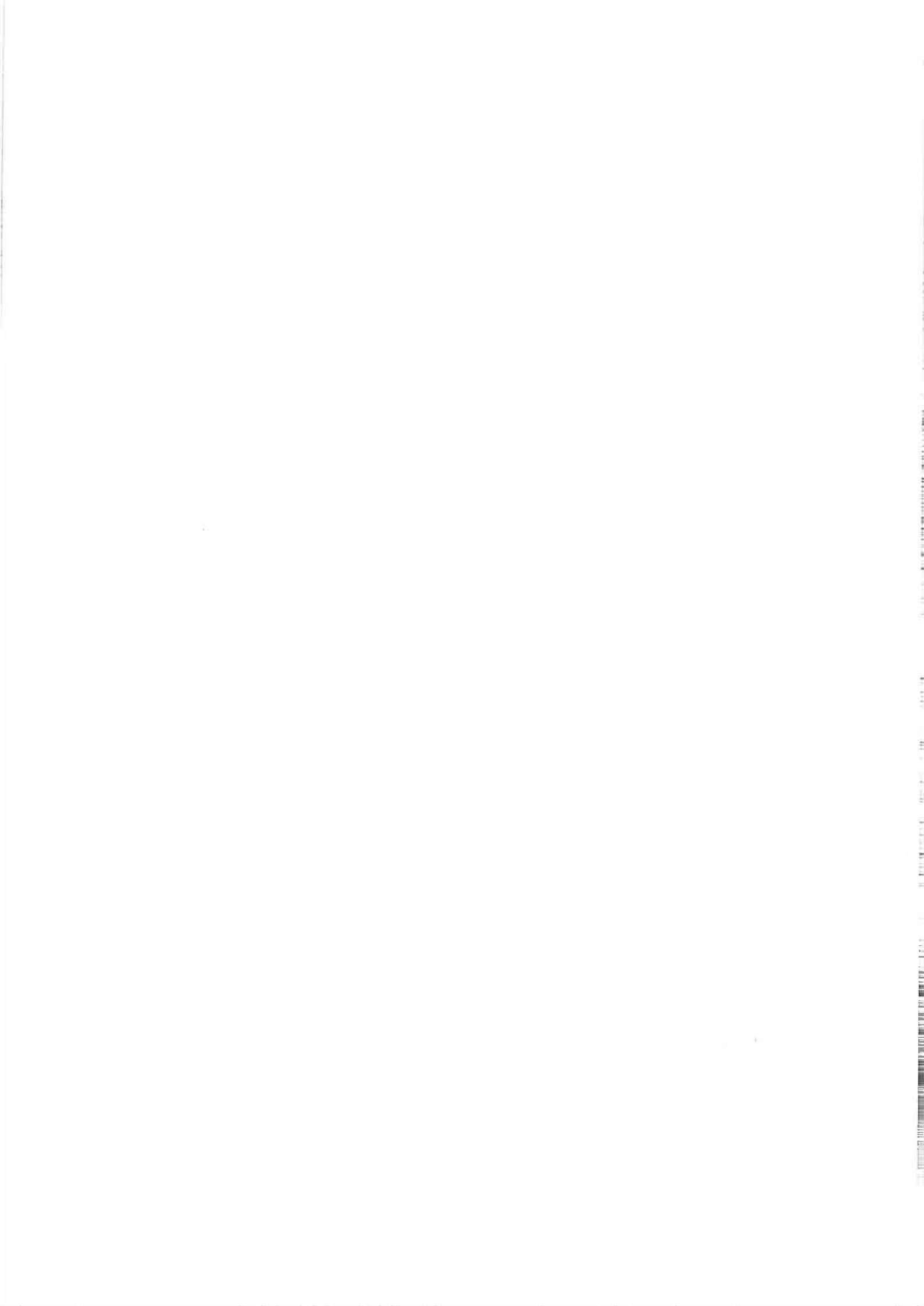
"MALAYSIA MADANI"

"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"

Saya yang menjalankan amanah,



(MAZLINAWATI MOHAMED)
Pengarah
Bahagian Audit Institusi
b.p.: Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif
Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia



**REPORT OF INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT ON
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

DATE OF VISIT:

21 - 23 JUNE 2022

PREPARED BY:

**THE PANEL OF AUDITORS FOR
THE MALAYSIAN QUALIFICATIONS AGENCY**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUKU	<i>Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti</i>
CADe	Centre for Academic Development
CBTM	Competency-Based Talent Management
CLO	Course learning outcome
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
COPIA	Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CQA	Centre for Quality Assurance
CQI	Continual quality improvement
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
eHRAMS	e-Integrated Human Resource Management System
eSMP	<i>Sistem Maklumat Pelajar</i>
FAMS	Fixed Assets Management System
GOT	Graduate on time
HRD	Human Resource Development Division
iDEC	InfoComm Development Centre
IAP	Industry Advisors Panel
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
i-GIMS	Internet-based Graduate Information Management System
IQA	Internal quality assurance
ISMS	Information Security Management Systems
JPU	<i>Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Universiti</i>
KIP	Key Intangible Performance
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LPPT	<i>Laporan Penilaian Prestasi Tahunan</i>

LPU	<i>Lembaga Pengarah Universiti</i>
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOOC	Massive open online course
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
MQF2.0	Malaysian Qualifications Framework, Second Edition, 2017
MQR	Malaysian Qualifications Register
NEC	National Education Codes
ODL	Online and Distance Learning
PEO	Programme educational objective
PLO	Programme learning outcome
PMRE	Programme monitoring, review, and evaluation
PS	Programme Standard
PSR	Programme Self-Review
PSRR	Programme Self-Review Report
PutraLMS	Putra Learning Management System
QMS	Quality Management System
RMC	Research Management Centre
SISMAN	<i>Sistem Sumber Manusia</i>
SAR	Self-assessment report
SETARA	<i>Sistem Penarafan Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia</i>
SKT	<i>Sasaran Kerja Tahunan</i>
SMP	<i>Sistem Maklumat Pelajar</i>
SOP	Standard operating procedure
SP	Strategic Plan
SRP	Self-Review Portfolio
TAM	<i>Tenaga Akademik Muda</i>

TNA	Training Need Analysis
TRM	Training Road Map
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
UPMBC	UPM Bintulu Campus
VC	Vice Chancellor

INTRODUCTION AND COMPOSITION OF THE AUDIT PANEL

The panel, which consisted of five members representing the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), was tasked to undertake a compliance evaluation of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) for the purpose of extending the self-accrediting university status conferred on 29th April 2010. The on-site audit visit was carried out over three days from 21st - 23rd June 2022 at the UPM main campus in Serdang.

The panel would like to thank the Chairman and members of the University Board of Directors, YBhg. Prof. Datuk Ir. Dr. Mohd Roslan Sulaiman, Vice-Chancellor of UPM, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Senior Executive Management Staff, the Deans and Directors, Heads of Departments and Units, the programme leaders, lecturers, students, alumni and support staff and professionals for their time and cooperation in the audit. The panel is grateful for the frank and candid views of all auditees throughout the on-site audit which immensely helped the panel to obtain deep insight into the policies and practices of the university.

The panel appreciates the warm reception and hospitality extended to the panel throughout the audit by all staff of UPM led by the Centre for Quality Assurance, UPM.

Chair	Name:	Dr. Hj. Hazman Shah Abdullah
	Designation:	Professor (Retired), UiTM
Secretary	Name:	Dr. Nabishah Mohamad
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 Designation: Assistant Director
 Affiliation: Institutional Audit Division,
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ABSTRACT

Based on the four Areas of Evaluation, the panel has made 0 commendation, 1 affirmation, 0 recommendation and 19 suggestions for improvement a summary of which is provided below.

Overall, the panel is of the opinion that Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) fulfils the requirements as stipulated in the Guidelines to Compliance Evaluation of Self-Accreditation Universities, 2020.

SUMMARY OF PANEL OF AUDITORS FINDINGS

COMMENDATIONS

None

AFFIRMATION

1. The panel affirms that the curriculum review and alignment of PLOs (to new MQF) is in progress and expects that the re-alignment of the few remaining programmes will be completed expeditiously.

