

INQAAHE GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE (GGP)



EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT



Organization	Japan University Accreditation Association
Place	Tokyo, Japan
Date of the visit	Tuesday (8 November 2022) to Thursday (10 November 2022)

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INTRODUCTION

INQAAHE's GGP external evaluation process

The Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) had requested the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) for an external evaluation of its performance in accordance with the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP). To this end, JUAA carried out a self-assessment process and submitted the self-assessment report and a list of supporting evidence to INQAAHE on 1 July 2022.

The external evaluation of JUAA was conducted in accordance with the GGP, updated by INQAAHE in 2018 (Annex 1. Guidelines of Good Practice - GGP) and was carried out by an independent review panel of international experts in the areas of evaluation and quality assurance in higher education (Annex 2. Composition of the GGP Review Panel). The review panel was composed of the following:

- **Dr Rolf Heusser (Chair of the Review Panel):** Director of the Swiss Accreditation Agency (2001-2010). Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA, 2004-2014). Board Member of INQAAHE (2009-2010). International Higher Education & QA Expert. University of Zurich.
- **Dr Ariana De Vincenzi (Committee Secretary):** Member of the Council of Rectors of Private Universities of Argentina (CRUP). Academic Vice Rector of the Universidad Abierta Interamericana (UAI). International Higher Education & QA Expert.
- **Dr Eddy Chong Siong Choy (QA Expert):** Chief Technical Officer, Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA). Board Member of INQAAHE (2018-2020). Lead Assessor of ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance. International Higher Education & QA Expert.

The site visit was held for three days – Tuesday 8, Wednesday 9, and Thursday 10 November 2022. It featured an agenda that included a total of 15 interviews with JUAA's authorities and management staff, higher education institution representatives, peer evaluators, representatives of national and international organizations associated with JUAA, and authorities of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and

Technology (MEXT). Annex 3 shows the agenda of the site visit and the interview sessions conducted by the review panel. A final session was also held with JUAA's authorities, during which the review panel provided a summary of the main results of the external review process.

Based on the self-assessment document and the information gathered during the site visit, the review panel drafted the first version of the external review report, which was shared with JUAA for verification before being submitted to INQAAHE's Board of Directors for final approval.

About Japan's Higher Education System

In Japan, higher education institutions (HEIs) include universities, graduate schools, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and specialized training schools. According to MEXT's website, as of May 2021, the percentage of 18-year-old population students enrolling in HEIs exceeded 70% (universal access to higher education), in which private universities and junior colleges have played a major role. In 2021, the total number of universities and junior colleges was 803 and 315, respectively. There were 86 national, 98 public, and 619 private universities reported, as well as 14 public and 301 private junior colleges.

The establishment of universities and junior colleges, and graduate and undergraduate programs require approval from the MEXT Minister. Since 2002, as part of the School Education Act revision, HEIs and some professional training programs must undergo periodic assessments by an external quality assurance agency certified by the MEXT. The certified evaluation and accreditation system took effect in 2004 and considers institutional certified evaluation and accreditation for universities, junior colleges, and colleges of technology every seven years, as well as specialized certified evaluation and accreditation of professional and vocational universities and junior colleges and professional graduate schools every five years.

The institutional certified evaluation and accreditation process is undertaken by five accreditation agencies, including JUAA, and the specialized certified evaluation is carried out by 13 agencies, including JUAA. The HEIs are free to seek accreditation from any accreditation agency of their choice.

About the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)

JUAA is a voluntary and non-profit organization of universities founded in 1947 by 46 member institutions modeled after accreditation bodies in the United States with the mission to “*promote the qualitative improvement of higher education institutions in Japan through voluntary efforts and mutual assistance of member institutions to contribute to international cooperation, such as educational and research activities in higher education institutions.*”

In 1951, JUAA began accreditation activities based on the verification of membership eligibility, and in 1996, it undertook university accreditation based on self-assessments. In 2004, JUAA became the first certified evaluation and accreditation organization authorized by the MEXT Minister. Since 2012, JUAA has been an autonomous public interest incorporated foundation certified by the Prime Minister of Japan and financed solely through membership fees and accreditation fees. As of 2022, JUAA was made up of 313 universities that are full members, and 124 universities that are associate members: a total of 437 universities representing 54% of the universities in Japan. Additionally, eight junior colleges are registered as JUAA full members.

Over the last seven years (2015-2021), JUAA has conducted 321 institutional certified evaluations and accredited 292 universities and 17 junior colleges. Furthermore, JUAA undertook 52 specialized certified evaluation and accreditation of professional graduate schools in the fields of law (7), business (28), public policy (6), public health (4), intellectual property studies (1), global communication (2), digital contents (1), and public relations (1). In addition, JUAA has conducted non-certified evaluation processes in veterinary medicine at seven institutions.

JUAA has also engaged in international joint accreditation standards projects (iJAS) with the Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA) in 2018, which resulted in the accreditation of two universities to date, one from each country. With the addition of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) of Thailand in 2021, the iJAS project was expanded to operate as a three-country partnership.

The basis of JUAA's quality work is broad, as the agency has focused not only on evaluation and accreditation but also on research and international cooperation activities.

In 2018, JUAA established the Research Institute of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (RIQAHE) to conduct research projects, seminars, an annual conference, and an annual university accreditation effectiveness survey, and disseminate the results of its performance and publications on JUAA's website.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, JUAA requested INQAAHE to conduct an external review following the provisions of the GGP. The external review was carried out considering JUAA's self-assessment report, the information gathered in the interviews held during the site visit in November 2022, and the complementary information provided by the agency after the site visit.

The self-assessment report is a very well-written document with clear and complete information covering five years (2017-2021), and the responses provided to the different categories, criteria, and indicators of INQAAHE's GGP are exhaustive. During the site visit, the review panel was able to conduct the interviews and gather complementary information in a cordial and respectful work environment.

JUAA has established medium-term goals and action plans (2020-2024) in the areas of accreditation, research, internationalization, and corporate operations aligned with its mission and with monitoring mechanisms for the achievement of the formulated goals. Furthermore, JUAA has an internal quality assurance system for its processes and outcomes, and a database system to organize information.

The robust governance structure, the qualified staff, the transparency in the decision-making process, and the integrity of its quality assurance framework are all attributes recognized by the representatives of HEIs and the authorities of MEXT. Although there are formal instances to appeal decisions concerning the accreditation process and outcome before the final resolution, it is recommended that JUAA revise the governance structure and processes of the appeal body to ensure its independence.

