AMDISA

SOUTH ASIAN QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (SAQS)

for Management Schools

SAQS ACCREDITED

Peer Review Guide

Booklet - IV

AMDISA

South Asian Quality Assurance System (SAQS)

Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA)

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PEER REVIEW GUIDE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Description of the SAQS Scheme

SAQS is an international system of strategic audit and accreditation designed for the assessment of Schools in widely different national contexts. Although it is inspired by the special needs imposed by extreme cultural diversity, the SAQS standards are those of effective education for international management and apply to Schools in any cultural environment in any region.

The SAQS was launched in 2003 by AMDISA and was designed through a process of close cooperation between existing national accreditation bodies in the field of management education.

Giving diversity a framework

One of the reasons for a general reluctance in the past to develop a common South Asian accreditation scheme was the diverse nature of South Asian systems and a rapidly diversifying world of management education, in which there was little belief in the "one best model". However, the modern trend towards global standards means there is now a greater need to help students and employers to make sense of the international market and gain some understanding of comparative standards.

The SAQS dynamic model that lies at the heart of the SAQS scheme was specially designed to provide a framework for handling this diversity. A truly international accreditation or quality assessment scheme has to combine the need for commonly agreed high standards with the need to respect the diversity of national systems. It has to consider the educational and cultural environment in which the School operates and relate it to the wider South Asian and international context. This effectively rules out classical, single context compliance schemes and necessitates a concerted and more flexible approach involving all the principal actors in management development in South Asia. Most important, there is no emphasis placed on a particular model for business Schools. An MBA programme is not a pre-condition for entry into the scheme, and some of the interested Schools need not necessarily subscribe to the 'big business School' model.

Providing a flexible development tool

SAQS is much more than an accreditation scheme. It was conceived, as its name indicates, as a quality improvement system, providing an unusual combination of accreditation as recognition of high international quality and a full strategic audit as a guide to a School's future progress. The scheme is designed to approach quality as an ongoing process in which Schools benchmark each other's performance and open their doors to evaluation by peers and customers.

The principal features of the SAQS process and standards can be summarized as follows:

> ➢ SAQS offers an international and intercultural approach to quality assessment.

> ➢ SAQS places a great emphasis on corporate concerns, both in the standards themselves and in the assessment processes.

- SAQS looks at the performance of the School taken as a whole, including all of its programmes and not just the MBA programme, and uses outcome-based perspectives and criteria.

- Special attention is paid to executive education with a separate chapter devoted to this area.

- SAQS stresses the personal development of MBA students and support of their inter-personal, entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

- SAQS is conceived as a learning process involving an international forum for defining the relevant quality criteria. SAQS is dynamic and forward looking with a concern for new trends.

2. The SAQS Process: An Overview

The SAQS Accreditation process consists of several distinct stages.

1. Preliminary Inquiry
2. Formal Application
3. Eligibility
4. Self-Assessment
5. International Peer Review
6. Accreditation Awarding Committee Decision

II. SAQS PROCESS IN BRIEF

The different stages of the SAQS process are described in more detail below:

1. Preliminary Inquiry

The AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director and his staff will provide information about the scheme and preliminary advice to Schools that are considering application.

2. Formal Application

A School that wishes to enter the SAQS accreditation process sends a letter of application to the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director and completes a Data Sheet with supporting material containing basic factual information about its programmes, activities and organization.

3. Eligibility

Upon receipt of the completed application to enter the scheme, the School, will go through a preliminary Eligibility screening to determine whether there are major obstacles to eventual accreditation and whether accreditation is probable within a reasonable period, currently defined as five years. This phase is also designed to make sure that Schools enter the SAQS scheme with a full understanding of both the criteria and the process. More details are provided in "Accreditation Procedures" document.

4. Production of a Self-Assessment Report

As soon as a School is declared eligible, it is invited to carry out an extensive Self-Assessment and to write a Self-Assessment Report covering the quality criteria set out in the document "Guidance Handbook on SAQS Quality Criteria" and in accordance with the guidelines established in the document "Guide to Self-Assessment".

The Self-Assessment process is expected to take between three and six months. During this time, the SAQS team will provide advice and support, as well as some monitoring of the process to ensure conformity to the spirit of the system.

5. International Peer Review

Once the Self-Assessment Report has been submitted, a team of International Peer Reviewers will visit the School to establish a diagnosis of its standing as regards the SAQS standards and to draw up recommendations for future progress, as per the guidelines in this document.

The Peer Review is usually scheduled to take place within two months of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report.

The visit lasts three days during which the SAQS Peer Reviewers meet a wide variety of people representing the different activities and interests of the School. At the end of the

Peer Review, the Chairperson presents orally the team's preliminary assessment and recommendations for future development.

The Chairperson then drafts the Peer Review Report and sends it to the other Reviewers for suggestions and alterations. This normally takes between two and four weeks. The Peer Review Report sets out the Team's final assessment of the School against the SAQS quality criteria together with its recommendations for future development and quality improvement, including advice on what remains to be done for the School to qualify for accreditation. The draft report will be sent to the School to confirm factual accuracy and consistency. It must be returned within two weeks.

In cases where the Peer Review Team believes that the School clearly satisfies all SAQS criteria and is qualified for immediate accreditation, it will recommend to the School and to AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director that the report be sent to the Accreditation Awarding Committee for a decision on accreditation during its next meeting. The Chairman of the Peer Review Team will, in these cases, write an accompanying document setting out the grounds for its support of the accreditation application.

In all other cases, the Peer Review Team will indicate areas in which progress is necessary and suggest steps that need to be taken before the School will enter a period of "Guided Development" with the assistance of the SAQS team to bring itself up to the level at which accreditation will be possible.

6. Decision of the Accreditation Awarding Committee

All Schools that have been through the Self-Assessment and Peer Review process are free to request that the Peer Review Report be submitted to the Accreditation Awarding Committee for a final decision on accreditation. However, it is clear that only those Schools that have the explicit support of the Peer Review Team will have a real prospect of a favorable outcome.