RECOMMENDATIONS

None

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Consistent with the historical roots of the University in agriculture and the LPU's commitment to continue championing this niche, the panel suggests that in the midterm review greater strategic visibility is provided to the role of the niche in the university's vision, mission and university goals.
2. The panel strongly suggests that the graduate attributes be articulated in a more concrete form for the programme leaders. Equipped with a common understanding, the programme leaders can think of ways to integrate this key university graduate attribute into the programme learning outcomes so that most, if not, all students are exposed to and hence, have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate this attribute within the programme as reflected in the university's educational goal.

3. The panel suggests that all policy documents including especially the information management policy documents are provided with information on creation, enforcement, and expected date of review.
4. The panel suggests that PLOs and PEOs be closely examined from the standpoint of UPM's educational goal and the graduate attributes stated above. These constructs must be articulated as approaches and principles which can guide the faculties to give life to these goals in their respective programmes as part of the periodic academic reviews.
5. The panel encourages UPM to reconsider the 5 yearly review policy as it may be too long in view of the pace of changes in all aspects of education. The duration may be made more flexible, i.e., shorter for some disciplines where the changes are more rapid and intense.
6. The PSR and curriculum review processes should be synchronised and harmonised because of the common objective of enhancement. It can vastly reduce duplication and reduce review fatigue amongst faculties.
7. The curriculum review process should indicate clear timelines to expedite the review processes so that it is completed in a timely manner.
8. Curriculum review process and mechanisms must also pay attention to monitoring the extent of change in each of the review cycles to take special action once the 30% cumulative curriculum change threshold is reached.
9. The panel encourages increased intake of mature students via the available modes of entry as the presence of 'experienced/senior' within the classes of current undergraduates may provide a good learning environment to the class. This diversity can be invaluable to both groups as this can form a good platform to understand the 'generation gap' issues. Such initiatives can be led by the UPM's Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing).
10. The panel suggest the university review the Garis Panduan used for recognition of awards for promotion and to consider ways to better recognise the value and impact of the prestigious and competitive national awards.
11. The panel suggests the university revisit the Program Pembangunan Staf UPM 2008-2010, as the recent developments may require the university to focus on new areas.

12. The panel suggests UPM consider ways to recognise the impact of highly respected and competitive national and international awards in annual academic performance evaluation, and for promotion.
13. The panel suggests UPM to identify training programmes for the administrative staff which leads to professional certifications in the relevant fields.
14. The panel suggests that the University to allocate more funds for maintenance of equipment, facilities and assets reflecting the rapid aging of ICT equipment and aged buildings.
15. The panel suggests that at the faculty level, CQA contextualise the programme monitoring and review (PMRE) exercises by encouraging faculties to include their own themes or risks into the review hence creating ownership and increasing relevance.
16. The panel suggests that CQA should consider adapting the reviews to a new approaches, for example risk-based, performance-based, priority-based etc. These new approaches help to develop greater ownership of the IQA processes by the departments.
17. While the CQA performs these responsibilities in a timely and effective manner, it should also begin to take on university priorities (as outlined in the strategic plans, VC's narrative etc.) within its work more actively than before. The SP priorities can become themes in the Programme Monitoring, Review and Evaluation (PMRE) exercises. for instance, sustainability, employability, internationalisation or student mobility.

It should also begin to provide programme managers and faculty some scope to include their priorities in the terms of the review. IQA can employ risks as part of the planning and execution of the internal reviews to effectively apportion review resources to areas that most need them.

18. IQA should also focus on the online medium of delivery and assessments to provide confidence to all that the teaching, learning and assessments are carried out with care and diligence cognizant of the standards to be observed.
19. There should be periodic management audits of the CQA to ensure effectiveness of their role/function.

PREVIOUS QUALITY ASSURANCE OR ACCREDITATION ASSESSMENTS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

The University has carried out improvements as outlined in the 2015 audit report which have been confirmed by follow-up audits in 2017. The University has submitted biennial reports to Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) on the accreditation and internal review activities carried out.

THE SELF-REVIEW PORTFOLIO

UPM developed and submitted a self-review portfolio (SRP) based on the Guidelines for the Compliance Audit of Self Accreditation Universities, 2020 by MQA using the standard Word and Excel templates provided. This document was organised, concise, and coherent.

The SRP was developed before the onset of the COVID-19 disruption did not adequately address the university's activities during the pandemic. UPM was requested to provide documentation on the emergency response to continue with teaching, supervision, learning, assessment, practicals, internships, and student services and support, which it did.

Many of the hyperlinked documents and evidence were not operable and further documents were requested and obtained from UPM. A key element of the SRP is the self-review. Although reflection of the provision under the broad areas was provided, it could have been more data-driven showing the performance, challenges and how UPM balanced the different and at times conflicting feedback and demands from relevant stakeholders with its own priorities and principles.

BACKGROUND OF THE UNIVERSITY

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) was first established as a School of Agriculture in 1931. Its status was converted to a college in 1947 and subsequently, to a university in 1971 as Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Malaysian Agriculture University). The name of the university was changed in 1997 to Universiti Putra Malaysia reflecting its multi-disciplinary constituency.

UPM hosts 16 Faculties, 11 Institutes and two Schools. It has 67 postgraduate programmes and 91 undergraduate/diploma programmes. It has a total of 1,782 academic staff (both local and international) and 93.7 % of whom are PhD holders. There are 16,320 undergraduate students and 11,726 postgraduate students or a total of 28,046 students enrolled in various programmes offered at the University.

Reflecting its growth and maturity, UPM was awarded the Research University status in 2006 and the Autonomous University status by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in 2011, and the Self-Accreditation status by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) in 2010.

UPM is at the forefront of agricultural research in the country. UPM is ranked 42nd in the world in the area of agriculture according to US News. In addition, 14 subject areas of the University are listed within the top 200 in the world by the QS World University Ranking. UPM is ranked top 123 for 2023, number 27th QS Asian University Ranking 2022 and top 10th QS World University Ranking for young universities under 50 years. The completion on time rate of the undergraduate is a high 95% while about half the postgraduate finish in time. Over the last few years at least 80% of the graduates find employment within 6 months of completion or pursue further studies.

**REPORT ON THE UNIVERSITY PUTRA
MALAYSIA**

**IN RELATION TO THE FOUR AREAS OF
EVALUATION**

CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR SELF-ACCREDITING INSTITUTION

AREA 1 INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

1.1. Review of Vision, Mission and Educational Goals

- 1.1.1. Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is a university with a growing international reputation. Despite meeting only 62.1% of the targets in the previous strategic plan period (2014-2020), UPM has continued to grow in stature and improved its international standing from 376 in 2014. It is ranked 123rd in the world and 27th in Asia by QS World/Asia University Ranking and is in the world top 200 ranking for 14 subject areas including agri-related fields of studies (QSWUR, 2022/2023). It is now working to be among the top 100 universities in the world (Presentation by TNC, 21st June 2022 to the panel). Fifty-four of its academic staff are recognised as among the world's top 2% of renowned scientists. Eighty four percent (84%) of its graduates are able to secure employment within six (6) months of completion of their programmes signalling high employability skills. The quest to improve UPM's international reputation and standing continues with the new strategic plan (2021-2025).
- 1.1.2. The planning and preparations for the new strategic plan (2021-2025) started in January 2020 with the establishment of three committees namely – *Jawatankuasa Induk Pelan Strategik*, *Jawatankuasa Teknikal Pelan Strategik* and *Jawatankuasa Pemurnian Pelan Strategik* whose work continued despite the COVID-19 restrictions until the final approval by the *Lembaga Pengarah Universiti* (LPU) on 13th Nov 2021. The achievements under the 2014-2020 strategic plan (SP) were analysed based on the vision, mission, goals, objectives, targets and indicators (Pelan Strategik UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA 2021-2025: 12-35). The review committees consulted academic staff, administrators, associations, student representatives, alumni, regulators and public, and resolved to retain the vision of being a university with international reputation and mission to make meaningful contribution to national development, wealth creation and common human wellbeing through the discovery and dissemination of knowledge.
- 1.1.3. The University's educational goal sharpened the focus on graduates who are exceptional (*bitara*), holistically developed (*holistic*), excellent (*lhsan*), patriotic (*patriotisme*) and resilient (*daya tahan*) (Pelan Strategik UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA 2021-2025:50). Five (5) SP goals expanded the vision and mission focussing on the creation of resilient graduates, establishing sustainable research and innovation hubs, industry and community networking, strengthening food security, and effective governance and institutional sustainability (SP 2021-2025: 57). These goals are aligned with the key directions of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), the government, industry and the global community. The Education Blueprint (2015-2025), the Vision for Common Prosperity (2030), Sustainable

Development Goals and a suite of sectoral policies and plans continue as key influences on the SP.