Throughout the site visit, it was possible to verify that the certified evaluation and accreditation processes are conducted with rigor and respect for the academic autonomy of universities and HEIs. It is recommended that JUAA involves students and graduates in both the Standards Committee and the accreditation committees.

The extensive international activities promoted through agreements with agencies mainly from the Asian continent for the development of exchange activities, as well as its participation in the iJAS project through the joint accreditation of universities, demonstrates JUAA's interest in updating its quality assurance practices in accordance with international trends in higher education. JUAA does not include in its evaluation system any standards

to promote and evaluate transnational or cross-border education because it has no legal basis to do so. Nevertheless, with the development of cross-border education increasing rapidly in various forms in recent years, JUAA assumes the challenge to revise its evaluation criteria and procedures considering cross-border education quality assurance for the new accreditation cycle starting in 2025.

In summary, the site visit confirmed that JUAA's performance has a positive impact on enhancing the quality of higher education in Japan and that the agency has the values, qualities, and capacities for further improvements. From the evidence gathered in this external review, JUAA's alignment with the INQAAHE GGP is substantial. For this reason, the review panel recommends that the INQAAHE Board certifies the alignment of JUAA with the GGP.

ASSESSMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH INQAAHE GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE

I. The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

The EQAA is a recognized, credible organization, trusted by higher education institutions and the public. It has adequate mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest in the decisions it makes; its staff has the needed skills to carry out the functions associated with external QA. The EQAA has the needed resources to carry out its mission.

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Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

1.1 Legitimacy and recognition

JUAA is an autonomous member-based organization founded in 1947 and was granted the status of a public interest incorporated foundation in 2012 by the Prime Minister of Japan.

In 2004, the MEXT Minister recognized JUAA as the first certified evaluation and accreditation agency for universities, and later it acquired the status of a certified evaluation and accreditation agency for junior colleges and graduate schools.

JUAA set one objective in its Articles of Incorporation that demonstrates its interest in aligning with guidelines designed by international associations when formulating policies and practices: “*contribute to international cooperation, such as educational and research activities in HEIs.*” In this connection, JUAA conducts different research projects to monitor international trends in the development of activities of quality assurance agencies from different countries, including the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Australia. Furthermore, in its Self-Assessment Report (page 14), it states that, “*before launching cycle two of its certified evaluation and accreditation, JUAA*

consulted the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) to develop an accreditation system that emphasizes IQA.”

During the interview, JUAA’s President mentioned that the evaluation of JUAA’s alignment with INQAAHE GGP is an opportunity for the agency to *“promote JUAA’s international acceptance and visibility and strengthen the relationship with INQAAHE’s quality assurance agency members.”*

To prevent conflicts of interest, JUAA has adopted and published on its website the *Regulations on the Fair Implementation of Third-Party Evaluation*, a document that defines the requirements for external reviewers, staff, and parties related to the institution under review. It also prohibits any related party to the institution from offering cash or gifts to the accreditation evaluators or JUAA’s staff. *The Guidelines for Maintaining Ethical Conduct and Confidentiality for Evaluators and Institutions* summarize the key points of the Third-Party Evaluation to prevent conflicts of interest that apply to evaluators, staff, and its decision-making body.

1.2 Mission and objectives

JUAA’s mission and objectives are stated in the Articles of Incorporation, namely, *“to conduct research on universities in Japan and abroad, improve the quality of Japanese universities, and contribute to the advancement of international cooperation in university education and research activities through voluntary efforts and mutual support of its members.”*

To accomplish this mission, JUAA has adopted the following objectives that are mentioned in the self-assessment report (2021:17-18):

- 1- Undertakes third-party evaluation of universities’ education and research activities;*
- 2- Develops, updates, and utilizes the university standards and other tools designed to contribute to quality enhancement of universities;*
- 3- Collects information and undertakes surveys and research on universities in Japan and abroad;*
- 4- Provides guidance, assistance, and information to universities for improvement of education and research activities;*

- 5- *Organizes seminars, conferences, and other events aimed at quality improvement of universities;*
- 6- *Engages and cooperates in the international exchange of information on education and research activities of universities;*
- 7- *Publishes resources on education and research activities of universities.*

1.3 Governance and organizational structure

JUAA's organizational structure consists of the Board of Councilors, the Board of Trustees, the Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, several Committees, and sub-committees that are part of the decision-making bodies, and the Secretariat.

Based on its Articles of Incorporation, the Board of Councilors is the highest decision-making body responsible for appointing and removing the members of the Board of Trustees and the Auditors, establishing the Articles of Incorporation, ensuring the autonomy of JUAA's operations according to the law and regulations, approving the balance sheet and the profit-and-loss statement, and making decisions regarding long term debts, and the acquisition and disposal of important assets. The minimum number of councilors is 15, and the maximum is 30. The Board of Councilors currently comprises 30 members, with 27 representatives of universities (mostly presidents), one accountant, one business owner, and one high school principal. The Councilors are selected and appointed by the Councilor Selection Committee from a field of candidates nominated by the Board of Trustees and the Board of Councilors. To select the candidates from university representatives, the following eligibility criteria are considered: university size and type, geographic location, and gender balance. The Councilors serve four-year terms.

The Board of Trustees makes decisions on the execution of JUAA's activities based on an annual plan and budget, appoints the President of JUAA, participates in board meetings convened by the president, and proposes the meeting agenda, selects Committee members, and reports on the work agenda. The minimum number of trustees is 15, and the maximum is 30. Currently, there are 28 representatives of Japan's leading universities (mainly presidents). The Board comprises a President, two Vice-Presidents, one Senior Managing Director, and four Managing Trustees to form the Board of Managing Trustees.

Two auditors monitor that the activities in the public interest are carried out as expected and scrutinize the performance of the duties of the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees develops its accreditation activities through Accreditation Committees and sub-committees composed mainly of university stakeholders. Each Committee has 20 members: 10 members selected from the candidates nominated by full-member universities, five members named by the Board of Trustees, and five members who are external experts, including representatives from high schools and the industry. The decision-making bodies do not include students, and this is an area for improvement that JUAA has assumed: *“It has come to JUAA’s attention that it lacks a mechanism to allow direct involvement of students as university stakeholders. Going forward, JUAA will need to consider building a process that reflects student perspectives in developing its standards and accreditation system”* (Self-Assessment Report, 2021:23.).

