

# **FACT SHEET 14**

## **PREPARING FOR AN AUDIT**

## Introduction

The FHEC, under the legislation, is able to undertake registration audits (which include initial and renewal, and approval to provide education and training services for an FQF qualification), as well as periodic assessments and academic audits. Audits are scheduled according to the registration cycle of the HEI. Periodic assessments and academic audits can be scheduled at any time at the discretion of the FHEC. These audits may be instigated due to the level of the perceived risk of the HEI or the programme, or complaints.

As a cautionary note, preparing for an audit immediately before the audit is to happen is unlikely to affect the audit outcome significantly. The Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions is focused on the implementation of processes and outcomes; hence, it is on the learner cycle from application through to completion.

HEIs are encouraged to:

- Undertake regular self-assessment (A self-assessment template can be accessed at [www.fhec.org.fj](http://www.fhec.org.fj)).
- Ensure HEI practices and behaviours align with the processes documented in the HEI's quality management system.
- Ensure that staff of the HEI are familiar with the Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions, the Guide to the Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions, as well as FHEC fact sheets and directives. These can be accessed at [www.fhec.org.fj](http://www.fhec.org.fj).

## Notification

Prior to the audit, the HEI will be contacted by the FHEC. There is no requirement for notice; however, HEIs could expect approximately two weeks' notice<sup>1</sup>.

Initial contact may include a request for information, such as:

- Number of current or past learners in each programme.
- Programme plans.
- Financial information and evidence.

HEIs will be informed about:

- The specific Quality Standards to be reviewed.
- Qualifications to be audited.
- The number of days on-site of the auditors<sup>2</sup>.
- The number of auditors.
- The primary venue for the audit.

---

<sup>1</sup> HEIs seeking review of registration will be notified according to different timelines

<sup>2</sup> Auditors are those undertaking the audit.

The FHEC may also discuss particular logistics and will propose an agenda for the site visit.

### **Preparation**

Once the scope and extent of the audit are known, HEIs can then begin preparations.

Preparations could include:

- Undertaking an internal self-assessment, essentially for gathering and checking the evidence<sup>3</sup>.
- Organising evidence that the HEI believes will demonstrate compliance with the Quality Standards for Higher Education Institutions.
- Identification of people to participate in the audit, for specific Quality Standards.
- Scheduling senior leaders.
- Organising space for the auditors and interviews.
- Organising third parties (if relevant).
- Ensuring access to staff, learners, learner files, learner data, monitoring participation and academic progress data, electronic learner database (i.e., FEMIS, LMIS).

Notifying staff and learners of the impending audit is a useful exercise, to not only prepare them but to explain the purpose of the audit. This will mitigate any assumptions made by staff or learners, and also promote the focus on continuous improvement of education and training services.

### **On the day**

At the site visit, the HEI will need to:

- Set up meeting rooms, ensuring access to electricity for computers.
- Prepare for the opening meeting, which will require the HEI to provide an overview of the HEI, its history, current focus and future aspirations. This may require a series of PPTs to organise the information.
- Consider the comments of the auditors and be ready to prepare data and contact learners for an interview.
- Prepare for the closing meeting, in which the auditors will provide a general overview of strengths and areas of concern.

### **Understanding the role of the auditors**

HEIs need to be aware that the auditors are not there to consult or to provide advice. The role of the auditors is to:

---

<sup>3</sup> As part of the process for review of registration, HEIs are required to submit a formal self-assessment report.

- Review the evidence provided by the HEI. It is not up to the auditors to locate evidence; however, they will explore the evidence provided and ask questions.
- Consider the evidence and make a judgement of compliance against the Quality Standard.
- Prepare a report outlining the evidence and findings that support the judgement.

Auditors are not decision makers. The report is collated and reviewed by the Commission who then decide as to actions to be taken.

### **Following the site visit**

Following the site visit, it is important to provide participants in the audit, especially staff, the opportunity to de-brief and to consolidate any learnings from the visit. Consolidating any learnings will improve preparations for the next audit.

In addition, it would be timely to notify staff of the proposed timelines for receiving the report, and for preparing for any anticipated outcomes.

---

FACT SHEET 14, VERSION 1, 03/12/2019

FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

Level 1 Red Cross Building, 22 Gorrie Street, Suva

P: (679) 310-0031, E: [info@fhed.org.fj](mailto:info@fhed.org.fj)

<http://www.fhed.org.fj/index.php/en/>