- 1.1.4. The LPU and the top management, cognizant of the COVID-19 disruptions while the plan was being formulated, are considering the need to undertake a mid-term review and adjustments to the SP given the many new developments and challenges. The panel concurs with the idea of a midterm review to bring the SP into alignment with the post pandemic developments like the heightened food security caused by supply chain failures, digital equity issues, mental health concerns and accelerated transformation to online, remote, hybrid and blended teaching and learning.
- 1.1.5. The historical and continuing agricultural niche is recognised by the LPU, palpable in the interviews with senior academics of the university and is strongly reflected in goal 5 of the SP (2021-2025). This niche flavours or directs the teaching, research, publications and commercialisation activities and outputs, and its international reputation of the University. The tagline – Agriculture (Pertanian), Innovation (Inovasi) and Life (Kehidupan) provides some visibility to this commitment. However, the vision, mission and the main goal (VMG) does not project this DNA of the university.

Suggestion for Improvement 1: Therefore, consistent with the historical roots of the University in agriculture and the LPU's commitment to continue championing this niche, the panel suggests that in the midterm review greater strategic visibility is provided to the role of the niche in the university's VMG.

- 1.1.6. The University Top Management has consulted the university community on the proposed strategic plan and continues to hold meetings, briefings sessions and follow-up activities to communicate the VMG and the need for all faculties, institutes, schools and units to actively develop their own derivative plans to meet their respective targets. From the discussions with all levels of university staff during the on-site visit, the implementation of the SP is progressing although affected by the COVID-19 restrictions and limitations (Interviews with deans, programme leaders and academic staff, 21st June 2022).

1.2. Formulation and Deployment of Strategic Plans

- 1.2.1. Through consultation of internal and external stakeholders, the proposed SP was formulated based on the past performance, the future challenges and proposed plan of action for the next five (5) years. The SP objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been iteratively refined and finalised with the LPU approval in February 2021. SP (2021-2015) articulates the VMG of the University through the five (5) SP goals which relate to the five (5) key results or impact areas namely – graduates, research and innovation, industry and community collaboration, agriculture and good, and sustainable governance. The SP is planned to be implemented in two phases – phase 1

(2021-2023) and phase 2 (2024-2025). These five (5) strategic goals are supported by 21 strategic objectives, 81 KPIs (with quarterly and annual targets) and 178 major initiatives. Faculties, schools, institutes and units are formulating or reformulating their respective directions and initiatives in line with the UPM's plans and initiatives (Interviews with Deans; e.g., Faculty of Agriculture which held workshops in 12-13th February 2022, at Dorsett, Putrajaya) to formulate the faculty strategic plan.

- 1.2.2. The SP targets and initiatives are communicated to the faculties, schools, institutes and units through the Senate, University Management Committee, the Vice Chancellor's (VC) briefing and talks and the suite of senior management meetings chaired by the four (4) Deputy VCs (DVCs). The faculties, schools, institutes, divisions and units are provided with the necessary directions, financial, human and infrastructural resources through the annual budget planning process and the expenditure monitored in terms of the agreed outputs and targets.
- 1.2.3. While the panel found the leaders and staff to be reasonably clear about VMG and the myriad of strategic objectives and KPIs, one aspect showed a divergence of understanding despite its centrality in the University's educational goal – the graduate attributes. Interviews with various levels of academic leadership in the University showed different interpretations of UPM's educational goal which, among others, lists resilience as a key attribute (SP, p. 52). The varying conceptions of the attribute are unlikely to ensure that the attribute is given a clear and the required focus in the design, development, review and delivery of the university's many programmes.

Suggestion for Improvement 2: Therefore, the panel strongly suggests that the attributes be articulated in a more concrete form for programme leaders. Equipped with a common understanding, the programme leaders can think of ways to integrate this key university graduate attribute into the programme learning outcomes so that most, if not, all students are exposed to and hence, have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate this attribute within the programme as is reflected in the university's educational goal.

- 1.2.4. The LPU has ultimate oversight on the implementation of the SP which it manages through the various sub-committees. The Centre for Corporate Strategy and Relations gathers information from the faculties, schools, institutes and units on a quarterly basis, compares the planned targets for the quarters and reports to the *Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Universiti* (JPU) and through it to the LPU. Wherever there are shortfalls, relevant DVCs and the respective functional heads seek to understand the challenges and provide assistance to help the units improve their performance. The performance (see analysis of university's performance in SP (2021-2-22:12-35)) to-date indicates that these processes are well executed, monitored, reviewed and improved from time to time.

1.3. Institutional and Academic Leadership

- 1.3.1. The University Constitution states clearly the criteria, the selection mechanisms and the job descriptions for the all positions in the University (Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (2010), under Section 24; *Perintah Universiti dan Kolej Universiti (Pengubahan dari penambahan kepada Perlembagaan Universiti Putra Malaysia) 2010*). Generally, candidates for the top institutional must have high academic standing (teaching, research and community service), wide academic management experience, have demonstrated leadership in progressing the university aspirations, and are individuals with integrity. The VC and DVC Search Committees were established pursuant to *Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti (AUKU)*, 1971 at MoHE to identify and make recommendations to the Minister of MoHE. Open recruitment through internal advertisements is practised to seek out suitably qualified candidates for the key positions (Appendix 1.3.2 b Sample of Advertisement for Internal Post Vacancies).
- 1.3.2. The UPM Search Committee receives nominations, carries out evaluation of the candidates including conducting interviews to the positions ranging from the deans, deputy deans, institute and centre directors and programme heads (Appendix 1.3.2 a Terms of Reference of The Search Committee). The LPU appoints candidates nominated by the UPM Search Committee to be the Registrar, Bursar and Legal Advisor. Appointments of the deans and directors are made by the VC based on the recommendations of the Search Committee. The academic staff are involved in nominating suitable candidates for positions of dean at the faculty/schools before they are vetted and shortlisted candidates forwarded to the VC for appointment. The staff and students interviewed did not indicate any significant leadership issues. The selection mechanism is clear, transparent, competitive and balances the need for emphatic academic leaders who are also experienced and capable of managing the departments, faculties, schools or institutes in the direction expected by the university.
- 1.3.3. The institutional and academic leader recruitment and selection processes are defined, documented and reviewed for adequacy, compliance and improvement under the ISO 9001:2015 QMS standards internally and externally. The recent appointments to top level positions have received positive support from the university community. Additionally, there is a succession planning policy (established in 2012 and revised in 2016) in place to identify potential candidates among younger academic and non-academic staff, assess their talent and provide opportunities for further development through individualised plans (Appendix 1.3.3 b Individual Leadership Advancement Plan Session by the Registrar Office). The Deans during the interview indicated that finding and nurturing young talents for academic

positions as one of their key challenges in sustaining faculty growth and development. The panel did not observe too many acting appointments and vacancies, indicating that the succession planning, search and appointments are functioning effectively. One remarkable aspect of the institutional leadership succession is the appointment of qualified younger academics to top management positions. The talent pool and development of candidates to fill senior positions is effective. Further, many UPM academics are also seconded to take up positions at MoHE and other higher education-related establishments.

- 1.3.4. The scholarly activities in the university provides opportunities for all staff to develop as thought leaders in their respective fields of studies, research champions, innovators and entrepreneurs. The succession plans in particular provide mentoring, training and development for targeted individuals in preparation for academic management responsibilities. The deans and other academic heads complement the succession plans and training for prospective academic leaders by offering opportunities to enthusiastic, energetic and ambitious young staff to hone their leadership capabilities.
- 1.3.5. On a more formal academic leadership development aspect, the Academic Office, Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) and Centre for Academic Development (CADE) provide training in curriculum development and transformation consistent with new initiatives from the University, MoHE, MQA and other bodies. Further, the occasional UPM-AKEPT joint programmes like “Strategic Leadership Coaching for University Leaders tailored for UPM leaders and “Individual Leadership Advancement Plan Session”, professional discourse knowledge-sharing sessions with renowned leaders and personalities and “Unshackling Young Academics (UYA) programmes” provides platform for holistic sharing of ideas, experiences and consolidation among young lecturers striving for achieving UPM’s mission and vision.
- 1.3.6. The talent pipeline of potential leaders for academic positions provides a good supply of candidates for the university management to consider for new appointments. The transformations outlined in the SP and compelled by the pandemic experience have signalled the need for innovative and intrapreneurial leaders. The CEO-faculty and Industry- academic collaboration programmes have broadened the typical leadership horizon in the university.
- 1.3.7. In summary, the succession plans, the leadership development programmes both planned and *ad hoc* by different units of the university ensure academic leaders remain well informed of developments within and outside the university and adapt their faculties and units VMG consistent with the new challenges.
- 1.3.8. Every level of leadership is subject to annual performance evaluation. The evaluation of top institutional leaders is conducted every year through the

submission of University KPI achievement to the MoHE. Academic leadership performance is assessed through UPM Performance Evaluation, in addition to their own Annual Performance Appraisal Report (*Laporan Penilaian Prestasi Tahunan UPM*, LPPT). The e-LPPT is categorised into two: i) Academic Appraisal (50%) and ii) Transformational Leadership (50%). The transformational leadership components are the University's KPI and are monitored every quarter, while the overall LPPT is evaluated at the end of the year.

