



**TERTIARY
EDUCATION
COMMISSION**

**REPORT OF THE FIRST CYCLE QUALITY
AUDIT OF UNIVERSITE DES
MASCAREIGNES**

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Réduit

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Tertiary Education Commission is a statutory body under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. The Commission has as objects to allocate government funds, promote, plan, develop and coordinate tertiary education in Tertiary Education institutions under its purview in order to achieve an accountable and responsive tertiary system of international standards. Since 2005 the objects of the Commission has been extended to include the responsibility to promote and maintain high quality standards in post-secondary education through appropriate quality assurance and accreditation processes.

Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	4
2. Overview of the Audit.....	6
2.1 Background.....	6
2.2 Terms of Reference of the Auditors.....	6
2.3 The Audit Process.....	7
4. Commendations and Recommendations.....	8
4.1 Commendations.....	8
4.2 Recommendations.....	9
5. Institutional Mission, Aims and Objectives.....	12
6. Institutional Approach to Quality Assurance.....	12
7. Administrative and Management Issues.....	13
7.1 Governance.....	13
7.1.1 Principles of Governance.....	13
7.1.2 Top management leadership.....	13
7.1.3 Management of Funds.....	14
7.1.4 Management of academic activities.....	14
7.2 Admissions.....	15
7.3 Students' Council.....	15
7.4 Students' Welfare.....	16
7.5 Staff Council.....	17
7.6 Staff Welfare.....	17
7.7 Staff Appointments, Appraisal and Promotion.....	17
7.8 Staff Development.....	19
8. Curricula and Programmes.....	20
8.1 Programme Design, Validation, Approval and Review.....	20
8.2 Learning Resources.....	21
8.3 Programme Organisation and Delivery.....	21
8.4 Monitoring and Assessment.....	22
8.4.1 Examination and script moderation.....	23
9. External Examiners.....	24
10. Research Degree Students.....	24
11. Collaborative Provisions.....	25
12. Industrial Links/Work-based Experience.....	26

13. Community Service and Good Citizenship.....	27
14. Appendices.....	29
14.1 Appendix A: The Audit Panel	29
14.2 Appendix B: Acronyms and abbreviations	30
14.3 Appendix C: Institutional Context	31

1. Executive Summary

This document reports on the First Cycle Quality Audit of Université des Mascareignes (UdM) carried out by a team of five auditors in April 2017. The starting point for the audit was a Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by UdM. The SER was short on data to provide evidence, with little on trends, and little comparison. The Audit Panel's findings have been worked out within the scope elaborated in the Quality Audit Handbook published by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in 2010. The Audit Panel spent four days at the University. The findings are based on the SER and information gathered through various interview sessions with UdM staff, students and stakeholders, and documents consulted at the institution. In addition to analysis and comments presented in the report, the Panel has formulated commendations of good practice and recommendations for appropriate improvement.

UdM was founded in 2012 after a merger between two institutions which resulted in the operation of two campuses, namely Rose-Hill and Pamplémousses. The University comprises three Faculties, namely (1) Faculty of Sustainable Development and Engineering, (2) Faculty of Business and Management and (3) Faculty of Information and Communication Technology. In addition to these faculties, UdM has a Doctoral School. UdM has a partnership agreement with Université de Limoges (UdL), France under which both the Université de Limoges certificates and the Université des Mascareignes certificates are awarded to students for joint programmes. The agreement also allows joint curricula and programme design and sharing of resources and expertise.

The double degree programme and the bilingual learning opportunity (French and English) have a strong attraction for students. In fact, intake for international students has increased since 2012. However, UdM, currently home to 881 students, has experienced a drop in its overall student intake since its inception.

Notwithstanding the various issues observed by the Panel, the latter's meeting with employers, some of whom are representatives on the University's Faculty Boards, revealed their full satisfaction with the quality of students during their industrial placement. The University is commended for its practical and hands-on approach to student learning which helps enhancing industry ready and employability skills. The dedicated programme of work-integrated learning or internships with industry collaboration is also highly commended.

The Panel noted with concern the dysfunctionality of the Board which is impeding the approval of policies and procedures, consequently leading to operational risks. Additionally, the agreement between UdM and UdL provides that the latter nominates the Chair of the Board, while the Act provides that the Prime Minister of Mauritius appoints the Chair. Appropriate discussions are required to ensure that the Chair is acceptable to both parties.

The number of vacant posts and acting positions is quite alarming. Promotion exercises have also not been carried out for both academic and non-academic staff. The Panel identified a serious need to remedy staff morale and welfare.