The Accreditation Awarding Committee can reach three decisions. It can grant Full Accreditation when it is satisfied that all the SAQS standards are met. It can grant Conditional Accreditation when it believes that there are significant areas where the standards are not fully met, but that, overall, the School deserves immediate accreditation. Or it can reject the accreditation.

III. THE PEER REVIEW

1. Composition of the Peer Review Committee

The Peer Review Committee normally consists of four South Asian members, and possibly a member of EFMD-EQUIS.

Three of the members are experts holding senior positions in the world of management education or with substantial experience in this field.

- ➢ One of the above will have distinct experience of the country being visited, the two others will represent two different nationalities to ensure an optimum international perspective.
- ➢ One corporate representative selected from a panel of three to be sent by the School.
- ➢ A member of EFMD-EQUIS may be invited as the fifth member.

One of the members of the Peer Review Committee with experience of the SAQS process will assume the role of Chairperson.

2. Objectives of the Peer Review within the SAQS Process

The fundamental goal of the Peer Review visit is to assess the quality of the School's activities against the SAQS criteria and to make a recommendation to the Accreditation Awarding Committee concerning accreditation. A secondary objective is to fulfill a consultancy role leading to suggestions for quality improvement and to offer the School the benefits of a strategic audit.

In order to achieve these objectives the Peer Review will seek to confirm the claims made within the Self-Assessment Report and to secure on-site information sufficient to build up a comprehensive profile of the School.

This is no easy task. The balance between the role of the Peer Review process in providing sufficient information to the Accreditation Awarding Committee to arrive at a decision on accreditation and the wider, strategic and quality improvement role of the Peer Review visit is delicate. In carrying out SAQS Peer Reviews it is important that all parties begin the process with a clear idea of what the Peer Review is designed to achieve. The success of the visit rests on a number of conditions being met by all those involved in the process:

- ➢ The allocation of a trusted and acceptable Peer Review Team to the School
- ➢ Thorough preparation by the School through the production of a Self-Assessment Report
- ➢ Careful reading of the Self-Assessment Report by the Peer Review Committee
- ➢ Clear relationships and expectations on the part of all involved
- ➢ Open discussions free of excessive formalism between the Peer Review Committee and the key stakeholders within the School
- ➢ The presentation of confidential feedback and recommendations for accreditation in a professional manner, combining the requirements of the Accreditation Awarding Committee with an approach that respects the needs of the School as a client.

3. Responsibilities of the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director in AMDISA

- ➢ To liaise with the School and arrange appropriate meetings
- ➢ To advise and assist in the Self-Assessment process
- ➢ To fix the timetable for the SAQS assessment and to set the date of the Peer Review Committee visit
- ➢ To establish the Peer Review schedule, in liaison with the School and Chairperson of the Peer Review Team
- ➢ To ensure there is adequate time between receipt of the Self-Assessment Report and the date of the Peer Review Team's visit (usually at least 6 weeks)
- ➢ To identify the members of the Peer Review Committee, seek concurrence from Chairman SAQS Committee, and to secure the necessary agreement from the School
- ➢ To brief the Peer Review Committee on the requirements of the SAQS assessment and to confirm receipt of all necessary supporting materials
- ➢ To make the necessary logistic arrangements with the School for travel, accommodation and special requests
- ➢ To arrange for the despatch of materials produced by the School to the members of the Peer Review Committee
- ➢ To make arrangements for the delivery of the completed SAQS Assessment Report to the Head of the School
- ➢ To arrange for the safe disposal of all sensitive materials following acceptance of the report by the School.

4. Responsibilities of the SAQS Project Leader within the School

- ➢ To coordinate the Self-Assessment process and the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report
- ➢ To ensure the timely production of the materials for the Self-Assessment Report
- ➢ To liaise with the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director
- ➢ To establish a programme for the Peer Review visit in collaboration with the SAQS team of AMDISA
- ➢ To reimburse all travel and accommodation fees for the Peer Review Committee
- ➢ To make the necessary practical logistic arrangements for the visit, including local travel and accommodation
- ➢ To ensure adequate access to key stakeholders during the visit of the Peer Review Committee
- ➢ To check the final report for factual inconsistencies.

5. Responsibilities of the Chair of the Peer Review Committee

Before the Visit

- ➢ To liaise with the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director within AMDISA and with the staff responsible for the SAQS process within the School
- ➢ To review the Self-Assessment Report and collect the comments and first impressions of the Committee members
- ➢ To agree on a schedule for the visit with the School and the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director, taking into account the main issues raised by the Self Assessment Report
- ➢ To notify the School of the key issues/questions to be covered in the visit and where appropriate to request further information in advance.

During the visit

➢ To brief the members of the Committee on the Peer Review Process
➢ To act as the main spokesperson for the Committee
➢ To ensure adequate preparation for meetings
➢ To determine the delegation of lead responsibilities to individuals
➢ To lead the Peer Review Committee towards a set of conclusions during the visit
➢ To ensure that the members of the Committee complete the assessment documents before the end of the visit
➢ To hold a meeting of the Peer Review Committee, usually on the evening of the second day, during which the team agrees on its conclusions and recommendation
➢ To run the debriefing for the School during the final meeting.

Following the visit

➢ To collect documentation made by the Peer Review Committee relating to the satisfaction of the core criteria
➢ To draft the final report and to circulate it to the other members of the team for comment
➢ To issue the revised report to AMDISA/SAQS Office which will liaise with the School and accommodate changes to the report where necessary
➢ To issue the final report to the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director for submission to the Accreditation Awarding Committee.

6. Responsibilities of the Individual Committee Members

Before the visit

➢ To liaise with the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director and Chair prior to the visit on the SAQS Peer Review visit requirements
➢ To prepare themselves adequately about the objectives of the assessment and the criteria used to make a balanced decision
➢ To read the Self-Assessment Report carefully and carry out a preliminary analysis against the SAQS criteria
➢ To communicate to the Chair their comments in sufficient detail to facilitate planning before the visit
➢ To convey to the Chair and SAQS team details of their travel arrangements and any special requirements they may have regarding travel and accommodation
➢ To arrive the night before the assessment visit by 6.00 p.m. to participate in the team briefing.