1.4. Governance Function and Mechanism

- 1.4.1. UPM is a public university established under the AUKU 1971 and governed by the said Act, the UPM Constitution and UPM University Regulations. The governing, administrative and academic structure, powers, roles and functions, and the interrelationships are provided for, clarified and detailed out in the Acts and Regulations (General Circular, No. 3, 1998) and also in AUKU 1971 (as at 1 August 2012), *Perintah Universiti Dan Kolej Universiti (Pengubahan Dan Penambahan Kepada Perlembagaan) (Universiti Putra Malaysia) 2010*, Universiti Putra Malaysia Constitution and Universiti Putra Malaysia Regulations (Tatacara Lembaga, 1998).
- 1.4.2. UPM is governed by the LPU consisting of representatives from the government, the industry, Senate representatives, alumni, non-governmental bodies and education experts who are appointed by the Minister of Higher Education for a term of three (3) years. This apex executive body approves the VMG, policies and plans, monitors their implementation through the VC and his executive team and is ultimately responsible for the university's overall performance.
- 1.4.3. The VC and the JPU are the key administrative arm of the university which meets regularly to decide and resolve issues in the implementation of the plans. The four DVCs, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian and the Legal Adviser assist the VC in managing the implementation of the university's plans in academic and international affairs, research and innovation, industry and community relations and student affairs and alumni (Presentation to Panel by VC:9; Self-Review Portfolio (SRP), 2020:68).
- 1.4.4. The powers and role of the Senate is well established and accepted. The Senate comprising the VC as Chairperson, the four (4) DVCs, Deans of faculties and schools, directors of institutes, elected Professors, Bintulu Campus Director and ex-officio members is entrusted under the Act as custodian of academic quality – curriculum, teaching, research, assessment and awards (AUKU 1971 (P.U. (A) 448. Page 5717-18); (SRP, 69). The Senate representative(s) in the LPU provides a bridge between the two (2) key bodies of the University. However, in the event of disputes a clear mechanism for its resolution is provided (AUKU 1971 (as at 31st December

2010)), *Perintah Universiti Dan Kolej Universiti (Pengubahan dan Penambahan Kepada Perlembagaan) (Universiti Putra Malaysia) (P.U. (A) 448. Page 5722).*

- 1.4.5. The LPU members and Senate members interviewed show good understanding of, not only their respective powers and roles, but also the common challenges that both bodies must work together to overcome for UPM to become an internationally reputed university education, research and services.
- 1.4.6. Reflecting the strength in academic governance and quality assurance, in 2010, UPM was granted self-accreditation status by MQA. The MoHE in 2012 recognised the autonomy of the University's LPU in three major areas: human resource planning and recruitment, wealth creation and academic programme development. The periodic reviews by MoHE, MQA and international ranking and accreditation agencies have continued to provide confidence in the institutional and academic governance, and quality assurance function in the university.
- 1.4.7. UPM operates the Bintulu Campus (UPMBC) in East Malaysia. The campus is headed by a director and has two (2) faculties and one (1) institute with academic heads. The UPMBC reports directly to the VC through the JPU and directors and Deans as Senate members are subject to the academic quality oversight by the Senate just as other faculties and schools in UPM. Operationally, UPMBC is subject to the same policies, processes, standards and requirements of UPM but with some autonomy to take advantage of the opportunities East Malaysia offers (interview with UPMBC Director). CQA is overall responsible for the quality assurance activities at this campus. There is an effective system to ensure operational and functional integration and comparable quality of education and services.

1.5. Information Management

- 1.5.1. The data and information gathered from students, staff and other third parties are subjected to UPM policies which are administered by functional units like Registrars, Bursar, faculties, schools, institutes (*Panduan Pengurusan Fail dan Rekod Universiti Edisi 1.0, undated*). The data and information is managed via information systems developed for undergraduates (Sistem Maklumat Pelajar (SMP), postgraduates (Internet-based Graduate Information Management System, i-GIMS), academic and non-academic staff (e-Integrated Human Resource Management System, eIHRAMS) and Human Resources System or *Sistem Sumber Manusia (SISMAN)*, students services, alumni and suppliers and vendors. These systems permit only access to authorised officers, and ensure the data are accessed only for specified use and not shared with others. The InfoComm Development Centre (iDEC) ensures that the records are safe, secure, backed up and are guarded against

intrusions. The disaster recovery policies and practices guard against disruptive events which can affect the continuity of university's operations (*Pelan Kesiambungan Bencana ICT, 11 July 2017; Laporan Penilaian Risiko ISMS Pusat Data*).

- 1.5.2. The University has been certified since 2014 (renewed in 2017) as complying with the requirements of the Information Security Management System (ISMS ISO/IEC 27001). The ISMS ISO/IEC 27001 specifically evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of the university information management system in meeting the needs of the university while complying with all local legislations and good practices in safeguarding the privacy, confidentiality, security, use, storage, archiving and disposal of records. The university has not reported any incidents involving breach of privacy and confidentiality of staff and student data.
- 1.5.3. Both the quality systems standards require that the operations are audited and any non-compliance brought to the attention of the management for correction and prevention actions (Minute of latest *Mesyuarat Kajian Semakan Pengurusan (MKSP)*). Five yearly reviews of the information policies are required and are followed dutifully. Some of the key documents provided and viewed by the panel have unclear dates of establishment and expected date of review including information of reviews undergone in the past. This is a requirement of quality standards documents within both the ISO 9001:2015 and also ISO ISMS ISO/IEC 27001.

Suggestion for Improvement 3: The panel suggests that all policy documents including especially the information management policy documents are provided with information on creation, enforcement, and expected date of review.

AREA 2 ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

2.1. Formulation of Learning Outcomes

- 2.1.1. The panel applauds the University for the range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in important disciplines including agriculture, medical and science disciplines, arts and social sciences, engineering, Information and Communication Technology as well as education. The graduates from these programmes are well received and recognised within the agricultural establishments in the country. The 93% employment rate of the graduates is an impressive achievement.
- 2.1.2. UPM has consulted and obtained relevant inputs from the internal and external stakeholders on its academic programmes, including curriculum development and review. UPM, the respective schools and institutes have forged strong links with the external stakeholders - with the Industry Advisors Panel (IAP), the Alumni of the University, the employers of UPM graduates, the academics and students, the external assessors, and the relevant professional bodies (4.1.2e Example of Employer Satisfaction Survey report).
- 2.1.3. The formulation of learning outcomes as well as curricular contents are carried out based on needs analysis and surveys of various stakeholders, and are benchmarked to comparable international programmes. The undergraduate programmes and most of the taught components of the postgraduate programmes have recently been reviewed (DB 19-UG- and DB 19-PG- Log Semakan Program) and realigned with the Malaysian Qualifications Framework's (MQF) 5-clusters of learning outcomes domains (e.g. Bachelor of Technology in Smart Agriculture and Master of Computer Network, Bachelor of Science in Biology with Honours, Bachelor of Consumer Studies with Honours and Master of Process Safety and Loss Prevention).
- 2.1.4. Beyond the market needs and curricular requirements, the new vision, mission and goals and the Strategic Plan (2021-2025), specifically highlight certain graduate attributes. The University's educational goals call for unique (bitara), holistic (holistic), patriotic (patriotisme) and resilient (daya tahan) graduates. These graduate attributes should be systematically considered in defining the programme learning outcomes at all levels.