Despite the merger that occurred in 2012, there is an obvious lack of conformity between the two campuses. There is a disagreement between the academic staff on the two campuses regarding academic staff union. The attitude to quality assurance, academic procedures, the style of functioning, amongst others, differ. It is recommended that operations should be standardised across the campuses to the greatest extent possible.

The examination security system is fragmented between Faculties and the Panel noted with concern the security risk involved. There is an examination office only at the Pamplémousses campus.

Given the many challenges facing the University, it is necessary to improve communication both vertically (through the hierarchy) and horizontally (between campuses). It is recommended that the Director General spend at least two days per week on each campus.

With only a few PhD holders and active researchers on staff, the Panel was of the view that UdM is unready to maintain the Doctoral School which has already manifested several lacunae. It is recommended that no more doctoral students be enrolled until TEC is fully satisfied that UdM is ready to do so.

The complete list of recommendations is available in this report and it is expected that UdM will use the findings of the Audit Panel to strengthen its quality assurance system and, thereby, facilitate the improvement of its core activities.

2. Overview of the Audit

2.1 Background

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) by virtue of its Act has the responsibility to ensure, promote and monitor quality in tertiary institutions in Mauritius. This report on the First Cycle Quality Audit of Udm is published by TEC as the first stage of institutional audits carried out in publicly-funded tertiary institutions.

Publicly-funded tertiary institutions are required to undergo institutional academic quality audits. These audits adopt the audit process stipulated in the Quality Audit Handbook for Tertiary Education Institutions (2nd Edition) published by TEC. The purpose of quality audit is to assess the strength of the quality culture and the actions undertaken by the institution to ensure continuous improvement. Audits are also concerned with the existence and effectiveness of the quality processes in place at the institution to achieve its set objectives and produce the desired outcomes.

This report is an outcome of the quality audit conducted at the Udm. Quotations and references taken from the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provided by Udm for their quality audit are identified in this report as (SERp). The membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix A and Appendix B defines abbreviations and acronyms used in the report. Appendix C gives a brief on the institutional context.

2.2 Terms of Reference of the Auditors

- a) To make a commitment to act as a quality auditor for the institution identified as per the schedule worked out and participate in the pre-audit workshop and the audit.
- b) To act within the scope identified in the Quality Audit Handbook.
- c) To be objective at all times, ensuring that they are non-judgemental in their approach; that they are aware of possible personal bias.
- d) To observe confidentiality.
- e) To give full support to the Chairperson.
- f) To work as a team, ensuring that members are working in harmony with a view to accomplishing a fact finding mission grounded on the Self-Evaluation Report.
- g) To identify good practice as well as unhealthy practice and make necessary recommendations.
- h) To ensure that there is agreement among the members on the conclusions of the panel.
- i) To fully co-operate in getting the audit report ready within two months of the audit by writing the specific observations made and checking with the Tertiary Education Commission's Secretariat to see that the report is a true reflection of the panel's findings.

2.3 The Audit Process

In November 2016, TEC appointed an Audit Panel to undertake the first cycle quality audit of the UdM.

On 27 February 2017 UdM submitted its SER which was then circulated to all panel members for initial comment, and any requests for additional documents and information to be provided by UdM before the site visit and during the visit through interviews. The SER was short on data to provide evidence, with little on trends, and little comparison. Prior to the start of the audit, the TEC Auditor liaised with the UdM regarding the requested documents, interview sessions, facilities and resources to be prepared for the audit.

The Audit Secretary and two officers from TEC undertook a Preparatory Visit to the two campuses of UdM on 14 April 2017. During that visit, the arrangements to be made for the audit were finalised. The additional information requested by the Panel and the Interview Schedule were also discussed. The Panel held its first meeting on 23 April 2017 to analyse the information submitted by UdM and to finalise its plans for the conduct of the Audit.

The Audit visit took place between 25 and 28 April 2017 at the campus in Rose-Hill, except for the second day when the Panel met at the Pamplémousses campus. During the visit, a campus tour was organised on each campus. In all, the Audit Panel spoke with approximately 100 persons from UdM in the course of the audit, including, the Director General, Board members, the Academic Council, academic and non-academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students, and employers and external members of Faculty Boards.

This report relates to the situation at UdM at the time of the audit exercise and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The report records conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the SER and additional documents provided by UdM as well as information gained through interviews and discussions.