During the visit

 - ➢ To ensure adequate preparation for all meetings
 - ➢ Be present throughout the entire Peer Review visit
 - ➢ To fulfill specified and agreed responsibilities within the team, such as the provision of specialist expertise
 - ➢ To act as the main spokesperson for some sessions, as agreed with the Chair
 - ➢ To document their own findings clearly enough to support the work of the Chair
 - ➢ To operate in the spirit of consensus. If they disagree with the decisions arrived at by the team, they must nonetheless abide by that consensus
 - ➢ To provide to the Chair all relevant documentation completed by them relating to the findings of sessions and satisfaction of SAQS criteria.

Following the visit

 - ➢ To liaise, if necessary, with the Chair and other Peer Review Committee members to confirm the final decision on accreditation
 - ➢ To contribute to the drafting of the final report
 - ➢ To provide all requested documentation required for reimbursement of travel and accommodation
 - ➢ To make arrangements for the destruction of all sensitive materials relating to the visit following acceptance of the final report
 - ➢ To avoid expressing any opinion or the results of the assessment to any person outside the Peer Review Committee and the AMDISA SAQS team.

7. Role of Corporate Reviewers

The corporate dimension is afforded special importance in the SAQS assessment, as reflected in the creation of two special chapters in the SAQS standards devoted to (a) Relations with the Corporate World and (b) Executive Education. This corporate dimension is not simply one of the eleven. In the same way as the International Dimension, it is to be seen as an overreaching framework for all the other criteria. Corporate presence in the SAQS process is also seen as an essential feature of the accreditation process, through representation on the SAQS Council, the Accreditation Awarding Committee and in the Peer Review Committees.

The corporate Peer Reviewer should play an important role in the Peer Review Committee and provide a corporate perspective within the process by paying special attention to the value of all processes and outcomes to the international business community.

IV. PREPARATION FOR THE VISIT

1. Reading Materials

The following documents are sent to the Reviewers before each Peer Review:

1. Names and addresses of the members of the review team
2. SAQS Quality Standards
3. Guide to Self-Assessment
4. Guidance Handbook on SAQS Quality Criteria
5. Peer Review Guide
6. School's Profile Sheet
7. Criteria Satisfaction Checklist
8. Self-Assessment Report of the School under review
9. Data Sheet with a summary of the 'facts and figures' of the School

2. Study of the Self-Assessment Report

As soon as the School has completed the Self Assessment Report, copies will be sent to the members of the Peer Review Committee. It is very important that each member studies this report carefully before the team comes together at the preliminary meeting. As an important starting point for discussion during this preliminary meeting, each member should attempt to answer the questions listed below:

➢ Are all the areas covered by the SAQS framework adequately addressed in the report?
➢ What further information is required?
➢ Is the local context and mission for the School clearly stated?
➢ Are the strategic aims satisfactorily translated into practice?
➢ Are the mechanisms for the strategic management of the School clearly visible from the report?
➢ Are the problems facing the School clearly formulated?
➢ Does the School clearly sketch out how it plans to deal with these problems?
➢ What preliminary assessment can be formulated against the main SAQS criteria?
➢ What are the main issues that will require careful analysis during the visit?

By answering these questions, each team member is not tied to a final judgement but is simply forming a first impression based on the written information supplied. During the Peer Review visit there will obviously be time to confirm or refute this opinion.

The Chair should seek to establish the impressions of the other team members in advance of the visit in order to identify further information that can be supplied by the School and to prepare the main focus of the interviews.

3. Logistics

The School is expected to make all necessary arrangements for accommodation and the local transport for the experts. The Project Leader should therefore liaise directly with AMDISA to confirm the travel arrangements for the members of the team. The members of the Peer Review Team arrange their own international/domestic travel.

Hotel accommodation should be arranged close to the site and should not be overly luxurious. There is often a tendency to locate teams in prestigious hotels at some distance from the host School. This wastes time on travel and can hamper the team's work.

Lunches should be short and simple, involving a minimum of disturbance. There is a definite preference for on-site buffet lunches.

The schedule for the visit of three days involving four/five team members will be very tight, so maximum use of the time is essential. Formal presentations and social events written into the proceedings are to be avoided.

4. Setting up the Schedule

Each of the Schools visited will have plenty of opportunity to discuss the arrangements and requirements for the Peer Review with the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director and will be asked to submit a proposed schedule for the visit, to be agreed with the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director and the Chair of the Peer Review Committee. Nonetheless, the following guidance notes should assist the teams in their planning.

V. PRELIMINARY BRIEFING MEETING OF THE PEER REVIEW TEAM

The work of the Peer Review Team will normally begin with a brief meeting held over dinner on the evening before the first day of the visit. It is essential that the team be alone for this meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to allow:

 ➢ Briefing of the Peer Review Committee by the Chairman
 ➢ Agreement on the working methods and allocation of responsibilities within the Peer Review Committee
 ➢ Review of the Self-Assessment Report and identification of the key issues
 ➢ Review of the visit schedule and preparation of the next day's meetings
 ➢ Identification of any supplementary information to be requested

1. The Actual Review

The actual review will begin at 9.00 a.m. on the first day and end no later than 4.00 pm. on the third day. The schedule for the first two days should not extend beyond 6.00 p.m.

The visit should start and finish with a meeting with the Executive Committee (senior management team) of the host School.

2. Initial Meeting with the School's Executive Committee (1-1.5 hours)

This is the opportunity for introductions, confirmation of the schedule and arrangements for the visit. The Peer Review Committee can put on the table before the key representatives of the School some of their main concerns after reading the Self-Assessment Report and any requirements for additional information. It is important that the team allow sufficient time for this session in order to maximize the effectiveness of subsequent meetings.

This initial session is also an opportunity for the School to present its current situation and explain how it sees the future. It would be quite appropriate to list the key difficulties facing the School to guide the Peer Review Committee. However, it is also important to stress that using the time as some form of marketing presentation will be helpful.

3. Final Debriefing Meeting (45 minutes)

This session, which comes at the end of the third morning, closes the Peer Review and allows the Chairman to make a provisional summary of the team's conclusions.

