

Dear Students,

DEVELOPMENT, APPROVAL AND ACCREDITATION OF WOU PROGRAMMES

PREAMBLE

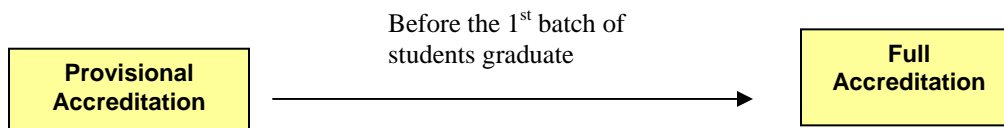
In response to the recent concern raised by a few students in the Student Portal Community Discussion Board concerning the recognition of WOU programmes by Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) or Public Services Department (PSD/JPA), WOU would like to allay the concern of all students by presenting a clear picture of the whole process development, approval and accreditation of any new academic programme in institutions of higher learning in Malaysia.

Students may have observed that only the CEMBA programme of WOU has been listed in the **Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR)** [www.mqa.gov.my]. This is simply because this list only records programmes and qualifications that have been awarded the **Full Accreditation** status. Likewise, only academic programmes that have gained full accreditation status will be listed under the **Public Services Department (PSD/JPA)** website.

For your information, all programmes and courses of WOU that students are currently pursuing have been approved by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and **provisionally accredited** by MQA. This information can readily be accessed from the MQA website (www.mqa.gov.my) under the “Online services: e-Semakan Program Pengajian” link located on the furthest right column of the MQA webpage.

PROVISIONAL AND FULL ACCREDITATION

According to standard procedure, all programmes that are **provisionally accredited** by MQA must seek **Full or Final Accreditation** in the semester prior to the graduation of the first batch of graduates as depicted in the diagram below.



The following 11 undergraduate degree programmes of WOU have been provisionally accredited by MQA and approved by MOHE in 2006.

1. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Computer Systems and Networks
2. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Computing and Intelligent Systems
3. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronic Commerce
4. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics
5. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Information and Communication Technology

6. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting
7. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Banking and Finance
8. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Business Information Systems
9. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Logistics and Supply Chain Management
10. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management
11. Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Sales and Marketing

As you are aware, WOU took in the first batch of students in January 2007. The University will be undertaking the Full Accreditation exercise some time in the second quarter of 2011 as it is anticipated that some of the first batch students will be graduating by end of January 2011 semester.

In Malaysia, all public or private higher educational institutions intending to offer any new programme must first submit the relevant documents to MQA to seek **Provisional Accreditation** of the programme following a defined protocol. For every new programme submitted to MQA for evaluation, a specific reference number will be provided eg. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics PA7214. This reference number will be tagged to the programme as long as the programme continues to exist. The Provisional Accreditation evaluation process focuses on the following nine areas:

1. Vision, mission, educational goals and learning outcomes;
2. Curriculum design and delivery;
3. Assessment of students;
4. Student selection and support services;
5. Academic staff;
6. Educational resources;
7. Programme monitoring and review;
8. Leadership, governance and administration; and
9. Continual quality improvement.

The purpose of Provisional Accreditation evaluation is to establish whether the minimum requirements to conduct the programme have been met by the educational institution. Special attention is paid to the curriculum design, quality criteria and standards. Once MQA has granted the Provisional Accreditation only then could the higher education provider (HEP) apply to MOHE seeking approval to conduct the programme.

Any programme conducted by HEP must first be approved by MOHE as stipulated in the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555). Once the programme has been approved by MOHE, the Ministry will then provide a reference code for the programme [eg. Bachelor of Technology (Hons) in Electronics KPT/JPS(KA/PA7214)7/11]. This code has to be displayed whenever the HEP is promoting or advertising the programme as evidence that it has been approved by MOHE. Only after having obtained the official approval from MOHE can the HEP begin to recruit students for the programme. Verification of the approval status can be made with Private Higher

Education Management Sector, MOHE at 03-88844786 or email to spipts@mohe.gov.my. The entire process of obtaining MOHE approval is summarised in the **Figure 1** below.