Suggestion for Improvement 4: The panel suggests that Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Programme educational objective (PEOs) be closely examined from the standpoint of UPM's educational goal and the graduate attributes stated above. These constructs must be articulated as approaches and principles which can guide the faculties to give effect to these goals in their respective programmes as part of the periodic academic reviews.

2.2. Curriculum Design, Delivery and Assessment

a) Curriculum Structure and Content

- 2.2.1. The University has a clear policy and comprehensive standard operating procedures (SOP) on development of new curriculum and review of existing curriculum (*Prosedur Pembentukan Program Baharu Dan Semakan Semula Program Prasiswazah UPM*). The SOP has been reviewed recently (2020) taking into consideration flexibilities and approaches from MoHE and MQA. The policies, processes and mechanisms to aligned the curriculum structure and content with programme standards (PS), MQF, MoHE and general disciplinary requirements are well established and reviewed periodically as per UPM policy and MQA requirements. These observations have also received further validation from external experts and internal assessors (4.1.2 b Example of Report from External Assessor- 2014).
- 2.2.2. The design of new undergraduate or postgraduate programmes are guided by the needs assessment and the University's 5 UPM Educational Goals, as well as (ii) MoHE's generic student attributes, and (iii) the MQF learning outcomes domains and the relevant programme and professional standards. In addition to self-accreditation, 40 academic programmes received accreditation from international accreditation bodies confirming the global equivalence of UPM programmes.
- 2.2.3. To ensure continuing effectiveness of the programmes, a review of all academic programmes once every five (5) years is carried out. However, some postgraduate programmes are yet to complete the review within this time frame, which is attributed to the lack of specific timelines attached to the review processes and stages. There is also a similar five (5) yearly programme self-review (PSR) as part of the internal accreditation process managed by the CQA which involves internal and external expert assessors as required of a self-accrediting university. These two review processes have broadly the same purpose but are organised and carried out by CQA and the Academic Office in different and distinct cycles. There is an obvious opportunity to collaborate on these reviews to optimise the reviews and to reduce review burden on the part of the faculties and schools. Further, the longstanding five (5) yearly review cycle may be implemented flexibly by allowing some programmes to carry out the reviews sooner given the extent and depth of changes in their field of study. The panel has several suggestions for the university to enhance this important Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) process.
- 2.2.4. Based on the observations above, the panel would like to make the following affirmation and suggestions for improvements:

Affirmation 1: The panel affirms that the curriculum review and alignment of PLOs to new MQF is in progress and expects that the remaining programmes

will be completed expeditiously. Refer: DB 19-PG- Log Semakan Program (most of PG programmes are still in progress)

Suggestion for Improvement 5: The panel encourages UPM to reconsider the five (5) yearly review policy as it may be too long in view of the pace of changes in all aspects of education. The duration may be made more flexible, i.e., shorter for some disciplines where the changes are more rapid and intense.

Suggestion for Improvement 6: The PSR and curriculum review processes should be synchronised and harmonised because of the common objective of enhancement. It can vastly reduce duplication and reduce review fatigue amongst faculties.

Suggestion for Improvement 7: The curriculum review process should indicate clear timelines to expedite the review processes so that it is completed in a timely manner.

Suggestion for Improvement 8: Curriculum review process and mechanisms must also pay attention to monitoring the extent of change in each of the review cycles to take special action once the 30% cumulative curriculum change threshold is reached.

b) Instructional Method

- 2.2.5. The teaching and learning are generally aligned with the course outcomes and are actively subject to change and innovation through work-based learning, blended, online, remote and hybrid deliveries. The pandemic has accelerated the pivot to online and alternative assessments which have reportedly produced positive outcomes for the programme, the instructors and students. The COVID-19 pandemic and the university pedagogical transformation initiatives have introduced flexibilities in teaching and learning. It is vital that these changes are carefully studied and the outcomes used to inform further policy changes and flexibilities.
- 2.2.6. Smart classrooms enabled the use of modern education technology and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to deliver and convey beyond the confines of the classroom. However, these developments must be underpinned by internal quality assurance considerations to ensure quality, stability and Continual Quality Improvement (CQI).
- 2.2.7. Various instructional methods are deployed to achieve the learning outcomes taking into consideration the varied students' learning preferences. The lecturers as well as students' (undergraduates and Postgraduates) commitment to adapt emergency learning alternatives during the COVID-19 pandemic is admirable. UPM has ample facilities, especially for field work to

support practical and hands-on activities. Interviews with Online and Distance Learning (ODL) students (undergraduates and Postgraduates) indicated the minimum requirements for ODL are observed by the university. In addition, in terms of acquiring practical skills, there are instances where more time is provided.

2.2.8. There is a strong commitment to promote innovative teaching and learning in UPM with CADe providing institutional leadership and support. The efforts of UPM's academic staff who exhibit best practices and innovation in teaching and learning are recognised through special awards as listed below.

- i. Best InnoCreative Educator in PutraMOOC
- ii. Best InnoCreative Educator in Transformative Teaching
- iii. Best InnoCreative Educator in Immersive Learning Experience
- iv. Best InnoCreative Educator in Alternative Assessment

2.2.9. Given the sizable number of postgraduate students in UPM, supervision is a key focus in guiding young scholars to completion. There are guidelines for staff to follow in supervising students including advisories on amount of time to be spent on monitoring progress and supervisor-students ratio to ensure effective guidance and high graduate on time (GOT) (Graduate Studies Rules 2003-Revision 2015 – 2016; page 28)

c) Assessment

2.2.10. Assessment principles, criteria and methods are defined in the guidelines issued by the academic office and CADe. Final examinations are governed by *Kaedah-Kaedah Universiti Putra Malaysia (Perkara Akademik Prasiswazah)* 2014 revision 2017 (Appendix 2.2.4 a) and (Graduate Studies Rules 2003 revision 2015-2016) (Appendix 2.2.4 b). This is supported more specifically by various SOPs related to the setting and vetting of examination questions, the carrying out of examinations, marking and dissemination of examination results. Assessments in postgraduate studies are outlined in the Postgraduate Rules. Some professional programmes have their own regulations governing the method of assessment and grading.

2.2.11. UPM provides sufficient autonomy to the relevant departments to develop and review assessment criteria and methods. Lecturers and their students are allowed to discuss and decide the coursework as long as the weightage assigned to the coursework (e.g.: 60 – 100%) meets the guideline provided by CADe except for programmes obliged to follow the professional and programme standards.

2.2.12. The student assessment methods and practices are, to a large extent, aligned with the learning outcomes and the curricula. In general, the assessment methods utilised are consistent with the nature of the programmes offered and

in line with the requirements of the professional bodies and the MQF 5-cluster of learning domains. UPM introduced alternative assessments that focused on competency-based and authentic assessment. The assessment of learning is not limited to traditional pen and paper-based tests, instead students are assessed on their performance i.e., class presentation, debate, role play etc. Tools of assessment include portfolio, case study and dissertation. The ratio of continuous assessment or coursework to final assessments are varied according to the requirements of relevant programme standards.

- 2.2.13. Both internal policies and reviews, and external expert reviews, professional and international accreditations continue to review and reflect on the quality of assessments. The pivot to alternative assessments in the form of assignments and open book and take-home examinations to the traditional final examination was borne out of necessity. It is time to provide better and specific guidance to all – staff, students and administrators to manage alternative assessments online. The existing assessment policies and rules need a complete review to systematically address new methods and media to allay questions about the validity and integrity of the assessments.
- 2.2.14. The continuous assessment results (e.g. quizzes, mid-semester tests, assignments and projects) are made available to students by week 15 of the semester through the *Sistem Maklumat Pelajar* (eSMP), while the final grades are released and communicated to students after the Senate's endorsement.
- 2.2.15. The panel applauds UPM for producing a step-by-step guide for academic staff on how conduct virtual classes as well as e-assessments. This 40 page guide was published in 2020 (UPM Virtual Classroom and E-Assessment Guidelines).

d) Constructive Alignment (programme and course levels)

- 2.2.16. There is a well-established policy and process which examines, among others, the programme and course learning outcomes, the alignment of teaching to outcomes and the suitability of assessment given the nature of course outcomes for new or existing programmes including the annual programme outcome achievement analysis. Semesterly course results analyses examine the constructive alignment in looking at causes of sub-optimal performance.
- 2.2.17. In general, the curriculum structure follows the programme standards by MQA and by professional bodies. The course learning outcomes (CLOs) are mapped to the (PLOs) of each programme. In addition, the teaching plan for each course is developed based on the principles of constructive alignment to ensure learning activities as well as assessment tasks are aligned to the intended learning outcomes. The teaching and assessment plans are submitted in the eSMP and verified by the Head of Department to ensure the

alignment of CLO with the assessment method and delivery. In achieving the PLOs for each program, a variety of teaching activities and assessment methods are being practised. Among teaching-learning methodologies used include lecture, Online Material via PutraBlast, Field observation, Group Discussion, Problem-based learning, Field observation, Social Media - Online Discussion. Assessment methods include written test, Online Assignment of Problem-based Activity. Examples of alignment between PLO vs CLO with teaching-learning methods as well as assessment methods are shown in appendix 2.2.7d (CAS EMG 3001 sem 2017/18). This is further confirmed by lecturers and students during the interview session. During COVID-19 pandemic, performance-based activities are carried out at home and recorded for feedback and assessment by lecturers.