4. The Main Peer Review Visit Schedule

The Peer Review Committee should be allowed sufficient time alone twice a day (30 min to 1 hour) to debrief themselves after a series of meetings and to prepare for the next round.

For many of the interviews, the main panel can be broken up into two sub-committees in order to optimize coverage during the visit.

A typical programme is likely to include sessions on most of the following topics and the meetings are preferably scheduled in the order as indicated below:

1. Meeting with the Top Executive (1.5 hours)
2. Governance – representatives of the School's Governing Body (1 hour)
3. Programme direction – programme directors of First Degree programmes, MBA, Ph.D, Executive Education etc., scheduled separately (1.5 hours each)
4. Faculty Management – Dean/Director of the School or those responsible for faculty management (1 hour)
5. Research (1 hour)
6. Subject specialists – two to three subject area heads (1 hour)
7. Faculty – A random group of faculty members. These should be different from the senior staff already met (1 hour) – the Peer Review Team can be broken up in 2 sub-committees and should meet 2 groups of 5 to 6 faculty members
8. Support services – representative of student services, admissions, marketing, internships, international office, and careers, scheduled separately (45 minutes)
9. Students – from different programmes, seen separately (45 minutes each group) – students should be met after the meeting with the programme director – the Peer Review Team can be broken up in 2 sub-committees
10. Corporate connections – representatives of key corporate customers, advisory boards etc. (45 minutes)
11. Alumni (45 minutes)
12. Resourcing – This meeting will focus on the physical and financial resources available to the School in view of its activities and development plans. It will also be the occasion to examine the financial management systems that provide information for the School's programme directors (1 hour)
13. Class visits (15 minutes each)
14. Final Debriefing (45 minutes)

Part of the programme (max 45 minutes) should be set aside to look at the facilities: lecture halls, working group rooms, libraries etc. For this, the team can split up if necessary.

An open slot should also be organized to allow individual staff and students to talk to members of the panel.

A typical programme

The following is an example of how these requirements translate into a typical schedule for a SAQS Peer Review visit.

This format must, of course, be adjusted to take into account the specific circumstances of the School. In all cases, the School should first propose a schedule to be reviewed and agreed by the Chair and AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director.

Day 1	
09:00 – 10:30	Initial Meeting with the Top Executive Committee of the School
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 12:15	Meeting 1
12:15 – 13:00	Meeting 2
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (Peer Review Team debriefing)
14:00 – 15:30	Meeting 3
15:30 – 16:00	Break + debriefing time for the audit team
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting 4
17:00 – 18:00	Meeting 5
19:30	Dinner
Day 2	
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting 6
10:00 – 11:00	Meeting 7
11:00 – 11:30	Break + debriefing time for the audit team
11:30 – 12:15	Meeting 8
12:15 – 13:00	Meeting 9
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch (Possible lunch meeting)
14:00 – 15:00	Meeting 10
15:00 – 16:00	Break + debriefing time for the audit team
16:00 – 17:00	Meeting 11
17:00 – 18:00	Meeting 12
19:30	Dinner and Peer Review Team meeting to formulate its overall assessment
Day 3	
09:00 – 10:00	Meeting 13
10:00 – 11:00	Meeting 14
11:00 – 12:15	Peer Review Team meets separately
12:15 – 13:00	Debriefing & feedback to the School by the Peer Review Team
13:00 – 14:00	Optional Lunch

The programme should clearly indicate the title of each meeting and the composition of participants.

VI. THE VISIT

1. Conduct of Interviews

1.1. Preparation for Interviews

It is obvious that the total time available for the visit is extremely limited and that the Team should make good use of its time. Team members need to be conscious throughout of the role of a particular session in the total process for the assessment, i.e.

- ➢ Team members need to prepare
- ➢ The team should consider the possibility of asking for additional paperwork from the School to facilitate their evaluation
- ➢ Throughout the interview, individuals should be working towards the overall assessment and need to cross check facts and complete adequate documentation. This will make their work much easier when summarizing their findings and writing the final report. The Criteria Checklist is intended to serve as a tool for this purpose. Several copies of this document per Peer Reviewer may be helpful.

The key issue that Peer Reviewers should focus on when preparing for interviews is to identify the additional information required to fill any information gaps.

1.2. Interviews with the Students

Students are a very rich source of information, but their comments need to be verified against the information given by faculty members. Interviews with students provide on important insight into workload, the professionalism of staff, the coherency of programmes, the clarity of aims and objectives, the organization of the curricula and the facilities. The interviews with the students should be held in the absence of faculty members, so they can speak freely. Each group should normally be made up of six to ten students, all from the same programme. The group should be representative of the whole student population within a particular programme and the School is best advised to ask a student organization to nominate the students. If this is not appropriate, steps should be taken to invite students at random. Students from very different programmes should not be mixed.

1.3. Interviews with Faculty and Staff

Interviews with faculty and staff are conducted to discuss issues around research, the design and delivery of programmes, and the overall management of the faculty. Confirmation of issues raised by students can also occur. As with students, the reasonable size of the group is probably a sample of about six.

VII.   THE BASE ROOM

The School should make available a base room for the duration of the visit, in addition to the main committee room used for meetings.

All documents for the visit, e.g. the faculty management handbook, course documents, examples of students' work, case studies, research output, brochures etc. should be laid out in this base room.

The room provided for the team should:

> ➤ Be spacious
> ➤ Possess a large table for laying out documents
> ➤ Be equipped with a flip chart
> ➤ Include a table for receiving guests
> ➤ Where possible provide a telephone connection and a computer
> ➤ Be free from disturbance

VIII. PERIODIC DE-BRIEFING SESSIONS

At the end of each major session, it is essential that the Peer Review Committee allow themselves enough time to consolidate their findings and to complete all relevant paper work. This is why it is so important to arrange a schedule that allocates regular de-briefing sessions throughout the visit. These meetings are also necessary to check that the Peer Review Committee is on track for a complete coverage of all the SAQS standards and is working steadily towards the final assessment.