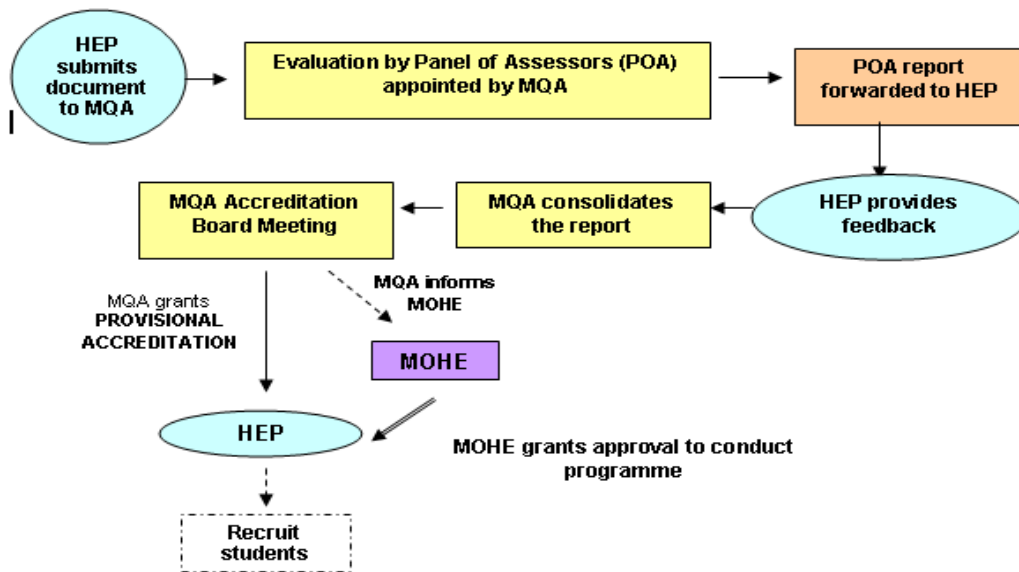


Figure 1 Programme approval process

INTERNAL PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY AT WOU

At WOU, **programme development** is governed by a rigorous protocol with strict adherence to an internal set code of practice for ensuring academic quality and standards. The internal quality assurance process involves several key stakeholders as illustrated in **Figure 2** below.

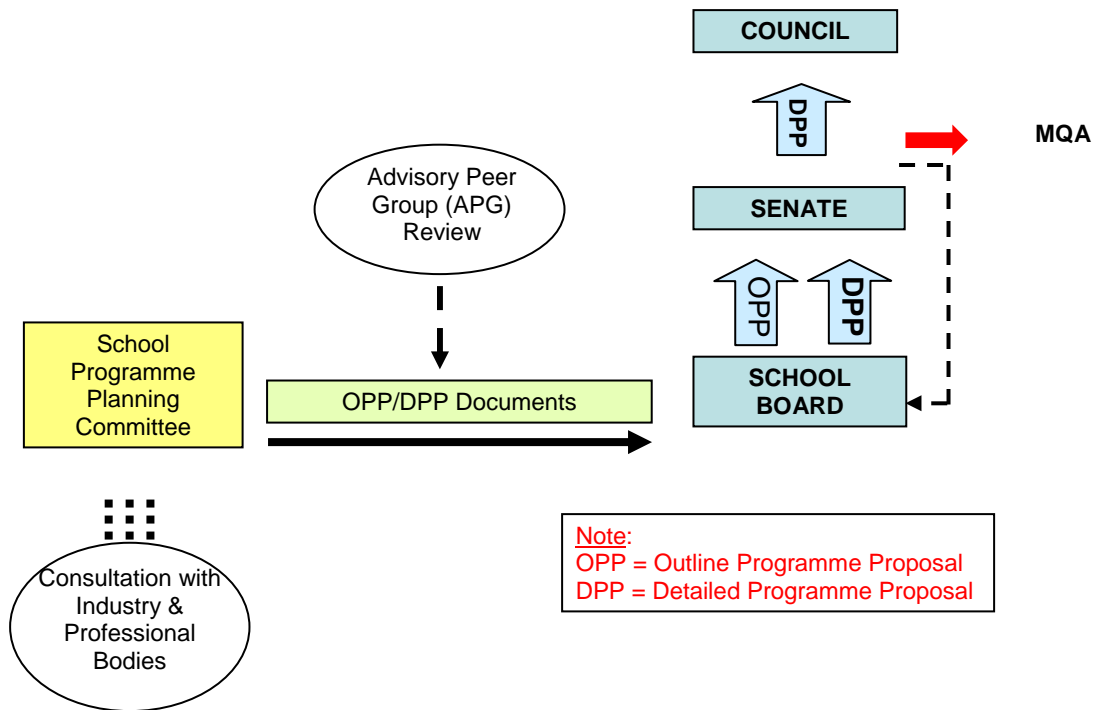


Figure 2 Internal programme development pathway at WOU

This internal process involves two distinct stages. Stage one begins with the School setting up a Programme Planning Committee (PPC) that comprises faculty members with appropriate expertise from within (and outside the School as appropriate). The PPC, in consultation with the Advisory Peer Group (APG) that consist of external members from academia and industry, develops the Outline Programme Proposal (OPP) for the new programme. The OPP contains the programme aims, objectives and learning outcomes, the proposed structure, the component course curricula, delivery systems and assessment strategies, market demands and provisions as well as resource implications. When completed, the OPP is tabled for endorsement by the School Board. After the School Board, the OPP is then presented to the Senate for endorsement.

Subsequently for stage two which takes place after Senate's approval, a Detailed Programme Proposal (DPP) fleshing out the detailed syllabus for each course, the course presentation schedule, the resource requirements and the budget proposals, etc., is prepared and taken through in succession to be endorsed and approved by the School Board, Senate and the University Council. After approval by the Council, the proposal is then submitted to MQA using a prescribed proforma.

CONCLUSION

WOU hopes the brief information presented above is adequate to provide an insight to the rigorous internal and external quality assurance for programme development, approval and accreditation. Last but not least, WOU is always committed to providing academically rich learning experience to students and maintaining high quality academic standards benchmarked against national and international best practices.