In the interviews during the site visit with university and college authorities, it was observed that JUAA is recognized as an efficient and rigorous agency. Some testimonies are transcribed: *“JUAA promotes the development of an internal quality assurance system in the university;” “JUAA’s standards are realistic and more flexible than those of other agencies;” “A comprehensive understanding of what is necessary to improve is met after an external evaluation carried out by JUAA.”* Moreover, in an interview with the MEXT, Ministry authorities declared that: *“JUAA has been highly evaluated and the government has used JUAA’s framework in order to enhance the quality of higher education”*.

In addition, JUAA is a member of the INQAAHE, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation’s (CHEA) International Quality Group (CIQG), a testament to its international and regional recognition.

JUAA’s daily activities are performed by full-time staff integrated into the Secretariat, which is led by an Executive Director and is made up of three Departments: The Accreditation Department, the Evaluation Research Department, and the General Affairs Department, which are divided into six divisions. The Departments are led by Directors, while the divisions are led by Associate Directors who are assisted by Assistant Directors.

It can be concluded that the composition of the decision-making body and its regulatory framework ensure independence and impartiality in the decision-making process and that the organizational structure promotes an effective and efficient space for debate and decision-making, as evidenced in the interviews with HEI authorities.

The EQAA has a strategic plan that helps assess its progress and plan for future developments. JUAA conducted a self-assessment exercise in 2018, and the Self-Assessment Report published on 27 September 2019 emphasized the importance of formulating and implementing its goals and strategies with a medium-term vision for each of its activities to enhance the quality of Japan's universities. Consequential to the self-assessment exercise, JUAA has established medium-term (2020-2024) goals and action plans in the areas of accreditation, research, internationalization, and corporate operations. A monthly operational status report on the areas outlined above is prepared under the directions of the Vice-Presidents and Managing Trustees of the Board of Managing Trustees. A duty status report is prepared every six months, while financial statements are produced yearly.

1.4 Resources

JUAA has a Secretariat comprised of an Executive Director and three Directors in charge of the Accreditation Department, the Evaluation Research Department, and the General Affairs Department. Each Department has two divisions, which are led by Associate Directors.

As of November 2022, the Secretariat has 29 full-time positions: one Executive Director, one Deputy Managing Director, two Directors, five Associate Directors, four Assistant Directors and sixteen staff. Considering the 16 full-time staff, 11 of them are in the Accreditation Department, two in the Evaluation Research Department, and three in the General Affairs Department.

Furthermore, the Secretariat also uses temporary and contract staff as well and promotes internships to manage the different activities carried out in the departments. As of November 2022 (revised in January 2023 by JUAA), the breakdown of staff per department is as follows:

Table 1: Secretariat Staff per Department, November 2022

Department	Full-time staff (includes directors)	Contract staff	Temporary staff	Interns	Total
Accreditation	16 ^{*1}	1	7	4	28
Evaluation Research	5	3	-	-	8
General Affairs	7	2	-	-	9
Total	28 ²	6	7	4	45

Source: Data provided by JUAA in January 2023.

The largest number of staff works in the Accreditation Department, consistent with JUAA's main activity, i.e., institutional and program accreditation. Considering that JUAA has conducted an annual average of 46 institutional accreditations between 2015 and 2021 (Self-Assessment Report, 2021, Table 1) and 10 annual accreditations in specialized fields (Self-Assessment Report, 2021, Table 2), the Accreditation Department is adequately staffed. However, in interviews with the Secretariat staff, it was mentioned that full-time staff is not sufficient to manage the number of accreditation processes that are expected for the fourth cycle of accreditation starting in 2025.

Regarding staff training, both in the interviews held and in the 2020-2024 medium-term plan forecasts, the need is acknowledged to provide training in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and in the development of skills to improve staff performance in accreditation processes.

During the site visit, the panel was able to evaluate the quality of the facilities of JUAA's own building, with natural ventilation and lighting, and working spaces equipped with information technology (IT) resources that can be taken home by staff for work-from-home purposes. The building includes a library with books and journals on higher education and valuable archival materials on Japan's university reform during and after the postwar reform period.

¹ The Deputy Managing Director serves as the Director of the Accreditation Department, for that reason, that position is counted as part of the Accreditation department

² A total of 29 full-time employees, including the Executive Director

In interviews with JUAA's authorities and staff, an area for improvement was identified: the development and implementation of a decision analytics system that contributes to the improvement of processes and results.

JUAA's financial resources are derived from full-membership fees that are annually collected and classified into ten grades according to the institution's student capacity, support- membership fees, and the accreditation fees.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the robustness of its management structure, which ensures the engagement and participatory deliberation of different organizational levels in decision-making, as well as the effectiveness of its processes to drive the improvement of the quality of HEIs.
2. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the high degree of satisfaction noted among the different representatives of HEIs interviewed during the site visit regarding the impact of the evaluation and accreditation processes on the improvement of the quality of the institutions. JUAA is also highly regarded by the MEXT, as well as its international and national partners.
3. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the creation of a Research Institute for Quality Assurance of Higher Education that strengthens its primary purpose of contributing to the continuous improvement of the quality of HEIs.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that JUAA increase the full-time staff in the Accreditation Department. This is considering that in its 2020-2024 medium-term plan, it expects an increase in applications from universities and colleges for the fourth cycle of accreditation starting in 2025.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA include students and graduates in its decision-making bodies and increase the presence of industry representatives.
2. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA develop job-based training activities to promote quality assurance knowledge and skills for its Secretariat staff.

3. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA develop and implement a decision analytics system that takes advantage of the information available in its database and contributes to improving the efficiency of its processes and results.

Conclusion of the review panel

The review panel determines that JUAA is overall **substantially compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with section 1: The Structure of the Quality Assurance Agency.

II. Accountability of the EQAA

The EQAA has in place policies and mechanisms for its internal quality assurance, which demonstrate a continuing effort to improve the quality and integrity of its activities, its response to the changes to the context in which it operates and its links to the international community of QA.

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Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

2.1 Agency's Quality Assurance

JUAA operates with transparency, integrity, and professionalism, and adheres to ethical and professional standards as mentioned in Section 1. A good practice of JUAA is the annual publication of a summary of the results of all accreditation processes carried out by the association, and an individual report of the results of the accreditation of each institution, mentioning its strengths, suggestions for improvement, and, potentially, any area of serious concern.

Every five years, JUAA carries out a performance self-assessment in accordance with its objectives, the effectiveness of its activities, and the ability to respond to changes in higher education. In the past 20 years, JUAA has conducted two self-assessments, one in 2014 and another in 2019, followed by two processes of external review.