IX. WORKING TOWARDS AN ASSESSMENT AND THE CONTENT OF THE FINAL REPORT

The framework for the SAQS Peer Review visit is based on norms laid down in the various documents developed by AMDISA. All the aspects should be covered and the schedule of interviews should ensure full coverage of these topics. In order to assist the Peer Review Committee with this task, a "Criteria Satisfaction Checklist" is provided. Team members should attempt to answer all the summary questions listed.

Throughout the visit, the Peer Review Committee should be working through a controlled process for refining their assessment of overall School's quality and coming to a consensus decision on the recommendation to be made to the Accreditation Awarding Committee.

The stages involved in this process will be as follows:

1. Individual assessment and completion of documentation, using the Criteria Satisfaction Checklist and the School's Profile Sheet
2. Consolidation of findings in the final team debriefing meeting(s)
   - Consolidation of the Criteria Satisfaction Checklist
   - Agreement on the School's Profile Scoring
   - Agreement on the Peer Review Committee's final decision on accreditation
   - Preparation for the debriefing of the School (Oral Report)
3. The debriefing of the School
4. Preparation of the Peer Review Report.

Each of these stages is discussed in more detail below:

1. Individual Assessment and Completion of Documents

This will, of course, be an ongoing process from the beginning of Day 1, but the documentation should be largely completed before the team meets on the evening of Day 2. The Chair may need to set aside time for individual completion of the Checklist and the Profile Sheet, immediately before this meeting.

2. Consolidation of Findings in the team meetings at the end of Day 2

The Peer Review Team will need to meet alone, probably for several hours to complete the documentation and to formulate their assessment and accompanying recommendations. This is best done on the evening of Day 2.

There are many different approaches adopted by different organizations and individual Chairs, but experience teaches us that the use of a rigorous procedure for collecting perceptions and arriving at a consensus avoids the undesirable effects of disagreement in the team.

Each of the key topics should not only be treated in a qualitative way through the written comments entered into the Criteria Satisfaction Checklist, but also in a more quantitative, comparative way. This is the role of the School's Profile Sheet, which not only helps the team to arrive at an objective assessment, but also fulfills the School's need for feedback on their relative positioning in the international community.

Although many Reviewers may naturally shrink away from doing something that looks like 'ticking boxes', the rationale for this approach has nothing to do with mechanizing the assessment. Its main justification is that it encourages the Reviewers to implement a process for arriving at a consensus opinion and identifying discrepancies between the perceptions of different team members. It quickly confronts panels with any discrepancies between written judgments and a scaled evaluation. However, it must be underlined that the process is not designed to produce a final score or ranking, but rather to produce a profile of a School's strengths and weaknesses.

2.1 The Criteria Satisfaction Checklist

The Criteria Satisfaction Checklist is a working document that the Peer Reviewers use to build up their personal assessment throughout the three days of the review. The first part of the meeting on the evening of the second day may be used by the team members to finalise their comments on this document.

It is very important that this process is carried out rigorously, since the final report will be in large part a synthesis of the documents filled in by the different members of the Peer Review Committee. Reviewers are, therefore, asked to write in each of the boxes a full commentary describing what they have observed. It is not sufficient in building up a profile of the School just to respond with single adjectives or yes/no. For example, below is an illustrative section of the Criteria Satisfaction Checklist:

Context and Mission

TOPIC	COMMENTS
• Autonomy	
• Effectiveness of the School's Governing Body and External Advisory Committees	

2.2 The School's Evaluation Sheet

Once they have completed their own assessment on the Checklist, team members will then go to fill in their personal copy of the School's Profile Sheet. In doing this, they should pay particular attention to the consistency between their written comments on the Checklist and the scaled assessment on the Profile Sheet.

The normal procedure is for each member of the Review Team to complete the document alone before any discussion has taken place on the assessment of the different items. It is only when each member has committed himself to an initial judgement that the Chair opens the debate in order to work towards a common position that will be entered on to a consolidated version of the Evaluation Sheet. This procedure will rapidly indicate where complete agreement exists among the team members and will also clearly reveal the areas that require careful discussion.

The final consolidated version of the School's Evaluation Sheet will reflect the Team's overall conclusions and is in the form shown below from a section of the School's Evaluation Sheet:

		Above Standards	Meets Standards	Below Standards	N/A
Chapter I	Mission/Governance/Strategy				
	Autonomy				
	External Governance				

The form summarizes the key criteria for each chapter of the SAQS standards and requires the team to agree on one of four possible evaluations:

Above Standards
The School demonstrates outstanding quality, well above the level required to satisfy the SAQS standards in this area, where it can be considered as a model of excellence.

Meets Standards
The School satisfies the SAQS standards in this area as defined in the Criteria Handbook. Most positive assessments are expected in this broad category. It is not to be interpreted as meaning that the School is mediocre or that it barely qualifies at a minimum level.

Below Standards
The School is judged to be below the threshold of the SAQS standards in this area.

N/A
Not considered applicable and/or relevant to the School concerned.

2.3 Formulation of the Peer Review Committee's Assessment and Recommendations

Once the School's Evaluation has been completed, the Peer Review Team should then be in a position to agree on the final decision as to whether the School has met the standards for SAQS accreditation. If they do not believe these have been met, then obviously the shortfall has to be fully defined together with a clear statement as to the action necessary to meet the shortfall.

The recommendations must be clearly substantiated with reference to observations made in the Criteria Satisfaction Checklist and to the assessment set out in the consolidated School's Evaluation Sheet.

The Peer Review Committee is not in a position to base its judgement upon comparison with other Schools, nor is it expected to do so. On the other hand, its judgement must be based firmly on the definition of SAQS standards as set out in the Criteria Handbook.

2.4 Preparation for the De-briefing of the School (Oral Report)

After arriving at a consensus, the Chairman should make an inventory of the topics to be treated in the oral presentation, perhaps against topics in the checklist. A distinction can be made between (a) the main findings that will form the basis of the written report and (b) any critical comments that can be brought forward in the oral presentation, because the subject matter is best discussed informally.

The Chair will then formulate the content of the oral presentation, based on his/her discussions with the other team members.