2.3. Admission and Mobility

a) Student Selection and Admission

- 2.3.1. Student Selection and Admission Processes/Procedures at UPM adhere to guidelines as provided by the MoHE and as approved by the Senate (Section 22 of UPM Constitution). Admissions to Postgraduate Studies are determined by the Faculty/Institute and governed by the University's Graduate Studies and the Senate. These guides are updated and are available on the website (http://www.sgs.upm.edu.my/prospective_students-2964).
- 2.3.2. UPM honours the collective decision made by all public universities and the MoHE regarding local student admission whereby students who have already been offered a placement cannot be offered by another institution.
- 2.3.3. The admission and selection processes and requirements are reviewed periodically to enhance both the competitive and 'unpopular' academic programmes. Interviews and submission of portfolios have been introduced for some programmes. Higher fees levied on international students is a good source of income for UPM.
- 2.3.4. There are adequate basic facilities for the 'disabled students', such as special toilets and ramps for wheel-chaired students in/at the faculty premises and residential colleges. UPM, however, does not admit students with total blindness, deaf or mute for lack of teaching and learning facilities, such as Braille.

b) Mobility, Articulation and Credit Transfer

- 2.3.5. The academic programmes that have received additional accreditation from international accreditation agencies helps to attract inbound student mobility and facilitate outbound student mobility. The faculties and the Centre for Advancement of Language Competence offers 19 Summer School

Programmes for international mobility. UPM encourages students to gain international experience via mobility or exchange programmes as well as study visits and/or industrial training. Other forms of student mobility include clinical training, practicum or placement programmes, internship programmes, short-term courses and language programmes. There has been a fair increase in the number of out-bound students for period 2014-2018. However, the number for in-bound remained around 1300-1700 during the same period. The University allocates approximately RM 180,000 to RM 200,000 per year to facilitate cross-border student mobility via student exchange programmes. There is limited financial aid for students with/or greater than Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) 3.00. The cost recovery based fees for the admission of local and international students to undergraduate programmes may help in the financial sustainability of UPM.

- 2.3.6. UPM has made provisions for credit transfer (at least six credits for transfer) as open electives to encourage student mobility abroad. This is articulated in the Second Schedule of Universiti Putra Malaysia Rules (Academic Matters for Undergraduates) (Amendment) (Senate Approval 21st July 2016). The UPM rules have been amended to ensure that credit transfer is in accordance with the credit transfer policy prescribed by MQA. Credit Transfer for postgraduate students is provided in Rule 11 of Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013).
- 2.3.7. UPM has outlined procedures for both undergraduate and postgraduate Programme Transfer or Change Field of Study as presented in Universiti Putra Malaysia (Academic Matters for Undergraduates) Rules 2014 and for postgraduate Rule 27 of Universiti Putra Malaysia Rules (Graduate Studies) 2003 (Revision 2012-2013). Much effort has been carried to accommodate Program Transfer(credits) for postgraduate students as stipulated in Rule 27 of UPM Graduate Studies 2003.
- 2.3.8. The autonomy given to Faculties/Institutes to establish specific requirements for the potential applicants reflects growing trust in the maturity of the academic centres. The panel applauds UPM's effort to increase the number of foreign students in postgraduate studies. However, the Graduate Studies Centre must provide good oversight to ensure academic integrity is maintained despite the increase in postgraduate student enrolment in line with the MoHE target of 250,000 international students by 2025.
- 2.3.9. In the context of increasing student enrolment, UPM should consider the adult and mature students' market in the context of lifelong learning and talent upgrading agenda of the nation. These mature students add another dimension to the learning experiences of younger learners in the university. In this connection, the panel makes the following suggestion.

Suggestion for Improvement 9: The panel encourages increased intake of mature students via the available modes of entry as the presence of 'experienced/senior' within the classes of current undergraduates may provide a good learning environment to the class. This diversity can be invaluable to both groups as this can form a good platform to understand the 'generation gap' issues. Such initiatives can be led by the UPM's Malaysian Research Institute on Ageing (MyAgeing).

AREA 3 TALENT AND RESOURCES

3.1. Academic Staff

a) Policies

- 3.1.1. UPM's recruitment and selection of staff follows the policies and procedures of public service with the addition of two service circulars (Circular No 1/2007 and Circular No.1 /2008. UPM requires PhD or equivalent as the minimum required qualifications for appointments. This is actively monitored and continuity is assured through the *Tenaga Akademik Muda* (TAM) scheme. The combination of schemes and active monitoring ensures UPM has the staff talent to drive UPM's the vision, mission and institutional goals.
- 3.1.2. The CADe, Research Management Centre (RMC) and Human Resource Development Division are responsible for and are actively providing continuous development programmes for academic staff. Additionally, every faculty has their own list of training considered necessary for their staff. The focal areas of training are documented in Program Pembangunan Staf UPM 2008-2010 which should be formally updated to the present. The latest programme introduced by CADe is *Program Transformasi Minda* in 2013 aimed at paradigm change.
- 3.1.3. The annual performance appraisal is based on predetermined and measurable indicators consistent with the research university criteria and requirements in teaching, supervision, research, professional services, personal and leadership qualities and services to the community. The determination of weightage is based on *Sasaran Kerja Tahunan* (SKT) that reflects the staff academic position and administrative obligations. Academic staff are recognized and rewarded based on the quality and quantity of outputs in the above mentioned areas.
- 3.1.4. There are clear policies on promotion of academic staff according to the guidelines and conditions set in *Garis Panduan dan Kriteria Kenaikan Pangkat Pegawai Akademik Edisi 3*. It is evident that the academic staff are well aware of these guidelines and are satisfied with the integrity of the promotion process.
- 3.1.5. Academic staff are also celebrated for their achievement in receiving national and international awards for various achievements. The awards form part of the criteria for promotion. However, during the interview some awards particularly in human science e.g., *Tokoh Sasterawan Negara* were excluded from the list.
- 3.1.6. UPM has clear policies to address the academic integrity which are outlined clearly in (1) *Perkara Akademik Prasiswazah* 2014: *Perkara 57 (1) dan (2)*:

Plagiat, (2) Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2015-2016): Part 12 (Scholarly Integrity), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (Research) Rules 2012: Part D Plagiarism and Research Data. During the interviews the academic staff, PUU and students are aware of the rules and guidelines.

- 3.1.7. UPM's commitment to talent development is reflected by the overall achievement of the university KPI in major activities. Prominent academic staff in UPM have been awarded national recognition such as *Tokoh Akademik Negara* and other awards in their field of studies in the annual MoHE awards scheme.

b) Implementations

- 3.1.8. UPM has 1834 academic staff of which 1670 (92%) are PhD holders in various fields to cater the needs of 25,399 students in 454 academic programs. The University has a noteworthy number of international staff (96 academic staff and research fellows – 5.2%) adding further diversity and strength to its academic staff. The overall academic staff to student ratio is 1:14, inclusive of both undergraduate and postgraduate, indicating potentially good support for teaching and learning for students.
- 3.1.9. The roles and responsibilities of academic staff according to their level and administrative positions are clearly stated for teaching, research, university and community services. UPM has also introduced Key Intangible Performance (KIP) to assess practices and behaviours that are critical but difficult to assess quantitatively and requires appreciation and underlining knowledge such as trust, integrity, and culture of knowledge. In addition, KIP accounts for efforts from the academicians in executing activities toward achieving their KPI. Both have been instituted and implemented since 2018.
- 3.1.10. The panel applauds UPM for the quality and competitive culture amongst UPM academic staff which contributes to and drives the high international standing and visibility of the institution.