It is expected that UdM will use the findings of the Audit Panel to strengthen its QA system and, thereby, facilitate the improvement of its core activities. The decisions about the manner in which this is to be done are the prerogative of UdM. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the University's activities within the scope of the audit, the report does not identify every aspect of the QA system, and their effectiveness or shortcomings. It is expected that UdM will submit an improvement plan based on this report.

The Audit Panel would like to thank Dr R Somanah, Director General, Mrs V Lockmun-Bissessur, Head of Quality Assurance and others at UdM for their cooperation in the audit process.

4. Commendations and Recommendations

4.1 Commendations

1. The partnership with the Université de Limoges, France is commendable as it ensures international recognition of awards thus providing an international leverage for the degrees being awarded.15
2. The devotion and commitment of the staff towards their responsibilities and duties is commendable.19
3. The University is commended for the attractive Double Degree programme and for the bilingual learning opportunity (French and English) which has a strong attraction for students.20
4. The University is commended for its practical and hands-on approach to student learning which helps enhancing industry ready and employability skills.20
5. Udm is commended for the useful student experience provided through the high quality facilities available in engineering labs at the Rose-Hill campus.21
6. Udm is commended for the dedication of its staff in providing valuable support and help for student learning.22
7. Udm is commended for its collaborative arrangement with UdL leading to academic staff visits in France and providing access to Udm staff and students to UdL online databases for resources.26
8. Udm is commended for its strong industry linkage built through the network of its academic staff to accommodate industrial placements for students.27
9. Udm is commended for the active involvement of the industry on the University's Faculty Boards.27
10. Udm is commended for the pioneering Dual Training Programme (DTP) with the Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) which comprises a good mix of work based experience and classroom studies leading to a Diploma.27
11. Udm is commended for securing funding from the Mauritius Research Council under the Research and Innovation Schemes.27

4.2 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that UdM improve the quality assurance system through appropriate documentations.13
2. It is recommended that the Board meeting be held once every month as required by the UdM Act to ensure timely implementation of policies.13
3. It is recommended that the institution's Mission, Vision and strategic plan be communicated to staff and effective links be established with all departments and faculties.14
4. It is recommended that the Director General spend at least two days per week on each campus.14
5. Although operational differences exist between the two campuses, it is recommended that operations be standardised across the campuses to the greatest extent possible.14
6. It is recommended that a proper Finance Department be established, with adequate and qualified staff for managing the financial matters of UdM, including budgeting, rationalization of funds, transparency, accountability and effective internal auditing.14
7. It is recommended that an effective communication link be established between those students elected or appointed to the different Boards/Committees and the Class Representatives and the students at large, to communicate and disseminate information and decisions taken at these levels.....16
8. It is recommended that UdM set up and actively support an operational office for students' welfare and encourage them to use the services provided.17
9. It is recommended that UdM develop and implement a Staff Welfare Policy.17
10. As a matter of urgency, it is recommended that an adequate budget be approved for the UdM to cater for the empty positions, and that UdM should fill all the vacant posts as soon as possible.18
11. It is recommended that UdM take appropriate measures to conduct the promotion exercise of existing staff through effective negotiation with the staff unions.18

12. It is recommended that UdM have a performance appraisal of all academic and non-academic staff periodically in a transparent manner with clearly developed policies.19
13. It is recommended that the review exercise of the Staff Development Schemes for both academic and non-academic staff be expedited, with the contents disseminated among staff following approval.19
14. It is recommended that the composition of the Teaching and Learning Committee accommodate student representatives.....21
15. It is recommended that the University develop a policy and procedures on periodic and major programme review for all programmes.21
16. It is recommended that the University provide wider access by creating more WIFI wireless routers on both campuses where students need access for learning purpose.21
17. It is recommended that the module information sheet be redesigned so as to include all needful details, including assessment details, required by students at the beginning of each semester.22
18. It is recommended that examination timetables be available to students well in advance and prior to examinations via various communication mechanisms including the University website.....22
19. It is recommended that UdM improve the assessment of student work and provide appropriate templates for assessment design and development, and also include the alignment of learning outcomes to assessments.23
20. It is recommended that UdM review its assessment policy for all modules so as to maintain a balance between formative and summative assessments in each module wherever possible.23
21. It is recommended that UdM adopt a systematic approach to identify and monitor students at risk in terms of their academic progression.23
22. It is recommended that UdM establish a centralised and secure examination unit for the University and set up an Examination Office on each campus.23