The self-assessments are conducted by the Self-Assessment Committee, which, since 2021, has been upgraded as a Standing Committee to monitor the achievements of JUAA's action plan every fiscal year. The Self-Assessment Committee consists of one managing trustee, one current or previous Standards Committee member, one current or previous member of the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Committee, one current or previous member of the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Committee for Professional Graduate Schools, and one external expert.

The results of the self-assessment process are compiled into a report and serve as input for the external review carried out by the External Review Committee. Its members are appointed by the Board of Trustees and include one to three members from Japanese universities, one to three members of other accreditation bodies, and a few external experts.

In January 2022, JUAA built an internal quality assurance (IQA) system whose purposes, structure and procedures are defined in the Regulation on Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). One of the key drivers for JUAA to create the IQA system is to link the results of the self-assessment and the external review with the improvements and reforms to be considered in the medium-term goals and plans.

From 2018, it is mandatory that all accreditation agencies conduct a self-assessment process and publish the result (Ordinance on Details in Applying the Standards Established in Article 110 (2) of the School Education Act). JUAA publishes the self-assessment reports and the results of its external review on its website.

2.2. Links with the Quality Assurance Community

Aligned with JUAA's mission, three targets have been set as its medium-term goals (2020-2024):

- a) *Carry out activities to enhance the international compatibility of JUAA's accreditation and ensure its international credibility.*
- b) *Engage in activities to promote collaboration with overseas accreditation agencies.*
- c) *Disseminate information on JUAA's activities to increase its international recognition and gather the latest accreditation information by participating in international conferences and other events.*

To achieve its targets, JUAA has joined several international networks of quality assurance agencies, including INQAAHE, APQN, and CHEA-CIQG, and became a supporting member of the Association of Asia-Pacific Business Schools (AAPBS) to participate in their events. JUAA has also signed memorandums of understanding with eight agencies of Asian countries and with the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) from Belgium to exchange information on the trends of the higher education system and quality assurance.

As for the connection with Asian agencies, JUAA has taken part in reciprocal visits and training activities with the following entities: the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation (MNCEA), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC), and the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment of Thailand (ONESQA). In addition, JUAA

has signed a trilateral agreement with TWAEA and ONESQA to conduct the joint accreditation of universities, aiming to become internationalized, manage international students' surveys, and organize international staff exchange programs.

In an interview with members of the Japan Network of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies, the review panel confirmed the existence of a space for the exchange of good practices between the national agencies certified by the MEXT Minister. In addition, JUAA has recently launched a website to disseminate good practices of the accredited universities, and the reports are translated into English to increase its international recognition.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the publication of the results of university and college accreditation processes on its website, both in Japanese and in English.
2. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the implementation of an IQA system linking the results of self-assessment and external review reports conducted every five years, with the improvements to introduce in JUAA's medium-term goals and plans.
3. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the critical and proactive self-assessment report produced for the certification of the Agency's compliance with INQAAHE GGP.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that JUAA continue with external evaluations conducted by international associations or networks, such as INQAAHE, rather than an External Review Committee appointed by the Board of Trustees.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that JUAA is **fully compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 2: Accountability of the EQAA.

III. The Agency’s Framework for the External Review of Quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The main concern of the EQAA is the promotion of quality education and student achievement. In doing this, it recognizes that quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and supports this principle in its criteria and procedures. These promote internal quality assurance (IQA) and provide higher education institutions with clear guidance on the requirements for self-assessment and external review.

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Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

3.1. Relations between the agency and the HEIs

JUAA recognizes that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of HEIs, by focusing on the evaluation of the internal quality assurance system of the institution. As mentioned in JUAA’s Self-Assessment Report (2021: 59), “*Standard 2. Internal Quality Assurance requires the universities to set out their policies and procedures for IQA and to establish systems linked to improving and enhancing their quality through such evaluations and internal and external reviews. The University Standards stipulates that universities must operate their IQA systems and carry out activities to assure their educational quality, thereby enhancing student learning outcomes.*”

As stipulated by the School Education Act, a cycle of accreditation is implemented every seven years for the Institutional Certified Evaluation and Accreditation, and every five years for the Certified Accreditation and Evaluation of Professional Graduate Schools. Since the third cycle of certified accreditation in 2018, JUAA defined the following five characteristics for the institutional accreditation in its *University Accreditation Handbook (2018-2024)*:

1. Evaluation focusing on the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the institution.

2. Evaluation with emphasis on self-improvement, as a result of a self-study in accordance with the standards.
3. Evaluation emphasizing initiatives for the achievement of the institution's mission and purpose.
4. Evaluation supporting continuous improvement and enhancement, and
5. Evaluation emphasizing peer review.

Thus, it is noted that JUAA not only places the responsibility for quality assurance in the institution but also respects the diversity of projects and institutional identities by taking a fit-for-purpose approach.

The members of JUAA's Standards Committee and the evaluators interviewed during the site visit agreed that it is necessary to improve the effectiveness of the IQA systems of the institutions. On the other hand, the HEI authorities interviewed highlighted the inclusion of the IQA standard starting with the second cycle of accreditations and recognized the importance of consolidating the implementation of the institutional IQA system. In its medium-term plan (2020-2024), JUAA foresees that the Standards Committee, the University Committee, and the Junior College Committee examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutional IQA system, and based on the results, establish improvements for the fourth-cycle accreditation.

JUAA implements different mechanisms to prevent accreditation processes from being an excessive workload:

- Prepares a briefing session for the institutions on the outline preparation of the accreditation one year before filling out the application procedures.
- Prescribes the format for self-study report and uniform data collection.
- Defines the type of evidence required for submission in line with the standards.
- Requires supporting evidence in digital formats.
- Requires one year to complete the accreditation processes.
- Defines reasonable accreditation fees compared with the accreditation fees charged by other accreditation agencies (comparisons of accreditation fees are available in Table 19 of JUAA's self-assessment report).

Despite the measures, in interviews held with representatives from junior colleges and from program accreditations, a lack of clarity was mentioned regarding the documents to

be included by the institutions as evidence of compliance with the standards, in addition to the need to shorten the accreditation process.

3.2. The definition of criteria for external evaluation

JUAA has established different sets of standards for each type of accreditation: standards for universities, standards for junior colleges, standards for nine professional graduate schools (law, business, public policy, public health, intellectual property studies, global communications, digital contents, global legal studies, and public relations), and standards for two specialized fields (veterinary and dental education).