Suggestion for Improvement 10: The panel suggest the university review the *Garis Panduan* used for recognition of awards for promotion and to consider ways to better recognise the value and impact of the prestigious and competitive national awards.

Suggestion for Improvement 11: The panel suggests the university revisit the *Program Pembangunan Staf UPM 2008-2010*, as the recent developments may require the university to focus on new areas.

c) Training and Development

- 3.1.11. UPM has comprehensive policies for academic staff in developing professional and leadership of the academic staff. Three main entities that are responsible for ensuring that the training and development of academic staff are the CADe, the RMC, and Human Resource Development Division (HRD). The training and development provided includes teaching and learning, research, commercialisation and innovation, leadership and management, professional development as well as industrial and community networking.
- 3.1.12. All academic staff go through two levels of training starting with Fundamentals of Teachings (KAP) and *Program Tranformasi Minda Pegawai Akademik* to attain the competency and align the academic staff with university goals. The academic staff then continue in specific Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programmes for continuous development, competency and capacity in specific areas of teaching and learning.
- 3.1.13. The academic staff can also participate in other training programmes such as research, leadership, post-doctoral, sub-specialisation, and professional training. These training provide exposure and knowledge to academic staff in the industrial research and community networks.

d) Performance and Reward

- 3.1.14. Academic staff performance appraisal is based on research university criteria and requirements pertaining to teaching, supervision, research, professional services, personal and leadership qualities and services to the community. Staff are recognised and rewarded on the basis of the quality and quantity of outputs in the fore-mentioned areas. Guidelines on how appraisal scores are awarded and on the expected standards for each criterion. The process is managed through the 'Sistem Laporan Prestasi Tahunan Pegawai Akademik (eLPPT)'.
- 3.1.15. There are clear policies and processes for staff promotion which is available to staff as 'Garis Panduan dan Kriteria Kenaikan Pangkat'. Academic staff who meet the criteria may apply for promotion at any time of the year. There are some concerns that the criteria do not recognize the achievement of staff in obtaining national awards in the area of social science and humanities such as 'Anugerah Sasterawan Negara'.

Suggestion For Improvement 12: The panel suggests UPM consider ways to recognise the impact of highly respected and competitive national and international awards in annual academic performance evaluation, and for promotion.

3.2. Non-academic Staff

- 3.2.1. UPM has 4854 non-academic staff including 59 PhD holders to cater the needs of 25,399 students in two campuses (Serdang and Bintulu). The current ratio of academic staff to non-academic staff is 1:2.3. The administrative structure that supports the academic activities is in place to ensure effective and efficient support for teaching, research, deployment and maintenance of facilities and resources. The staff placement policy based on government regulations, stipulates the criteria for the recruitment and deployment of administrative staff both at the central and individual faculties, centres and institutes.
- 3.2.2. UPM has in place training plans to enhance the professionalism and efficiency of the administrative and management staff. The Training Road Map (TRM) ensures all staff achieve the required competency and skills. Training Need Analysis (TNA) is conducted annually and a Training Profile is developed for the administrative staff. The profiled administrative staff also undergo specialised training accordingly to progress them in the career paths.
- 3.2.3. UPM has encouraged and facilitated administrative personnel to pursue academic programmes up to the level of PhD. However, the panel is of the view that administrative personnel will better be assisted in their line of work and career with greater support for relevant professional certifications that will expose the administrative personnel to advanced industry practices.
- 3.2.4. UPM has developed and practised *Etika Amalan Kerja* UPM as a guide for implementing tasks in line with the goals of the university. UPM also conducts a comprehensive performance review of its administrative and management staff based on KPIs via the Performance Evaluation System (e-LPPT). The system has also been used in promotion, training and selection of candidates for non-academic talent pools to fill in strategic administration posts.

Suggestion for Improvement 13: The panel suggests UPM to identify training programmes for the administrative staff which leads to professional certifications in the relevant fields.

3.3. Physical and Technological Resources

- 3.3.1. UPM has a sprawling green campus with land area of 3,186 hectares with adequate facilities for academic, research and recreational purposes for the staff and students. There are adequate buildings, laboratories, lecture halls, farms, fields and forests, libraries, and green houses to facilitate academic management, teaching and learning, supervision and research, and innovation and commercialisation. Further, UPM has adequate facilities i.e., administrative buildings, students' residential colleges, medical centres,

sports fields, gymnasiums, stadium and religious buildings to cater for the needs of staff and students as a predominantly residential campus.

- 3.3.2. From the site visit and dialogue sessions with the staff and students, the panel is satisfied that the facilities are adequate for teaching, learning and research. The classrooms are gradually being converted into smart classrooms to support new and innovative approaches to learning spearheaded by CADe and the academic office. UPM has a Fixed Assets Management System (FAMS) for optimal utilisation and upkeep of the physical facilities.
- 3.3.3. Laboratory and workshops visited are well equipped for use in teaching and research activities. In general, there are adequate technical and support staff to assist the users and maintain the facilities. The physical facilities of the University are regularly checked for compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act, safety laws, radiation safety requirements and other health and safety regulations. Nevertheless, as observed by the top management, many UPM buildings are nearing the natural lifespan and require not just regular maintenance but major refurbishment to extend the lifespan.
- 3.3.4. The library and ICT services are adequate to the needs of students and staff. The library has a comprehensive collection of learning resources to support teaching, research, and instructional needs of the faculties and students. Access to the online databases, e-books and e-journal is provided with an extensive subscription to many databases. The postgraduate students are happy with the online access to the databases, especially during the pandemic when all physical access was stopped.
- 3.3.5. UPM has a clear ICT policy to support academic programmes, research and student management services. ICT facilities are maintained and upgraded to provide high bandwidth wireless and Internet access. Although wireless Internet access is available in most areas in the campus, students have raised concerns with blind spots. UPM may want to examine the patterns and pockets of use and access of the Internet by the students and accordingly adjust the wireless footprint.
- 3.3.6. UPM learning and teaching activities are supported by the Putra Learning Management System (PutraLMS). PutraLMS provides access to materials and enables communication via the internet to facilitate teaching. This platform provides access to lecture notes, unit materials, assessment details, presentation, formative tests and discussion board for collaboration. This system is the backbone of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning activities and served well during the pandemic when all teaching and learning pivoted to online.

3.4. Student Support Services

- 3.4.1. Generally, students are satisfied with the support services provided by the university under the Student Affairs Division and by the International Office. The library, health clinic, sport and recreation facilities, accommodation, transport, lecture halls services are provided and managed via an accredited quality management system. This management system is regularly audited internally and externally for compliance and improvements. Both the survey data and interviews with students showed that there is high level of satisfaction with the services provided and the responsiveness of the services to any special needs.
- 3.4.2. The counselling services are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and the counsellor-student ratio at the university is better than the ratio specified by MoHE (1:1500). Students are very satisfied with counselling services provided.
- 3.4.3. The University has appeal mechanisms which are implemented both by MoHE and the University in term of student conduct and discipline. Also available are remedial programmes for students, especially in English competency. There are also mechanisms for transfer of students between universities similar to the practices of most public universities.
- 3.4.4. The University as part of its quality assessment provides significant opportunities for the students to express their sentiments on all university services. The students are well represented in the various university committees for example in Student Welfare Committees, Student Zakat Committee, UPM Green Sustainability Committee and also on important management committees meeting such as University management committee (JPU), Senate, Senior Officers Meeting, *JK Kualiti*, and Student Affairs and Alumni.
- 3.4.5. Formal student representation is provided through the elected Students' Representative Council which is governed by the Universities and University Colleges Act (1971). Students are also have opportunities for representation at the faculties and residential colleges. The student leaders are also invited to attend Senate sessions when issues that needs their feedback is tabled. These channels and media are being used by the students to provide feedback on the adequacy of support services and co-curricular activities.
- 3.4.6. The alumni are involved in the activities of the university especially in the tracer studies and employer surveys conducted by the University through the Alumni Centre. There is a considerable involvement of alumni as advisors to faculties and in various activities organised by the students. It is also noteworthy that some of the Board members are alumni of the university.

- 3.4.7. The University provides facilities for students with special needs to access buildings for teaching and learning as well as other activities. The facilities include toilets for the disable, ramps, parking bays, service counters with specially built lower wheelchair access and wide door access to tutorial rooms and lecture theatres. There is also a vehicle for use for students with special needs and also a society that champions the special needs students.
- 3.4.8. The co-curricular activities are mandatory for all undergraduate programmes. In addition, there is a wide array of extra-curricular activities ranging from sports, music and culture to nurture and sharpen student's team, leadership, and social skills. UPM has the facilities and programmes to support the achievement of holistic, balanced and entrepreneurial graduates as articulated in the Strategic Plan (2021-2025) and the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education).