23. It is recommended that a Controller of Examinations be appointed to oversee the responsibilities of the University's examinations and to assign a dedicated staff for the Examination Office on both campuses.	23
24. It is recommended that each campus should have an Examination Office.	24
25. It is recommended that Udm establish its own moderation system for programmes awarded by Udm only and reduce its dependence on the French affiliation.	24
26. It is recommended that Udm institute a mechanism (policy and procedures) for the recruitment of external examiners and develop the terms of reference for the appointment of external examiners.	24
27. It is recommended that Udm develop a comprehensive manual for research students and research supervisors which should include roles and responsibilities, thesis submission guidelines, and guidelines for selection and change of research supervision.	25
28. It is recommended that research students be provided with adequate support through continuous monitoring of progress and feedback.	25
29. It is recommended that each research student be supervised by a Panel of supervisors that includes at least one member from Udm and at least one active researcher in the field.	25
30. It is recommended that no more doctoral students be enrolled until TEC is fully satisfied that Udm is ready to do so, and that the relevant recommendations in this report have been met.	25
31. It is recommended that Udm build up research initiatives with UdL academic staff.	26
32. It is recommended that Udm collaborate with professional bodies to inform its programme reviews and accreditation initiatives.	26
33. It is recommended that an Industry Placement office be set up to monitor and support students.	27
34. It is recommended that an Industrial Placement Manual be developed.	28
35. It is recommended that Udm develop a systematic overall plan for community engagement.	28

5. Institutional Mission, Aims and Objectives

UdM has an explicit Vision and Mission. Noteworthy and realistic features of these include being ‘*complementary to other universities in Mauritius by offering professional courses*’, and enabling ‘*students to realise their educational aspirations and maximise their employability*’.

Staff understand the thrust of these statements and are committed to providing students with an education relevant to the needs of Mauritius and the students’ future employment.

The aims and objectives are clearly based on the Mission and Vision. Staff were able to describe how they are acting towards the achievement of some of these. The aims and objectives are probably achievable, although some will come only in the longer term when a large range of pressing problems have been addressed

The Mission aims for “*internationally recognised research*” and this is appropriate for a University. However, this should be a longer term goal. The Panel believes that too much emphasis is being placed on quantity of research at this stage, in view of the inadequacy of support mechanisms e.g. libraries, computers and research-active staff.

6. Institutional Approach to Quality Assurance

UdM has a definition of quality education that is based on the Mission. It then relates quality assurance to foreshadowed actions that are intended to achieve that quality.

In terms of structure, there is a quality unit with a Head and one part-time support, and two committees have been established, one at University level chaired by the Director-General, and one focused on academic quality and standards. These have met and developed a range of policies and procedures. Unfortunately, due to problems with the Board of Governors (see later), most of these have yet to be approved. Other procedures, such as a procedure on systematic cyclic reviews, have yet to be developed.

There is a first draft of a quality manual, which is currently combined with the OH&S(Occupational Health and Safety) manual and the policies and procedures manual. These three should be separate. The utility of future versions of the quality manual will be improved if there is some advice to staff on how they might take a quality approach, such as alertness for opportunities for continuous improvement, ‘closing the quality loop’, and the OADRI cycle. It is recommended that the quality assurance system be improved through appropriate documentation.

The quality manual is not yet available as the Board has yet to approve it (see below).

As mentioned above, there is a small quality unit and two quality committees. Also, many people were involved in drafting the Self-Evaluation Report. This is perhaps as much as can be expected at this stage.

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that UdM improve the quality assurance system through appropriate documentation.

7. Administrative and Management Issues

7.1 Governance

7.1.1 Principles of Governance

The governance of the University is based on the provisions listed in the Université des Mascareignes Act 2012, enacted by the Parliament of Mauritius in 2012. The Act contains all the details associated with the establishment of the University. The Board is the ultimate Governing body of the institution, and is backed by several other entities, including the Academic Council, the Faculty Boards, and many other committees. According to the UdM Act 2012, the Board is the governing body having the direction and superintendence of the UdM and its principal responsibilities include -

- (a) devising or approving strategic plans and major policies for the UdM;
- (b) overseeing its management and development;
- (c) monitoring and reviewing its operations; and
- (d) providing rigorous accountability standards in its various operations.

Though the structure has been specified in the Act, the Audit Panel noted the dysfunctionality of the UdM Board. The agreement between UdM and UdL provides that the latter nominates the Chair of the Board, while the Act provides that the Prime Minister of Mauritius appoints the Chair. The various parties involved should hold the appropriate discussions to ensure that the Chair is acceptable to both parties. The Panel noted that the Board has not met regularly since 2015 and thus many drafted policies and procedures have not been properly approved. Their implementation is therefore problematic. This dysfunctionality is leading to operational risks.

