



FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

**ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS FOR
RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS**

ASSESSOR'S GUIDE



FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

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*Quality higher education for sustainable
development and a knowledge-based society*

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Purpose

The purpose of this Assessors Guide is to assist those who assess applications for recognition by higher education institutions by providing, for each expected *outcome*, a list of the outcome's components. These components can be demonstrated by an institution to show that it has met the relevant outcome.

Assessment Criteria

The process of determining the recognition or otherwise of an institution is based on a total of thirteen (13) assessment criteria which are outlined in paragraph 6.3 of the Policy on Recognition of Higher Education Institutions. They are as follows:

- Criteria 1: Legal status including the legality of agency arrangements
- Criteria 2: Ownership
- Criteria 3: History as an educational institution
- Criteria 4: Goals including vision and mission
- Criteria 5: Culture
- Criteria 6: Corporate governance
- Criteria 7: Organizational Structure
- Criteria 8: Academic governance
- Criteria 9: Quality Assurance
- Criteria 10: Finances
- Criteria 11: Management
- Criteria 12: Staffing
- Criteria 13: Students' tuition and grievances arrangements

Assessment Outcomes

Out of the above criteria, thirteen (13) outcomes were developed to act as *standards* against which institutions are to be assessed in relation to what they have with regard to what are considered to be significant features of their operation as higher education institutions. The outcomes are listed in the table on page 3. An institution is expected to be able to meet these outcomes to be given recognition.

Definitions:

- 1. *outcome* means an approved result or effect of an action or event
- 2. *standards* means approved examples against which others are measured

OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

**Attachment on student grievance policy and procedures
AR Ref. B.7 (b)**

Outcome No. 13: There are grievance procedures for students that ensure their protection when they complain about any aspect of the institution's operations.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

- 1. The institution has a policy on harassment which has provisions for complaints to be heard by a special committee and for the victim to be present/represented during hearings.
- 2. There are procedures for dealing with students' grievances which provide for grievances to be heard by a special committee and for the complainant not to be victimized in any way.

OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Subject: Students Tuition Arrangements AR Ref. B.7 (a)

Outcome No. 12: There are arrangements to protect students' interests in the case of the winding up of the institution and withdrawal from courses/programmes.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The institution is aware of the requirement in the Higher Education Promulgation 2008 regarding the winding up of institutions.
2. The institution has a policy on winding up that allows for the refund of fees owed to students, if any.
3. The institution has arrangements for the continuation of students' studies at other institutions should it close down.
4. The institution has arrangements for the provision of academic transcripts to enrolled students.
5. The institution has a policy on refund of fees that has provisions for fees to be refunded for withdrawal from a programme/course.

No.	Outcomes
1	The institution is legally recognized under a law of Fiji.
2	The historical background of the institution shows a reputation in the provision of quality education.
3	The vision, mission and goals of the institution reflect the national strategic development goals of Fiji and universal parameters for institutions of higher education.
4	The institution's focus is clearly articulated as being the delivery of quality higher education.
5	Documentation shows the institution's intention to comply with policies and procedures that promote teaching, research (if applicable), free intellectual inquiry, academic integrity and honesty.
6	The institution has a governing authority with oversight responsibilities of all the institution's activities.
7	The organizational structure of the institution is suitable for the purposes of the institution and for the provision of quality education
8	The institution has academic governance policies and arrangements.
9	The academic governance arrangements support the development and monitoring of academic standards.
10	The institution has the financial capacity to sustain quality higher education programs and courses.
11	The institution is appropriately staffed to enable it to achieve its goals.
12	There are arrangements to protect students' interests in the case of the winding up of the institution and withdrawal from courses/programmes.
13	There are grievances procedures for students that ensure their protection when they complain about any aspect of the institution's operations.



RECOGNITION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- In the processing of an application for recognition by an institution:**
1. Each assessor will receive an envelope containing the following:
 - an Assessment Report which will contain data and information that were submitted by the institution in its application form
 - Requested attachments from the institution
 - Optional evidence in support of application
 2. In Section B of the Assessment Report, the assessor will refer to seven (7) criteria and their relevant attachments. For the purposes of the assessment, the 13 criteria which are listed on page 2 were summarized giving rise to the 7 criteria.
 3. For every attachment and information submitted on a subject in the Assessment Report that requires the assessors' professional judgment, the relevant outcome has been identified. In the following pages of this Guide, one would find an outcome stated under its corresponding attachment or subject together with the outcome's components. The outcome's components are to guide the assessor in determining how well an institution has met that particular outcome.
 4. The outcomes and their corresponding attachments or subjects are presented in sequence and in the order that they appear in the Assessment Report.
 5. **Assessors are requested to consider the totality that is created by the components listed below an outcome and any other relevant information. The components should not be applied separately as checklists. Where an institution does not possess or demonstrate evidence of a particular outcome, the institution may demonstrate through other means that it meets the outcome.**
 6. The assessors will make their assessments in the spaces provided under each of the 13 outcomes in the Assessment Report and discuss their findings before making a joint recommendation on the recognition of an institution to the Higher Education Commission.
 6. The Assessment Report and the Attachments will be returned to the Commission for filing.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Subject:	Staffing	AR Ref. B6 (a)
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Outcome No. 11: The institution is appropriately staffed to enable it to achieve its goals.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The category or categories of staff available is/are consistent with the administrative needs of the institution.
2. The number of staff in each category is sufficient for the academic and administrative and management purposes of the institution.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Subject: Finance and Management AR Ref. B.5 (a) & (b)