3.5. Financial Resources

- 3.5.1. As a public university, UPM receives its operational and development budget from the government. To achieve one of the goals of the University's strategic plan i.e., to generate and manage the University's financial resources, the University has two principal objectives namely: (1) "to generate sufficient financial resources" and (2) "to optimise the usage of the financial resources". The University has in place an efficient financial management system financial planning, resource allocation, expenditure monitoring, annual performance reporting based on the agreed outcomes and the related KPIs.
- 3.5.2. UPM provides direct and indirect financial aid to deserving undergraduate and postgraduate students through scholarships, grants for research, travel, purchase of equipment, fellowship, and others. There are clear guidelines for the disbursement of financial aid to students such as the *Garis Panduan Agihan Bantuan Zakat Pelajar UPM*, *Panduan Pengagihan Tabung Kebajikan Pelajar UPM* and others.
- 3.5.3. Overall, the financial allocation received by UPM covers most essential cost items, especially the personnel costs. UPM has raised donations and generated revenue income from its intellectual properties to fund other plans. The panel shares the concerns of the financial managers that better priority setting between competing foci by the university leaders is necessary to optimise future resource allocation which is expected to decline.

Suggestions for Improvement 14: The panel suggests that the University to allocate more funds for maintenance of equipment, facilities and assets reflecting the rapid aging of ICT equipment and aged buildings.

AREA 4 CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1. Mechanisms for Programme Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

a) Policy on Programme Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 4.1.1. UPM has a clear policy on monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating its programmes, covering the need and/or benchmarking analysis, teaching-learning activities, student assessment, administration, and related educational and support services. (Appendix 4.1.1c: UPM Quality Policy). The policy on monitoring, review and evaluation of academic programmes is outlined in the Quality Management System (QMS).
- 4.1.2. The CQA under the Vice Chancellor's office to oversees the overall QMS implementation. The roles, responsibilities, accountabilities and authority of the CQA which is mandated to manage the execution of these policies, are clearly stated. The CQA has efficiently and credibly implemented the five (5) yearly internal PSR.

Suggestions for Improvement 15: The panel suggests that at the faculty level, CQA contextualise the Programme monitoring, review, and evaluation (PMRE) exercises by encouraging faculties to include their own themes or risks into the review hence creating ownership and increasing relevance

b) Processes and Outcomes of Programme Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

- 4.1.3. The PMRE are exercised through various committees at department, faculty, and University levels and overseen by the Dean as programme owner. Various parties are involved in and consulted on programme monitoring, review, and evaluation, including students, academic staff, external assessors, alumni, industry representatives, and professional bodies. These mechanisms are identified and listed below.
- 4.1.4. The programme development and review include the essential inputs provided by various parties including:
- i. External assessors
 - ii. Programme Advisory Committee
 - iii. Professional bodies
- 4.1.5. External examiner also reviews the assessment of each course and present the suggestions for improvement to the programme leaders and Deans.
- 4.1.6. Programme delivery performance and outcome are monitored through:

- i. Teaching evaluation, blended learning, laboratory surveys, and practical training surveys and to gauge lecturers and students' performance in their programmes of study and satisfaction with facilities provided by UPM, using the Putra Learning Hub (<http://learninghub.upm.edu.my/>).
- ii. Programme Outcome Summary Evaluation (POSE) using the Putra Outcome Based Education (PutraOBE) Reporting System (<http://putraobe.upm.edu.my/putraobe/>).
- iii. Tracer Study (hosted by MoHE) to determine the employability of graduates six months after graduation (Appendix 4.1.2.d).

4.1.7. Another mechanism taken are programme self-review by CQA where internal and external assessors formally review programmes using the Programme Self-Review Report (PSRR) and culminate in an assessment report which is followed up for improvement actions. The results of the programme review and of levels of evaluation as well as the recommendations and areas of improvement are brought to the UPM Senate and LPU meeting to ensure further appropriate measures are being taken to address the gaps. The outcomes of these processes are included in the development and review programme document submitted to the Senate for approval and informed to LPU (Appendix 4.1.2 f).

4.1.8. The programme monitoring, review, and evaluation exercises resulted in identification of compliance and improvements in teaching and learning, research, and achievement of UPM educational goals.

Suggestions for Improvement 16: The panel suggests that CQA should consider adapting the reviews to a new approaches, for example risk-based, performance-based, priority-based etc. These new approaches help to develop greater ownership of the IQA processes by the departments.

Suggestions for Improvement 17: While the CQA performs these responsibilities in a timely and effective manner, it should also begin to take on university priorities (as outlined in the strategic plans, VC's narrative etc.) within its work more actively than before. The SP priorities can become themes in the (PMRE) exercises. for instance, sustainability, employability, internationalisation or student mobility.

It should also begin to provide programme managers and faculty some scope to include their priorities in the terms of the review. IQA can employ risks as part of the planning and execution of the internal reviews to effectively apportion review resources to areas that most need them.

Suggestions for Improvement 18: IQA should also focus on the online medium of delivery and assessments to provide confidence to all that the teaching, learning and assessments are carried out with care and diligence cognizant of the standards to be observed.

4.2. Involvement of Stakeholders

- 4.2.1. Various stakeholders are involved in the review and evaluation of the programmes (Refer to 4.1.2f, Sample of Curriculum Programme Review Document; Appendix 4.1.2b Example of Report from External Assessors). These stakeholders comprise external assessors, Board of Studies, professional bodies, students, graduates and alumni.
- 4.2.2. The feedback is systematically documented, analysed and considered in the curriculum and the changes are disseminated. The outcomes of the analyses are incorporated into the proposed changes to the academic programmes. The proposed changes are eventually approved by the Senate and the LPU. The involvement of stakeholders has resulted in programme improvements to address current and future challenges including the pivot to active learning, blended deliveries, work-based learning and non-high stakes and more authentic assessments.

4.3. Quality Improvement and Enhancement

- 4.3.1. The University has in place policies and procedures for regular reviewing and updating of its internal quality assurance system and processes to ensure continual quality improvement (Refer to Appendix 1.5.2 a *Prosedur Pengurusan Dokumen ISO UPM/PGR/P001*). These reviews are participatory and cooperative processes involving all levels to ensure continual quality improvement in all its core processes. One of the initiatives the training of 603 internal auditors for QMS, 77 assessors for ISMS, and 134 internal panels of assessors (POA) for the audit of academic programmes. The reviews have follow-up processes to correct weaknesses and also institute improvements which are SOP for IQA and all other QMS.
- 4.3.2. The panel supports the initiative of CQA to develop user-based review templates which are based on user roles and functions. Under this initiative, a more focused and user-friendly template will be developed to reduce the amount/number of documentations. Such a move was initiated by Research and Innovation.

Suggestion for Improvement 19: There should be periodic management audits of the CQA to ensure effectiveness of their role/function.

4.4. Institutional Sustainability

- 4.4.1. UPM's strategic and internal processes are institutionalised and supported by UPM's top management in ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation and sustainability of the education system in UPM. QMS, the Information

Security Management Systems (ISMS) and the initiatives for CQI processes of the University further assist the top management and all the academic leaders to carry out their responsibilities by providing clear and specific guidelines. Such accountability to the top management has been outlined in Standard ISO 9001:2015, Clause 5: Leadership (5.2.1) which states that 'Top Management shall establish, implement and maintain the quality policy.'

- 4.4.2. In terms of the Human Resource Sustainability Strategy, UPM has developed a strategic plan in coping and managing competitiveness in human resource development. Strategies that are included are:
- i. The deployment of academic and administrative staff based on the University Transformation Plan (Merging of College/Faculty/Institute).
 - ii. The University's training focus has shifted towards talent development programmes and succession planning using Competency-Based Talent Management (CBTM). UPM achieved 92.7% academic staff with Ph.D. qualifications, which is currently the highest among other Malaysian higher education institutions.
- 4.4.3. To ensure financial sustainability, UPM's Board of Directors approved the University Income Generation Guidelines as a guide for implementing income generation activities focusing on seven (7) scopes. These guidelines are aimed at generating more income and to reduce the reliance on government funding.