Recommendation 2

It is recommended that the Board meeting be held once every month as required by the UdM Act to ensure timely implementation of policies.

7.1.2 Top management leadership

The strategic plan, set up in line with the Vision, is intended as a key document for planning, monitoring, evaluation and accountability of the use and allocation of resources. The strategic objectives listed in the Strategic plan 2017-2021 form the basis for annual planning and resource allocation to Faculties, Schools and support Service Divisions. Amongst other things, the strategic plan lists the University's Vision, Mission, core values, Strengths and Weaknesses, the Strategic Challenges faced, the Corporate Strategy, the Innovation outlook, the Infrastructure Planning and the Monitoring Methodology.

The Director General has clearly expressed the Vision of the institution. The Panel believes that too much emphasis is being placed on research at this stage, especially with the inadequacy of support in terms of library, computers, etc. Other staff of the Udm mentioned that the Vision has not been clearly communicated to them. Poor communication was evident both vertically through the hierarchy and horizontally between campuses. There is an acute lack of communication between top management and staff as well as with students between campuses. Moreover the operations across both campuses are different although they fall under the same University. The Audit Panel found that more generally much of the information was available only at the faculty level and not at the University level.

Recommendation 3

It is recommended that the institution's Mission, Vision and strategic plan be communicated to staff and effective links established with all departments and faculties.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the Director General spend at least two days per week on each campus.

Recommendation 5

Although operational differences exist between the two campuses, it is recommended that operations be standardised across the campuses to the greatest extent possible.

7.1.3 Management of Funds

Udm, being a public University, receives funding from the Government. A substantial part of the revenue is derived from the capital and recurrent grants, and there are also the fees collected from both full-time and part-time students. Budgeting is done annually, taking into account the requirements of the different departments within the campuses. The Finance Department is skeletonally staffed, with the two Acting Financial Operations Officers overseeing its functions. The lack of staff impinges on its operations, and makes it very challenging to address all pertinent issues relevant to Finance within the whole of the University. The Panel noted the efforts made by Udm to formalize a few key procedures and guidelines.

Recommendation 6

It is recommended that a proper Finance Department be established, with adequate and qualified staff for managing the financial matters of Udm, including budgeting, rationalization of funds, transparency, accountability and effective internal auditing.

7.1.4 Management of academic activities

Programmes are developed in relation to academic years and progress in various sectors related to the field of study. The academic staff at Udm constantly monitor trends in their

field of specialisation and research and whenever a trend is identified, existing programmes are updated and new programmes are mounted to accommodate such trends.

The University has a partnership agreement with Université de Limoges, France (UdL). Under this partnership agreement, both UdL certificates and UdM certificates are given to students for those programmes that are jointly provided. The degrees are internationally recognized and UdM is the only public university to offer such a scheme. Most programmes offer the opportunity of bilingual learning (French and English). Students have the possibility to further their studies at Université de Limoges.

Commendation 1

The partnership with the Université de Limoges, France is commendable as it ensures international recognition of awards thus providing an international leverage for the degrees being awarded.

7.2 Admissions

The admission of students is done as per the modalities laid out in the procedure for admission of local and international students. This procedure applies to the intake of new University students at Diploma, “Licence” and B.Eng. levels. Upon admission, students also undergo an induction as detailed in the procedure for induction of students.

The Audit Panel was given to understand that it is the policy of the University to offer equal opportunities to students irrespective of their backgrounds. UdM does its best to ensure that there is no discrimination for or against any student on the basis of their age, sex, race, religion, colour, ethnic origin, nationality, disability, impairment, marital status/civil partnership status, sexual orientation, HIV status or pregnancy /maternity. Disabled students are successfully studying at the University, with further efforts currently being undertaken to ease their comfort on both campuses. During the Campus Tour, it was observed that provisions have been made for ramps to ease access for students with physical disability to the premises and workrooms on the Pamplémousses campus.

The main considerations in the recruitment, selection, education and assessment of students are that the latter must meet, or be likely to meet, the requirements of the programme/ course as per the procedures in place.

7.3 Students' Council

In order to ensure that the voice of the student is heard, the UdM involves students at different levels. This is done through participation of students in statutory Boards and Committees:

- The Board of Governors includes as a member one person elected by and from the students;
- The Academic Council includes as a member one person elected by and from the students;

- The Faculty Boards of the three Faculties each include as a member one student elected by and from the students of each respective Faculty;
- The Quality and Standards Committee includes as a member one representative of the Students as appointed by the Udm Student Union; and
- The Occupational Safety and Health Committee includes as a member one representative of the Students as appointed by the Udm Student Union.