Outcome No. 10: The institution has the financial capacity to sustain quality higher education programs and courses.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The institution has a budget that is approved by its governing body.
2. The institution has a bank account with funds at an appropriate level.
3. The institution has a record of its assets and investments which are available for viewing by stakeholders.
4. There are plans for financial development to support the institution's mission and educational programs which are accessible to stakeholders.
5. The financial accounts are audited by a chartered accountant.
6. The institution has a strategic plan.
7. The outputs of the strategic plan are aligned to the budget and financial capacity of the institution.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Attachment on Certificate of Registration AR Ref. B.1 (a)

Outcome No. 1: The institution is legally established under a law of Fiji.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The legal document indicating the legal status of the institution exists.
2. The legal document is a valid representation of how the institution is legally constituted.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Subject: History as an educational institution AR Ref. B.4 (a)

Outcome No. 2: The historical background of the institution shows a reputation in the provision of quality education.

Components:

An institution that has been in existence for some time is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. Through the students that it has trained, the institution has been able to meet the demand for skills and competencies in a specific or general area of service to the community and nation at large.
2. The qualifications offered by the institution are recognized either locally or internationally.
3. The institution has trained staff for the courses offered.
4. The institution's programs are regularly reviewed.
5. The institution has collaborated with other local or overseas institutions in promoting and enhancing the quality of its educational programs.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

**Subject: Academic Governance and Quality Assurance
AR Ref. B.4 (a)&**

Outcome No. 8: The institution has academic governance policies and arrangements.

Outcome No. 9: The academic governance arrangements support the development and monitoring of academic standards.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcomes:

1. There are provisions for departmental forums to be convened to deliberate on the assessment of teaching and learning.
2. There are provisions for the review and evaluation of courses and programmes and the vetting of examination papers at the departmental level.
3. The examination results and new courses and programmes are vetted by at least two forums prior to confirmation.
4. The institution has provisions for an academic board to be convened to deliberate on recommendations made in relation to examination results and introduction of new courses and programmes.
5. The institution has provisions for the systematic maintenance of academic records.
6. There are procedures for the provision of academic counseling to students.
7. The institution has procedures on practical attachments.
8. The institution has provisions for the maintenance of records of academic forum deliberations.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Attachment on Organizational Chart and explanation of relationships
AR Ref. B.3 (b)

Outcome No. 7: The organizational structure of the institution is suitable for the purposes of the institution and for the provision of quality education.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The organizational structure reflects the provision of administrative services in the areas of academic programs, finance, operations, students' services, research and planning, ICT and public relations.
2. The organizational structure places people or groups at appropriate levels to ensure adequate authority for implementation and effective line of reporting.
3. The stated relationships reflect governance through mutual understanding, respect and trust.
4. The relationships reflect a line of authority and accountability for policy development and decision making.
5. The key responsibilities of distinct positions are stated.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Attachment on Documentation on Vision, Mission and Goals
AR Ref. B.2 (a)

Outcome No. 3: The vision, mission and goals of the institution reflect the national strategic development goals of Fiji and universal parameters for institutions of higher education.

Outcome No. 4: The institution's focus is clearly articulated as being the delivery of quality higher education.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcomes:

1. The institution has a clearly stated vision that describes a future that is desirable for the institution and aligns with the government's vision for higher education.
The latter is interpreted as: "Quality higher education for growth and a knowledge-based society" which is based on Pillars 5 and 9 of *The Peoples' Charter for Change, Peace and Prosperity.*]
2. The mission and goals are clearly defined to guide decision-making, planning, resource allocation and curriculum development.
3. The mission and goals reflect a desire to develop, sustain and improve the delivery and quality of education and training.
4. Staff development is reflected in the goals of the institution.
5. The mission and goals reflect the pursuit of a lifelong learning approach to education and training.
6. The goals recognize the role of new technology in enhancing teaching and learning.
7. The mission and goals reflect recognition of universal parameters in higher education.
[Universal parameters include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; students' rights to organize themselves autonomously; links between higher education and research etc.]



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Attachment on Policies and Procedures on Academic Integrity and Honesty AR Ref. B.2 (b)

Outcome No. 5: Documentation shows the institution's intention to comply with policies and procedures that promote teaching, research (if applicable), free intellectual inquiry, academic integrity and honesty.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. There are requirements for admission/entry into programmes of study.
2. The institution has requirements on completion of courses and programmes of study.
3. There is a policy on plagiarism, which has provisions for students to present their cases and to be heard.
4. The institution has requirements for progression, within a programme of study, from one semester/term/block to another.
5. The institution has procedures for continual assessment and professional development of staff.
6. There is a policy on recount of examination marks/grades and the policy has provisions for refund of recount application fees.
7. The institution encourages research and free intellectual inquiry and has funding provisions for the purpose.
8. If the institution is a university, it conducts research in innovative and creative ways, that are recognized internationally and it has structures and funding for this purpose.



OUTCOMES COMPONENTS CHECK

Attachment on Information on governing body, financial sponsors, terms of reference and membership AR Ref. B.3 (a)

Outcome No. 6: The institution has a governing authority with oversight responsibility of all the institution's activities.

Components:

An institution is expected to have the following components of the above outcome:

1. The governing body has a Terms of Reference that:
 - (a) is consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.
 - (b) has procedures for appointment of new members.
 - (c) has procedures for dealing with conflict of interest.
2. The membership represents the necessary skills/experience to oversee the running of the institution.
3. The relationship between the governing body and the owners or financial sponsors is clearly articulated.