The institutional certified evaluation and accreditation stipulate ten standards and their rationale: mission and purpose; internal quality assurance; education and research organizations; educational program and learning outcomes; student enrollment; faculty and faculty organization; student support; education and research environment; social cooperation and contribution; university management and finance. JUAA published the standards on its website, together with a document called “*Evaluation items, perspectives and considerations for universities accreditation*,” which is a practical guide with questions for institutions to conduct their self-assessment process considering the items comprised in each standard.

The certified evaluation and accreditation for professional graduate schools stipulate four standards. It is noteworthy that, within the framework of the periodic review of the standards, JUAA identified in 2019 that there was an overlap between the standards for institutional accreditation and those required for the accreditation of professional graduate schools. In particular, the overlap occurred in the standards referring to student support and education and research environment. Therefore, considering that professional graduate schools are required to undergo institutional certified evaluation and accreditation, JUAA focused the standards only on the educational program. The standards are mission and purpose, education outcomes and students, faculty and faculty organization, and professional graduate school management and improvement.

JUAA is committed to reviewing the standards prior to the start of a new accreditation cycle. For that purpose, it implements consultation mechanisms with different types of institutions. In interviews with representatives of universities, colleges, and professional graduate schools, it was mentioned that their participation in the definition of standards occurs through surveys. It is worth going back to what was already mentioned in Section 1 regarding the absence of participation of students and graduates in the definition of standards; this constitutes an aspect for improvement that JUAA has undertaken for the fourth cycle of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation starting in 2025.

Regarding online education, JUAA's Self-Assessment Report (2022: 71) states: "*JUAA does not generally regard online and distance education as special educational methods and evaluates these approaches as part of the educational methods adopted by universities based on their diploma and curriculum policies to realize their missions and purposes (...)*". Also, a survey was conducted by JUAA'S RIQAHE to analyze the experiences and challenges of online education introduced by universities after the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the survey, as well as future trends based on the examples of other countries are inputs for JUAA "*...to consider regarding the implementation and evaluation of online education*". This challenge was also mentioned by the authorities of the Board of Trustees in the interview held during the site visit.

3.3. The external evaluation process

All JUAA accreditation processes involve the preparation of a self-assessment report against the prescribed standards, document analysis, site visit, and the publication of the external review report on JUAA's website (previously, a draft report is produced that is sent to the university to respond in case of identifying errors or inconsistencies). JUAA also includes mechanisms for follow-up of suggestions for improvement and areas of serious concerns resulting from the external review. The universities can present a progress report to be reviewed by the Accreditation Committee and can request a follow-up review between the year following accreditation and the year before the next accreditation cycle.

In addition to the information provided in the *University Accreditation Handbook* and other supporting documents available on JUAA's website, HEIs are also given a detailed explanation of the accreditation process during briefing sessions.

The external review process is carried out by Accreditation Committees that consist mainly of faculty members recommended by their universities and are selected by the Board of Trustees. The committees also include external experts to reflect the needs of the industry, such as corporate executives and media representatives. The Accreditation Committee has the authority to set up sub-committees in charge of document analysis and site visits that, in principle, consist of university faculty and staff. External experts can only participate in the sub-committees as observers, which prevents them from holding exchanges with the representatives of the institutions, this being an aspect that JUAA intends to improve. The representatives of the universities interviewed during the site visit mentioned that it is important that external experts are involved in the accreditation process beyond the instance of report production.

For their part, students and graduates do not participate in the accreditation process, except when the evaluators interview them during the site visit.

JUAA has established the nomination requirements for candidates of institutional and professional graduate schools' accreditation committees and sub-committees. All the evaluators are supported by training in accordance with the "*University Accreditation Regulations: Detailed Rules on the Qualifications and Nomination of Subcommittee Members Candidates.*" This is in addition to JUAA's annual symposium and comprehensive seminar sessions. JUAA has also produced an *Evaluator Manual* for the institutional certified evaluation and accreditation to contribute to the understanding of the evaluation criteria from the evaluator's point of view. The evaluators interviewed during the site visit mentioned that the training provided by JUAA is effective, a perception consistent with the result of the surveys administered by JUAA to the evaluators at the end of each fiscal year.

3.4. The requirements for self-evaluation

JUAA requires universities and junior colleges to establish and operate an IQA system and link the results of self-studies to clarify the direction of the institutions. Furthermore, particular attention is given to monitoring learning outcomes presented in the diploma policy of each HEI.

JUAA has provided HEIs with clear guidance on the preparation for external reviews. In addition to accreditation handbooks and the information posted on JUAA's website, on-site

consultations, briefing sessions, and videos are also made available. JUAA has also disseminated good practices from universities accredited.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the support it offers to HEIs to build an internal quality assurance system and the respect for the identity and integrity of the institutions.
2. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for its commitment to review its standards before each accreditation cycle, considering the opinion of various stakeholders.
3. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the diversity of materials provided to the universities to prepare the self-study report, especially the briefings where good practices from accredited universities are shared.
4. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for the systematic training of external experts and members of sub-committees in charge of accreditation processes.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that JUAA strengthen the support mechanisms for HEIs so that they manage the institutional and program accreditation processes without perceiving them as a work overload.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA systematize mechanisms to involve students, graduates, and industry representatives in the revision of the standards for the fourth cycle of institutional certified evaluation and accreditation starting in 2025, and to involve these stakeholders in the evaluation and accreditation processes.
2. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA develops standards and criteria to implement the evaluation of online education as a specific mode of education, considering that many universities have introduced online education after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion of the review panel

The review panel concludes that JUAA is **substantially compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 3: the Agency's Framework for the External Review of Quality in Higher Education Institutions HEIs

IV. The EQAA and its relationship with the Public

The EQAA makes public its policies and decisions about institutions and programs, discloses the decisions about its own performance and disseminates reports on outcomes of QA processes.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

4.1. Public reports on quality assurance policies and their decisions

JUAA provides disclosure of its documentation through the website and other means. Handbooks are available for each type of accreditation, including the description of the procedures, standards, regulations, and other relevant materials.

In addition to the evaluation results in Japanese, as required by the School Education Act, JUAA also publishes a summary in English on its website.

There are mechanisms in place to provide the public with a fair understanding of the evaluation decisions made. In 2021, JUAA launched a webpage that enables users to search for commendations, distinctive features, keywords, and comments from evaluated universities. The webpage tags the good practices to publicize the excellent points and successful achievements of the institutions.