3. The Debriefing

The oral presentation at the end of the Peer Review visit plays a special role in the assessment process. With a great deal of time and energy having been invested by the staff of the School over a period of months, it is important that the feedback provides real value and 'closes down' the visit in the right way. Giving feedback is a skilled task, both for individuals and Schools. The rules for good practice that apply to feedback given to individuals are just as valuable when applied to School's feedback:

> ➢ Adoption of a positive, supportive and constructive approach
> ➢ Concentration on the key messages that need to be delivered, not on the fine detail
> ➢ Enumeration of the strengths as well as the weaknesses
> ➢ Early stressing of positive feedback to create the right climate
> ➢ Delivery of key points in a clear and concise manner
> ➢ Presenting more negative feedback in a constructive form that can be accepted
> ➢ Confirming understanding and acceptance of key development needs
> ➢ Suggesting alternatives for the way to deal with specific problems
> ➢ Allowing the recipients to identify the solutions
> ➢ Providing clear guidance on the necessary action for quality improvement where appropriate.

The de-briefing also allows panels to distinguish between feedback provided informally and that contained in a more formal report. There are sometimes findings and conclusions that may not be really suitable for a more public report, yet the panel would like to make more critical statements about a particular aspect of School's management. In these cases, the oral feedback can be used to formulate strongly worded recommendations to the right audience and in the right place (e.g. the School's main board room).

The Chair should stress that the feedback represents a form of interim report, since some conclusions may alter following a full consultation with his/her colleagues, including possible referral of some points to the School's Director. It is not appropriate at this point to divulge the recommendation that the Peer Review Committee intends to make to the Accreditation Awarding Committee.

4. Preparation of the Peer Review Report

The Chair will collect the completed Criteria Satisfaction Checklists from the other Reviewers for use in the drafting of the written report.

X. THE PEER REVIEW REPORT

The report is the culmination of the assessment process and is an extremely important document not only for the Accreditation Awarding Committee but also for the School's management team. Although the report will not normally be made public, it will have considerable impact within the School. Therefore, great care should be taken with the wording of key sections, especially where these are critical.

XI. PROCEDURE FOR THE PEER REVIEW REPORT

1. The Chair collates and consolidates comments from the team, using the written summaries in the Criteria Checklist and the minutes of the oral presentation.

2. The Chair writes up a draft of the report, and, based on the Team members comments, edits the Peer Review Report.

3. The edited version is submitted to AMDISA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/SAQS DIRECTOR, who sends it to the School to check for any factual inconsistencies.

4. The School responds as necessary.

5. Following receipt of comments from the School a final editing is undertaken and the Peer Review Report is finalized by the Chair, and sent to AMDISA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/SAQS DIRECTOR for necessary follow-up.

XII. FORMULATING THE REPORT

The Chairperson writes the Peer Review Report setting out the Peer Review Team's assessment of the School against the SAQS quality criteria.

The Peer Review Report should also provide recommendations for the future development of the School. These recommendations will be of two types;

> ➤ SAQS Recommendations: These are binding requirements or conditions that the School must satisfy in order to reach the level of quality necessary for SAQS accreditation. The School will be expected to follow these recommendations.
> ➤ Non-binding recommendations by the Peer Review Team: These are suggestions which the PR Team, based on the professional experience of its members, believes to be helpful for the School to achieve its strategic objectives. The School is not obliged to follow these recommendations.

The final version of the Peer Review Report may indicate to the School that the Peer Review Team believes that it may be ready to obtain SAQS Accreditation immediately. The AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director presents the report to Apex Committee for final consideration and comparative assessment of Schools Peer Reviewed based on Apex Committee Recommendations. As a consequence, the School may decide to apply to the SAQS Accreditation Awarding Committee for SAQS accreditation. If it does, the Peer Review Team will send the Peer Review Report together with a one-page memo with a supporting recommendation for accreditation to the Chairperson of the Accreditation Awarding Committee.

If the final version of the Peer Review Report does not give any indication with respect to SAQS Accreditation, by default the School should assume that the Peer Review Team believes that the School is not yet ready for SAQS accreditation. In this case, the School can still apply to the SAQS Accreditation Committee for accreditation. However, in this case only the Peer Review Report will be sent to the Awarding Committee, without any supporting recommendation for SAQS Accreditation. In these circumstances, SAQS accreditation is highly unlikely.

A School for which the Peer Review Report does not convey that it is ready for accreditation and which decides not to apply to the Accreditation Awarding Committee, can work on its own to make the necessary improvements to attain SAQS accreditation, or can opt to do this with the assistance of a SAQS expert by requesting the AMDISA Executive Director/SAQS Director for Guided Development.

XIII. RECOMMENDED FORMAT

Length: 10-15 pages

Title Page

Presentation of the School 1-2 pages

> ➢ Basic context, description of the School, main programmes, etc.

Paragraph on the Self-Assessment Report

> ➢ Coverage of the SAQS criteria framework
> ➢ Adequacy of the information provided
> ➢ Quality of the self analysis
> ➢ Whether submitted in time

Description of the Assessment Visit

> ➢ Summary of events. The schedule for the visit, items not included in the original schedule. Problems relating to the organiza tion of the visit, co-operation from the School, access to information, exceptional items.

Main Body of Report

> ➢ General assessment of the School (1-2 pages)
> ➢ Detailed analysis following the 11 SAQS chapters (6-8 pages)

Recommendations

> ➢ SAQS recommendations
> ➢ Non-binding recommendations

Please ensure that this document contains the latest and most up-to-date information.

XIV. CRITERIA SATISFACTION CHECKLIST

Note: The criteria and details correspond to those in the Guide to Self-Assessment. To be filled in by Peer Review Team Members individually, and to be consolidated by Team Leader in consultation with the Members.