The evidence of participation of the students in the Boards/ Committees has been found in the different Minutes of Meeting of the respective Boards and Committees. The procedure for appointment of the Udm Student Union, as already approved by the Academic Council and the Board, ensures that the Union submits the list of the students' representatives for each of the statutory Boards/ Committees. The names of the appointees of the Udm Student Union as at November 2016 were provided in the SER.

Among the responsibilities of the students elected or appointed to the different Boards/Committees is to communicate and disseminate information and decisions taken at these levels to the Class Representatives and the students at large. However, during the interviews, several sources confirmed that this does not commonly occur, so there appears to be a communication problem.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that an effective communication link be established between those students elected or appointed to the different Boards/Committees and the Class Representatives and the students at large, to communicate and disseminate information and decisions taken at these levels.

7.4 Students' Welfare

According to the SER, multiple activities have been organised in order to balance the campus life of students, including:

- Participation in sports activities across both campuses, especially football;
- The organization of a "Club de théâtre";
- Bring and share food day on campus at Pamplemousses Campus;
- The setting up of comic strips (bande dessinée) in August 2016 presented in a conference at the University of Mauritius, as part of the AUF project;
- The enacting of plays during end of year 2016, as part of the AUF project;
- International and 'art' movies in Cineclub at Pamplemousses Campus (including the Tree of Life, Amelie, Indigenes, Indochine, Shakesperare in Love, Le Patient Anglais and a series of Hindi films);
- The organisation of talks on different subject areas which are of benefit to students (including talks on Health and Safety issues, Environmental issues, Substance Abuse Prevention by NatResa, on Employability or employment law, on Finding a job, on

Trade Unions, on Energy Efficiency, Smart cities, Sustainable Development, Bioculture and other pertinent subject areas);

- The organisation of Cultural Days; and
- The organisation of department specific events (e.g. the Moodle workshop attended by students in November 2016, The LinuxFest, The Webcups to which ICT students have successively participated since 2015).

In addition to the above, the UdM Student Union is also authorised to organise activities for the students on campus. The Audit Panel could not find any evidence for the operation of an office dedicated to the welfare of students. Although it was agreed that management was behind the organisation of some activities, other activities were mainly due to the students' initiatives and involvement at different levels.

Recommendation 8

It is recommended that UdM set up and actively support an operational office for students' welfare and encourage them to use the services provided.

7.5 Staff Council

There are two Staff Councils (Academic Staff Union and General Staff Union). Each has distinct membership and the Panel noted that some academic staff are members of the non-academic staff union. The Panel also noted that both staff unions are represented in the Board of the UdM.

7.6 Staff Welfare

The lack of a full-fledged Human Resources Department at the University has had a bearing on the fact that not enough emphasis has been put on issues of Staff Welfare, with obvious adverse effects on staff motivation. There is certainly substantial room for improvement in Staff Welfare issues, ranging from motivation /reward programmes to organisation of events for staff. The Audit Panel noted that the Staff morale is low at UdM.

Recommendation 9

It is recommended that UdM develop and implement a proper Staff Welfare Policy.

7.7 Staff Appointments, Appraisal and Promotion

Since the inception of the University, there have been only a few new recruits, including the Occupational Safety and Health Officer (part-time), the Head of International Affairs, Student Welfare and Support, the Head of Quality Assurance, the Accountant and two general workers. The current Director General also joined the University in February 2016.

The SER mentions that there are several posts for which recruitment needs to be undertaken. Given the number of vacant posts and acting positions, the Panel was informed that

recruitment will be undertaken in a phased approach, whilst taking into account budget constraints. To date, interviews have been held for the post of Human Resource Management Officer, and the post of Internal Auditor has been advertised. Filling vacant positions, especially senior ones, is essential for the smooth functioning of the University.

Recommendation 10

As a matter of urgency, it is recommended that an adequate budget be approved for the UdM to cater for the empty positions, and that UdM fill all the vacant posts as soon as possible.

In 2012, with the merging of the Institut Supérieur de Technologie (IST) situated at Rose-Hill and the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management (SDIM) of Pamplémousses, the staff were given three options. They could either join the newly created University, or opt for redeployment or retirement. An agreement was established between the Board and those staff who preferred to join UdM which stipulated, inter alia, that there should be some sort of remuneration following the restructuring exercise.