4.2. Other public reports

JUAA publishes the self-assessment report and the external review results on its website. It is noted that these documents are not easily accessible through the free navigation of the site.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for its transparency in making numerous reports and substantial information available on its website.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that JUAA improve the visibility of the Agency's self-assessment and external review reports published on its website, to further strengthen its transparency and social responsibility.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review panel concludes that JUAA is **fully compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 4: The EQAA and its relationship to the public.

V. Decision-Making

The EQAA has policies and procedures in place that ensure a fair and independent decision-making process in the final review of the institution or the program. It provides effective procedures to deal with appeals and complaints.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

5.1. The decision-making process

JUAA's decisions take into consideration the outcomes of the self-assessment report and supporting evidence provided by the institutions, and all the information obtained during the site visit. The evaluation decisions are based on JUAA's published standards and procedures.

After the evaluation process, JUAA conducts a survey of the evaluated institutions on the effectiveness of the accreditation. According to the survey results, more than 90% of the respondents described the evaluation procedures as appropriate or mostly appropriate (Self-Assessment Report, 2021:106). The representatives of different HEIs interviewed during the site visit expressed a high degree of acceptance and recognition of the transparency and clarity with which JUAA conducts the evaluation and accreditation processes.

As mentioned in the introduction, HEIs are free to seek accreditation from any accreditation agency of their choice. In this sense, it is common for some universities to submit the results of reviews conducted by other accreditation agencies as evidence, but JUAA regards them as one of the many evidence materials provided.

5.2. The agency's process for appeals and grievances

JUAA defines the appeal procedure in its *Regulation on Review of Appeals against Accreditation Results*, which is available on its website.

The institutions denied accreditation can file an appeal to overturn the decision based on factual errors. An Appeals Committee conducts reviews considering the documents provided by the institution and may solicit opinions from the appealing institution, the external experts, and even conduct onsite inspections. After completing the review, the Committee sends the result to the Board of Trustees for the final decision. JUAA notifies the institution and the MEXT of the final decision.

The Appeals Committee consists of five members: two university officials and three experts who do not belong to universities, elected by the Board of Trustees. To ensure transparency, the list of Appeals Committee members is published on JUAA's website.

This Committee is different from the committee responsible for accreditation, and both are under JUAA's Board of Trustees.

JUAA acknowledges two challenges with the appeals, one of which is to add the appointment of legal professionals to its regulations, and the other one regarding the independence of the Appeals Committee's decisions in terms of the possible influence from the Board of Trustees.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** JUAA for its strictness and consistency in its evaluation procedures, evidenced in the self-assessment report and in the interviews held during the site visit.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA revise the regulation for appeals, preventing the decisions of the Board of Trustees from affecting the composition of the Appeals Committee and therefore the resulting outcomes.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that JUAA is **substantially compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 5: Decision making.

VI. The QA of Cross-Border Higher Education

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies take into account the characteristics of the providers and the receivers, and refer to all types of transnational higher education.

■	□	□	□
Not-applicable	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

6.1 Criteria for cross-border education

According to the Self-Assessment Report (2021:115), no Japanese universities have opened overseas schools and Japanese campuses of overseas universities “are designed under MEXT’s jurisdiction, which means that quality agencies cannot engage in quality assurance activities for them. For these reasons, JUAA currently has no framework for transnational education.” However, “JUAA will strive to improve its evaluation system, including evaluation standards as needed, in light of the future overseas development of Japanese universities”.

6.2 Collaboration between agencies

This standard does not apply to JUAA in terms of cooperation with local agencies in importing and exporting education, for the reasons mentioned above. However, JUAA collaborates with other agencies to improve mutual understanding of higher education environments. In 2018, JUAA launched an iJAS project to contribute to the internationalization of universities through joint accreditation. The agreement signed between JUAA and TWAEA (Taiwan) involved a mutual understanding to develop an international framework with a fit-for-purpose approach. In 2019, iJAS issued its accreditation to two universities, Akita International University from Japan, and Chia Nan University of Pharmacy and Science from Taiwan. In 2021, ONESQA (Thailand) joined the project, and a three-party accreditation is expected in cooperation with universities in Thailand.

Recommendations:

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that JUAA includes standards for cross border education in its evaluation system to promote the quality of higher education at the transnational level.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that section 6: The QA of cross border higher education of the Guidelines of Good Practice is **not applicable** to JUAA's evaluation.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE REVIEW PANEL

JUAA is a robust quality assurance agency recognized by the MEXT Minister, with a consolidated governance structure and a well-regulated working process. It has a clear and published quality assurance framework, and its staff is qualified and committed to achieving its goals and action plans. JUAA has the challenge to continue with the training of its staff, and a job-based training program is recommended.

JUAA's operations are aligned with the national regulations and the cultural contexts of the country, and at the same time, the agency is fulfilling international best standards. There is evidence of alignment between JUAA's mission and its actions. The basis of JUAA's work is not only focused on evaluation and accreditation processes but also takes into consideration other relevant topics of higher education, such as research, international cooperation, and social commitments. JUAA has the challenge to continue improving the mechanisms to increase the visibility of its activities and the interest of the public in the results of its accreditation processes.

To fulfill the purpose of improving the quality of Japanese universities, JUAA assumes a fit-for-purpose approach and encourages HEIs to establish an IQA system. In this regard, the Agency recognizes and respects the heterogeneity in the higher education system of Japan and is flexible regarding new trends in higher education. JUAA reviews its standards in line with each accreditation cycle and solicits the opinion of different stakeholders, while assuming the challenge to involve students in the next accreditation cycle starting in 2025. Also, it is important to increase the participation of representatives from the industry during the whole evaluation and accreditation process.

The transparency, integrity, and professionalism of the Agency in its operations are noteworthy. Nevertheless, JUAA must revise the independence of the Appeals Committee from the decisions of its Board of Trustees.

There is enough evidence in the self-assessment report and in the information gathered during the site visit regarding the respectful relationship between JUAA and the HEIs, and

between JUAA and other national and international partnerships. JUAA collaborates with other international agencies in MOU-based activities, joint staff training, and joint accreditation projects.

Finally, there are two aspects to remark on about the review process: the hospitality and the respectful work environment throughout the three days of the site visit and the clear, complete, and well-written self-assessment report.

From the evidence gathered in this evaluation, it emerges that its compliance with the INQAAHE 2018 Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP) is substantial (see the summary table below); therefore, the Review Panel recommends to the INQAAHE Board of Directors to certify JUAA's compliance with the GGP.