1. CONTEXT AND MISSION

		Comments
1.1	Autonomy	
1.2	Effectiveness of the School's Governing Body and external advisory committees	
1.3	Effectiveness of the School's internal organizational structures and decision making processes	
1.4	Coherence between external and internal decision making structures	
1.5	Clear sense of mission	
1.6	Credibility of the School's present strategic positioning	
1.7	Identity and legitimacy within the national environment	
1.8	Main characteristics of the School's culture and values	
1.9	Clarity and coherence of future strategies	
1.10	Match between Mission and strategic objectives	

1.11	Match between strategic objectives, resources and risks	
1.12	Appropriateness and adequacy of marketing, public relations and communication strategies	
1.13	Corporate involvement in the School's Governance	
1.14	Do the main characteristics of the School (in terms of governance, autonomy, identity, legitimacy, sense of mission, strategic positioning, access to resources) make it credible at the international level?	

2. STUDENTS

2.1	Quality of incoming students	
	Is there a match between intake profile and the target profiles for graduating students?	
	Selectivity	
2.2	Student selection processes	
2.3	Quality of the admissions office	
2.4	Student placement -level of entry into the job market	
2.5	Qualify of the placement office	

2.6	Other student support services (counseling, international office etc.)	
2.7	Alumni Association	
2.8	Corporate involvement in recruitment and placement processes	
2.9	To what extent has the student body been internationalised?	

3. PROGRAMME QUALITY

3.1	Coherence of the School's portfolio of programmes	
3.2	The programme design process and clarity of objectives	
3.3	Programme content and coverage	
3.4	Programme delivery: What are the principal delivery Modes?	
	Do they meet international standards?	
3.5	How innovative is the School in its programmes?	
3.6	Integration of new technologies	
3.7	Balance between the academic and managerial dimensions.	

3.8	Focus on learning: to what extent there is an emphasis on learning as well as teaching?	
3.9	Quality of the course material: documents distributed to students (syllabi, course descriptions, etc)	
3.10	The Programme monitoring and review process - Evaluation by students - Faculty and student committees, etc - Review periodicity	
3.11	Student performance assessment regime	
3.12	Quality of the programme administration	
3.14	Compatibility with global business education systems	
3.15	International and regional content of the programmes	

4. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1	Do the School's programmes and processes favour personal development?	
4.2	Do the School's programme instill ethical values and societal concerns?	
4.3	Does the School provide individualized learning support for students? - Tutorials - Coaching	
4.4	How much opportunity for practical work and project-based work is provided within the School's programmes?	

		Are internships and action-based learning parts of the programme?	
4.5	Opportunities to develop managerial skills: - Team work - Presentation skills - Others		
4.6	How well does the School develop individuals as future international managers? - Managerial skills - Language and presentation skills - Intercultural skills		
4.7	Opportunities for study abroad		

5. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

5.1	Does the School have a clearly stated policy regarding Research, Development and Innovation (RDI)?	
	How is RDI defined within the School?	
	Is research a value within the School?	
5.2	What are the School's main areas of distinctive expertise?	
5.3	Nature and quality of the research output.	
5.4	Do faculty members have sufficient time to devote to research?	
5.5	Does the School have a policy in the area of innovative development (new technologies, new courses/programmes, new delivery modes)?	
5.6	Relevance of RDI to companies	

5.7	International scope and recognition of RDI	
5.8	Contribution of RDI to teaching	
5.9	Contribution of RDI to faculty development	
5.10	Role of consultancy in faculty and programme development.	

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

6.	Does the School play a significant role: through consultancy and outreach activities at the:	
	- Local level?	
	- National level?	
	- International level?	

7. FACULTY

7.1	Profile of the current Faculty Is the current composition of the faculty coherent with and adequate for the School's strategic ambitions?	
	Ratio of full-time-equivalent faculty members to full-time students	
	Ratio of full-time to part-time faculty	
7.2	Qualifications of the faculty: - Full-time - Part-time	
7.3	Does the School have effective policies and processes for management of the faculty? - Recruitment - Promotion - Development - Deployment (allocation, processes, workloads, objectives)	
7.4	Faculty exposure to the practicing and corporate world: - Modalities (including consultancy) - Frequency	
7.5	How internationally qualified are the full-time faculty? - Education - Experience	
	Visiting Faculty - Education - Experience	
7.6	Is the faculty of a sufficient quality to meet the international standards of management education?	

8. RESOURCES AND ADMINISTRATION

8.1	Quality of the Learning Environment - Campus and buildings - Cafeteria and refreshment facilities - Study areas - Student common room facilities	
8.2	Are the basic pedagogical resources adequate? - Class rooms, auditoriums, group/syndicate rooms	
	- Library	
	- Data Bases	
	- Computer and internet facilities for faculty, students, staff	
8.3	Effectiveness and viability of the School's financial management systems	
8.4	Is the School financially viable? Are there any major risks in the foreseeable future?	
8.5	Quality of administrative system: - Overall quality of staff - Human resource policy - Management/operation	

9. CONNECTIONS WITH THE PRACTISING AND CORPORATE WORLDS

9.1	Does the School have a well-defined policy for managing its links with the corporate world?	
9.2	Overall customer orientation of the School	
9.3	Does the School have adequate links to the corporate world at the:	
	- Local level?	
	- National level	
	- International level	
9.4	Quality of corporate partners and clients	
9.5	Input from practitioners	

10. INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

10.1	Does the School have a well defined policy for internationalization?	
10.2	What is the quality of the School's international academic partners?	
	What are the main international strategic alliances?	
	Exchange Programmes	
10.3	How international are the School's main corporate partners?	
10.4	Overall culture	
10.5	Governing Body	

11. EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

11.1	Integration of executive education into the School's mission, programme portfolio and overall strategy	
11.2	Coherence of the executive education portfolio	
	The core expertise offered to the business community	
	Nature of the portfolio of programmes - Open - Customised	
	- Residential - Non-residential	

		- Distance Learning	
		- Long/Short/Modular	
		- Qualification programme - Certification programmes	
		- Content (functional, general, management, issue based, skills workshops, etc.,)	
	11.3	Organisation and resources for Executive Education	
	11.4	Quality of open programmes	
	11.5	Quality of customised programmes	
	11.6	Understanding of the adult learning process	
	11.7.	Management of the customer base and quality of the client relationships	
		Composition of the Centre's customer base: - Local/National/International	
		- Nature of companies and organizations (sector, size)	
		- Level of managers (senior executives/middle managers/specialists and technical staff)	
		- Balance between customers as organizations and customers as individuals	

11.8	Measurement of the impact of learning on individuals and organizations	
11.9	Faculty involvement in executive education	
11.10	Impact of the School's RDI potential on executive education	
11.11	Marketing	
11.12	Development of international Executive Education	
12	**OVERALL ASSESSMENT** Does the School qualify for the South Asian Quality Label?	Yes
		No
		Under certain conditions

XV. SCHOOL'S EVALUATION SHEET

Name of the School: ....