It was also agreed that a Commission would be set up to define the modalities of promotion of staff. A Commission, chaired by Dr Li Kam Wah, was set up and worked for nine months, consulting with all those involved. The report which emerged from this exercise was approved by the UdM Board and a calendar of activities was also finalised.

Accordingly, the promotional posts were advertised and applications were made. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the selection exercise was postponed temporarily for eventual consideration. The UdM Board was reconstituted and decided to consider the selection exercise. The Panel noted that to date the promotion exercise has still not been completed. The Panel was of the view that the lack of Staff Appointments and Promotion is causing a lot of harm to UdM. This has unleashed a lot of passion and frustration which has been a demotivating factor among staff to the extent that they had recourse to the judiciary to seek redress.

The Panel considered the Scheme of Service for senior academic positions. The Panel noted that these senior academic positions can be filled only by considering applications from existing staff because they are promotional posts. Thus the UdM cannot attract talented and high calibre academics from outside the organisation for these senior positions. The UdM informed the Panel that they can recruit high calibre academic staff through contractual employment, although this may be less satisfactory for potential applicants. During the discussion with the staff members the Panel noted their passion and dedication to their job despite their personal problems and grievances which they have put aside, focussing on the interests of the University.

Recommendation 11

It is recommended that UdM take appropriate measures to conduct the promotion exercise of existing staff through effective negotiation with the staff unions.

Commendation 2

The devotion and commitment of the staff towards their responsibilities and duties is commendable.

7.8 Staff Development

According to the SER, Staff Development Schemes, previously drafted for both academic and non-academic staff, need to be reviewed and this exercise is earmarked to be carried out in the course of 2017. It is further stipulated in the SER that one of the tasks of the newly appointed Human Resource Management Officer will be to lead the review of the Staff Development Schemes for non-academic staff, whilst ensuring that staff appraisal is undertaken systematically, at regular intervals. The SER mentions that the Director General also plans to undertake a review of both Staff Development Schemes in the first quarter of 2017(although this had not occurred by the date of the Panel's visit in late April).

The SER also highlights that staff of the University undertake laboratory visits, seminars, conferences and other training sessions as part of an ongoing contribution to their staff development.

Performance appraisal is barely mentioned in the SER, and all sources have confirmed that no such appraisal exercise is conducted at Udm, either for granting annual incremental credit or to assess the strengths and weaknesses of staff. The latter would eventually assist to identify appropriate support and training to be given to staff to overcome weaknesses so as to perform more effectively and for continuing professional development. There is an appraisal form designed by the Udm but not being used.

Several sources confirmed that the Staff Development Schemes had already been approved by the Board since the last three years. However they were not put into practice and disseminated across all the relevant levels and platforms. Consequently, a limited number of staff benefitted from these Schemes in terms of laboratory visits, seminars and conferences abroad.

Recommendation 12

It is recommended to have a performance appraisal of all academic and non-academic staff periodically in a transparent manner with clearly developed policies.

Recommendation 13

It is recommended that the review exercise of the Staff Development Schemes for both academic and non-academic staff be expedited, with the contents disseminated among Staff following approval.

8. Curricula and Programmes

8.1 Programme Design, Validation, Approval and Review

The University provides an attractive Double Degree programme and a bilingual learning opportunity (French and English) which has a strong attraction for students. This also provides study abroad options for students which help them to experience new cultures and gain a competitive edge while travelling in other countries.

The practical and hands-on approach to student learning helps in enhancing industry ready and employability skills. Courses such as communication and presentation skills also offer an advantage to students.

The dedicated programmes of work-integrated learning or internships with industry collaboration are highly commended. In particular, the joint Dual Training Program in collaboration with MEXA for a Technical Diploma in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering for industries is extremely valuable for students as it provides pathways to real world job opportunities.

Commendation 3

The University is commended for the attractive Double Degree programme and for the bilingual learning opportunity (French and English) which has a strong attraction for students.

Commendation 4

The University is commended for its practical and hands-on approach to student learning which helps enhancing industry ready and employability skills.

The panel recommends that Teaching and Learning Committee be proactive in terms of working through the consequences of their findings ('closing the loop'). There is a consistency in terms of evidence provided by various university sources that this step does not get the necessary attention. It is also recommended that the composition of the Teaching and Learning Committee accommodate student representatives.

Module evaluation policy and procedure are not validated by the Academic Council and Board of Governors. Furthermore, the actions taken from the module evaluation are not informed to students. Data analysis and interpretation are also missing.