Summary Table: Assessment of Compliance with INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)				
GGP Sections	Not Compliant	Partially Compliant	Substitutional Compliant	Fully Compliant
Section I: The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)			✓	
Section II: Accountability of the EQAA				✓
Section III: The EQAA's framework for the external review of quality in Higher Education Institutions			✓	
Section IV: The EQAA and its relationship to the public				✓
Section V: Decision making			✓	
Section VI: The QA of cross border higher education	N/A			

ANNEX 1. INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)

I. The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

The EQAA is a recognized, credible organization, trusted by the higher education institutions and the public. It has adequate mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest in the decisions it makes; its staff has the needed skills to carry out the functions associated to external QA. The EQAA has the needed resources to carry out their mission.

1.1. Legitimacy and recognition

- 1.1.1** The EQAA has an established legal basis and is recognized by a competent external body.
- 1.1.2** The EQAA takes into consideration relevant guidelines issued by international networks and other associations, in formulating its policies and practices.
- 1.1.3** The EQAA has a clear and published policy for the prevention of conflicts of interest that applies to its staff, its decision-making body, and the external Reviewers.

1.2 Mission and purposes

- 1.2.1** The EQAA has a written mission statement and a set of objectives that explicitly provide that external quality assurance of higher education is its major concern, describe the purpose and scope of its activities and can be translated into verifiable policies and measurable objectives.

1.3 Governance and organizational structure

- 1.3.1** The EQAA has a governance structure consistent with its mission and objectives, and adequate mechanisms to involve relevant stakeholders in the definition of its standards and criteria.
- 1.3.2** The composition of the decision-making body and/or its regulatory framework ensure its independence and impartiality.
- 1.3.3** The EQAA's organizational structure makes it possible to carry out its external review processes effectively and efficiently

- 1.3.4** The EQAA has a strategic plan that helps assess its progress and plan for future developments

1.4 Resources

- 1.4.1** The EQAA has a well-trained, appropriately-qualified staff, able to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach.
- 1.4.2** The EQAA has the physical and financial resources needed to fulfil its goals and carry out the activities that emerge from its mission statement and objectives.
- 1.4.3** The EQAA provides systematic opportunities for the professional development of its staff.

II. Accountability of the EQAA

The EQAA has in place policies and mechanisms for its internal quality assurance, which demonstrate a continuing effort to improve the quality and integrity of its activities, its response to the changes to the context in which it operates and its links to the international community of QA.

2.1 Quality assurance of the EQAA

- 2.1.1** The EQAA operates with transparency, integrity and professionalism and adheres to ethical and professional standards.
- 2.1.2** The EQAA has in place mechanisms that enable it to review its own activities in order to respond to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives.
- 2.1.3** The EQAA periodically conducts a self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data collection and analysis, to inform decision-making and trigger improvements.
- 2.1.4** The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals, ideally not exceeding five years. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.

2.2 Links to the QA community

- 2.2.1** The EQAA is open to international developments in quality assurance and has mechanisms that enable it to learn about and analyze the main trends in the field.
- 2.2.2** The EQAA collaborates with other QA agencies where possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, and review of decisions, joint projects, or staff exchanges.

III. The EQAA's framework for the external review of quality in Higher Education Institutions

The main concern of the EQAA is the promotion of quality education and student achievement. In doing this, it recognizes that quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and supports this principle in its criteria and procedures. These promote internal quality assurance (IQA) and provide higher education institutions with clear guidance on the requirements for self-assessment and external review.

3.1 The relationship between the EQAA and higher education institutions

- 3.1.1** The EQAA recognizes that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions (HEIs) themselves, and respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions and programs.
- 3.1.2** The EQAA promotes the development and appropriate implementation of IQA processes in accordance with the understanding that the primary responsibility for assuring quality resides with the institutions and its programs.
- 3.1.3** The EQAA bears in mind the level of workload and cost that its procedures will place on institutions and strives to make them as time and cost effective as possible.

3.2 The definition of criteria for external quality review

- 3.2.1** The EQAA recognizes and values institutional diversity and translates this valuation into criteria and procedures that consider the identity and goals of higher education institutions.

- 3.2.2** The standards or criteria developed by the EQAA have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders and are revised at regular intervals to ensure relevance to the needs of the system.
- 3.2.3** Standards or criteria take into consideration the specific aspects related to different modes of provision, such as transnational education, distance or online programs or other non-traditional approaches to HE as relevant to the context in which they operate.
- 3.2.4** Standards or criteria explicitly address the areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA's scope, (e.g., institutional governance and management, program design and approval, teaching and learning, student admission, progression and certification, research, community engagement) and on the availability of necessary resources (e.g., finances, staff and learning resources).
- 3.2.5** Criteria or standards and procedures consider internal follow up mechanisms, and provide for effective follow up of the outcomes of the external reviews.
- 3.2.6** The EQAA procedures specify the way in which criteria will be applied and the types of evidence needed to demonstrate that they are met.

3.3 The external review process

- 3.3.1** The EQAA carries out an external review process that is reliable and based on published criteria and procedures. It follows a self-assessment or equivalent, and includes an external review (normally including a site visit or visits), and a consistent follow up of the recommendations resulting from the external review.
- 3.3.2** The EQAA has published documents, which clearly state what it expects from higher education institutions, in the form of quality criteria, or standards and procedures, for self-assessment and external review.
- 3.3.3** The external review process is carried out by teams of experts consistent with the characteristics of the institution/program being reviewed. Experts can provide input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students, employers or professional practitioners.

- 3.3.4** The EQAA has clear specifications on the characteristics and selection of external Reviewers, who must be supported by appropriate training and good supporting materials such as handbooks or manuals.
- 3.3.5** External review procedures include effective and comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts of interest, and ensure that any judgments resulting from external reviews are based on explicit and published criteria.
- 3.3.6** The EQAA's system ensures that each institution or program will be evaluated in a consistent way, even if the external Panels, teams, or committees are different.
- 3.3.7** The EQAA carries out the external review within a reasonable timeframe after the completion of a self-assessment report, to ensure that information is current and updated.
- 3.3.8** The EQAA provides the higher education institutions with an opportunity to correct any factual errors that may appear in the external review report

3.4 The requirements for self-evaluation

- 3.4.1** The EQAA provides clear guidance to the institution or program in the application of the procedures for self-evaluation, the solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents, or the preparation for external review as necessary and appropriate.

IV. The EQAA and its relationship to the public

The EQAA makes public its policies and decisions about institutions and programs, discloses the decisions about its own performance and disseminates reports on outcomes of QA processes.