....

Date of evaluation by Peer Review Team and Chairperson:

....

More than Adequate
The School demonstrates outstanding quality, well above the level required to satisfy the SAQS standards and where it can be considered as a model of excellence.

Adequate
The School satisfies the SAQS standards in this area as defined in the Criteria Handbook. Most positive assessments are expected to fall in this broad category. It is not to be interpreted as meaning that School is mediocre or that it barely qualifies at a minimum level.

Less than Adequate
The School is judged to be below the threshold of the SAQS standards.

N/A
Not considered applicable and/or relevant to the School concerned.

		Overall Quality Evaluation			
		More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	NA
Chap.1	Mission/Governance/Strategy				
1.1	Autonomy				
1.2	External Governance				
1.3	Internal Governance				
1.4	Coherence between internal & external Governance				
1.5	Sense of mission				
1.6	Credibility of present strategic positioning				
1.7	Culture and values				
1.8	Clarity & coherence of future strategy				
1.9	Marketing, PR, communication				
1.10	Corporate involvement in the School's governance				
1.11	International credibility of the School				
Chap.2	Students & Participants				
2.1	Quality of incoming students-first Degree				
	Quality of incoming students-post graduate degree				

		Overall Quality Evaluation			
		More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	NA
2.2	Quality of the student selection processes				
2.3	Quality of the admissions office				
2.4	Student placement				
2.5	Quality of the placement office				
2.6	Quality of the other support services (i.e. counseling etc.,)				
2.7	Alumni association				
2.8	Corporate involvement in recruitment and placement				
2.9	Internationalisation of the student body				
Chap.3	**Programme Quality**				
3.1	Coherence of the School's portfolio				
3.2	Programme design				
3.3.	Programme content and coverage				
3.4	Programme delivery				
3.5	Programme innovation				
3.6	Integration of new technologies				
3.7	Balance between the academic and the managerial dimensions				
3.8	Focus on learning				
3.9	Quality of the course material				
3.10	Programme monitoring, evaluation and review				
3.11	Student performance assessment regime				
3.12	Programme administration				
3.13	Responsiveness to corporate needs				
3.14	International content of the programmes				
Chap.4	**Personal Development**				
4.1	Focus on personal development				
4.2	Values and societal concerns				
4.3	Individualised learning support				
4.4	Project –based work, internships, action learning				
4.5	Managerial skills				
4.6	Skills for international management				
4.7	Opportunities for study abroad				
Chap.5	**Research, Development and Innovation (RDI)**				
5.1	Clear policy				
5.2	Distinctive expertise				

		Overall Quality Evaluation			
		More than Adequate	**Adequate**	**Less than Adequate**	**NA**
5.3	Quality of research output				
5.4	Sufficiency of time devoted to research				
5.5	Innovative development				
5.6	Relevance of RDI to companies				
5.7	International scope and recognition of RDI				
5.8	Contribution of RDI to teaching				
5.9	Contribution of RDI to faculty development				
5.10	Contribution of consultancy to faculty and programme development				
Chap.6	**Contribution to the Community**				
Chap.7	**Faculty**				
7.1	Adequacy in terms of size and profile				
7.2	Qualification				
7.3	Faculty management				
7.4	Faculty exposure to the corporate world				
7.5	Internationalisation of the Faculty				
7.6	Quality of faculty relative to international standards				
Chap.8	**Resources and Administration**				
8.1	Quality of the learning environment				
8.2	Library, data bases, computer access, etc.,				
8.3	Effectiveness of financial management				
8.4	Financial effectiveness and viability				
8.5	Quality of administrative system				
Chap.9	**Connections with the Corporate World**				
9.1	Clarity of policy				
9.2	Overall customer orientation of the School				
9.3	Adequacy of corporate links (local, national, international)				
9.4	Quality of corporate partners and clients				
9.5	Input from practitioners				
	Recapitulation of Corporate Connections Items from previous chapters				
9.6	Corporate involvement in governance (see 1.10)				
9.7	Corporate involvement in admissions and placement (see 2.8)				
9.8	Responsiveness to corporate needs (see 3.13)				
9.9	Relevance of RDI (see 5.6)				
9.10	Faculty exposure to the corporate world (see 7.4)				

		Overall Quality Evaluation			
		More than Adequate	Adequate	Less than Adequate	NA
Chap.10	**International Dimensions**				
10.1	Clarity of policy				
10.2	Quality of the School's international partners, alliances and exchanges				
10.3	Main international corporate partners				
10.4	Overall culture				
10.5	Governing body				
	Recapitulation of Corporate Connections Items from previous chapters				
10.6	International credibility of the School (see 1.11)				
10.7	Internationalisation of the student body (see 2.9)				
10.8	International content of the programmes (see 3.15)				
10.9	Skills for international management (see 4.6)				
10.10	Opportunities for study abroad (see 4.7)				
10.11	International scope and recognition of RDI (see 5.7)				
10.12	Internationalisation of the faculty (see 7.5)				
10.13	Quality of faculty up to international standards (see 7.6)				
Chap.11	**Executive Education**				
11.1	Integration of executive education into mission and strategy				
11.2	Coherence of the executive education portfolio				
11.3	Organisation and resources for executive education				
11.4	Quality of open programmes				
11.5	Quality of customised programmes				
11.6	Understanding of the adult earning process				
11.7	Management of the customer base. Quality of the client relationships				
11.8	Measurement of the impact of learning				
11.9	Faculty involvement in executive education				
11.10	Integration of RDI into executive education				
11.11	Marketing				
11.12	International executive programmes				

AMDISA

South Asian Quality Assurance System (SAQS)

Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA)

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