4.1 Public reports on EQAA policies and decisions

- 4.1.1** The EQAA provides full and clear disclosure of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.
- 4.1.2** The EQAA reports its decisions about higher education institutions and programs. The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.

4.1.3 The EQAA has mechanisms to facilitate the public a fair understanding of the reasons supporting decisions taken.

4.2 Other public reports

4.2.1 The EQAA discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.

4.2.2 The EQAA prepares and disseminates periodically integrated reports on the overall outcomes of QA processes and of any other relevant activities.

V. Decision making

The EQAA has policies and procedures in place that ensure a fair and independent decision-making process in the final review of the institution or the program. It provides effective procedures to deal with appeals and complaints.

5.1 The decision-making process

5.1.1 The EQAA decisions take into consideration the outcomes of both the institution's self-assessment process and the external review; they may also consider any other relevant information, provided this has been communicated to the HEIs.

5.1.2 The EQAA decisions are impartial, rigorous, and consistent even when they are based on the reports of other quality assurance bodies.

5.1.3 The EQAA decisions are based on published criteria and procedures, and can be justified only with reference to those criteria and procedures.

5.1.4 Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action.

5.1.5 The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.

5.2 The EQAA's process for appeals and complaints

5.2.1 The EQAA has procedures in place to deal in a consistent way with complaints about its procedures or operation.

5.2.2 The EQAA has clear, published procedures for handling appeals related to its external review and decision-making processes.

- 5.2.3** Appeals are conducted by a Panel that was not responsible for the original decision and has no conflict of interest; appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.

VI. The QA of Cross-Border Higher Education

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies take into account the characteristics of the providers and the receivers, and refer to all types of transnational higher education.

6.1 Criteria for cross border higher education




- 6.1.1** The EQAA in a sending country makes clear that the awarding institution is responsible for ensuring the equivalent quality of the education offered, that the institution understands the regulatory frameworks of the receiving countries, and that the institution provides clear information on the programs offered and their characteristics.
- 6.1.2** Students and other stakeholders receive clear and complete information about the awards delivered.
- 6.1.3** The rights and obligations of the parties involved in transnational education are clearly established and well known by the parties.

6.2 Collaboration between agencies

- 6.2.1** The EQAA cooperates with appropriate local agencies in the exporting and importing countries and with international networks. This cooperation is oriented to improve mutual understanding, to have a clear and comprehensive account of the regulatory framework and to share good practices.
- 6.2.2** The EQAA seeks ways to cooperate in the external quality assurance in transnational education provision, for example through mutual recognition.

ANNEX 2. COMPOSITION OF THE GGP REVIEW PANEL


INQAAHE GGP review panel

		
<p>Dr Rolf Heusser Chair of the Review Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director of Swiss Accreditation Agency (2001-2010), Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA, 2004-2014). Member of board of directors of INQAAHE (2009-10) - International Higher Education & QA Expert - University of Zurich <p>Previous GP Review: - CAA GGP Review 2021</p> <p>Switzerland</p>	<p>Dr Ariana De Vincenzi Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member of the Council of Rectors of Private Universities of Argentina - Academic Vice-chancellor of the Universidad Abierta Interamericana, Argentina. - International Higher Education & QA Expert <p>Previous GGP Review: - ANEAS GGP Review 2021 - CNED GGP Re-alignment 2022</p> <p>Argentina</p>	<p>Dr Eddy Chong Siong Choy QA Expert</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Technical Officer (QA) Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA) - INQAAHE Board Member - AUN-QA Lead Assessor - International Higher Education & QA Expert <p>Preview GGP Review: - HEEACT GGP Review 2020</p> <p>Malaysia</p>

Report signed by the GGP Review Panel

Date: 13 February 2023

GGP Project Coordinator

	<p>Mr. Dewin Justiniano INQAAHE GGP Project Coordinator</p> <p>Quality Assurance Senior Specialist at ADEK – 42 Abu Dhabi, UAE Honduras</p>
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ANNEX 3. SCHEDULE OF THE VIRTUAL VISIT

Day 1

Time	Activities & Interview Sessions
8:30-9:00	Preparatory Meeting Day 1
9:00-10:00	Session 1: JUAA President and Secretariat <i>(in-person)</i>
10:00-11:00	Session 2: JUAA Self-Evaluation Committee <i>(In-person)</i>
11:00-12:00	Session 3: HEIs Representatives, QA Representatives - Institutional Accreditations <i>(online)</i>
12:00-12:30	Office Tour
12:30-13:30	Lunch Break
13:30-14:00	GGP Review Panel Internal Meeting
14:00-15:00	Session 4: Professional Graduate School QA Representatives – Certified Evaluation and Accreditation <i>(online)</i>
15:00-16:00	Session 5: JUAA's International Partners <i>(online)</i>

Day 2

Time	Activities & Interview Sessions
9:00- 9:30	Preparatory Meeting Day 2
9:30-10:00	Session 6: JUAA's National Partners #1 <i>(online)</i>
10:00-11:00	Session 7: HEIs QA Representatives – Program Accreditations (Veterinary Medicine) <i>(online)</i>

Time	Activities & Interview Sessions
11:00-11:45	Session 8: Junior College Representatives, QA Representatives - Institutional Accreditations <i>(online)</i>
11:45-12:30	Lunch Break
12:30-13:00	GGP Review Panel Internal Meeting
14:00-14:30	Coffee Break
14:30-15:30	Session 10: JUAA's Standards Committee <i>(In-person)</i>
15:30-16:00	Coffee Break
16:00-17:00	Session 11: JUAA's Evaluators (Reviewers) <i>(Hybrid: online and in-person)</i>
17:00-18:00	Session 12: JUAA Staff Members (Institutional and Program Accreditation) <i>(In-person)</i>

Day 3

Time	Activities & Interview Sessions
9:00– 9:15	Preparatory Meeting Day 3
9: 15-10:15	Session 13: Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) – University Education and Entrance Examination Division, Higher Education Bureau <i>(online)</i>
10:15-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-11:00	Session 14: JUAA's National Partners #2 <i>(online)</i>
11:00-11:30	Session 15: JUAA's National Partners #3 <i>(online)</i>

11:30-12:15	Call-back Session: The GGP Review Panel will call for another interview session with JUAA staff if the GGP Review Panel needs to clarify or ask additional questions.
12:15-13:00	Lunch Break
13:00-14:30	GGP Preparations to deliver the Oral Exit Report
14:30-15:00	Oral Exit Report <i>(In-person)</i>