The learning outcomes at module, programme and University level requires more thorough and constant reinforcement. There is no clarity on the proper alignment between programme level outcomes and individual module outcomes.

There is no clarity about programme review, including the frequency/timeline and details. A major recommendation is the need for the University to develop a policy and procedures on periodic and major programme review for all programmes.

External benchmarking such as professional accreditations (e.g.EurEng) can be sought so that the programmes can be comparable and graduates can be recognized regionally and internationally. This will foster student mobility.

Recommendation 14

It is recommended that the composition of the Teaching and Learning Committee accommodate student representatives.

Recommendation 15

It is recommended that the University develop a policy and procedures on periodic and major programme review for all programmes.

8.2 Learning Resources

The Panel observed that the facilities in computer labs at both campuses of the University are outdated. In particular, the computers available in these labs are obsolete. Some software used for student learning is of old versions while others are of trial versions, which incurs difficulties in terms of limited use and features.

The Panel also found that Internet connectivity is poor in labs. There is WIFI connection in some but not all places in both campuses. The Panel recommends that the University provide wider access by creating more WIFI wireless routers on both campuses where students need access for learning purpose.

The high quality facilities available in engineering labs at Rose-Hill Campus are acknowledged for providing useful student experience.

Commendation 5

UdM is commended for the useful student experience provided through the high quality facilities available in engineering labs at the Rose-Hill Campus.

Recommendation 16

It is recommended that the University provide wider access by creating more WIFI wireless routers on both campuses where students need access for learning purpose.

8.3 Programme Organisation and Delivery

The Panel noticed and highly acknowledges several dedicated and approachable staff of UdM who provide valuable support and help for student learning.

The Panel considers that the cross campus teaching (ie teaching for students who study on both campuses) should be reviewed. It needs to be streamlined.

The module information sheet which contains important information for students does not include all details and lacks the assessment component which needs to be available for students in the beginning of each semester.

Assessment details with submission deadlines and marking schemes should be available to students at the beginning of the semester.

At Rose Hill Campus, there is no formal exam timetable available for students well in advance. The Panel therefore recommends that the examination timetables should be available for students well in advance via various communication mechanism including university website.

Commendation 6

UdM is commended for the dedication of its staff in providing valuable support and help for student learning.

Recommendation 17

It is recommended that the module information sheet be redesigned so as to include all needful details, including assessment details, required by students at the beginning of each semester.

Recommendation 18

It is recommended that examination timetables be available to students well in advance of the respective exam dates via various communication mechanisms, including the University website.

8.4 Monitoring and Assessment

There are no clear guidelines across faculties and departments on assessment design and development. The Panel recommends that UdM give attention to improving the assessment of student work and suggests the provision of appropriate templates for assessment design and development. These should include the alignment of learning outcomes to assessments.

In most of the modules, the weighting for summative assessment is higher than the formative assessment. The Panel suggests reviewing assessment policy for all modules and recommends observing balance between formative and summative assessments in each module wherever possible.

There is no formal mechanism to identify students at risk and hence no formal monitoring. The Panel recommends that a systematic approach be taken to identifying and monitoring students at risk in terms of their academic progression. Such students need further assistance and support for their learning and success in their academic work.

Recommendation 19

It is recommended that UdM provide appropriate templates for assessment design and development, and also include the alignment of learning outcomes to assessments.

Recommendation 20

It is recommended that UdM review its assessment policy for all modules so as to maintain a balance between formative and summative assessments in each module wherever possible.

Recommendation 21

It is recommended that UdM adopts a systematic approach to identify and monitor students at risk in terms of their academic progression.

8.4.1 Examination and script moderation

The Panel observed that there is no examination section or unit at Rose-Hill Campus and hence staff send the examination papers to the respective heads of the departments and the individual secretary (of each HOD) enters the final marks in a database. After examinations, the answer papers/scripts are stored in the HOD's office. This is not a secure system and there is a risk involved. The Panel strongly recommends that UdM establish a central and secure examination unit for the University with dedicated staff responsible on both campuses. Furthermore, a Controller of Examination or equivalent staff may be appointed who can oversee responsibilities of university examinations. It is recommended that each campus should have an Examination Office.

UdM does not appoint external examiners and moderators. Currently there is no formal system. However, UdL has agreed to do the moderation though it is not the role of the Limoges academic staff. UdM needs a local framework, not merely to depend on the French system. Since there are programmes that are exclusively awarded by the UdM, UdM must establish its own moderation system for those programmes. This is also a cautious move to ensure that UdM has a moderation system in place even if UdL ceases to provide its present level of support.

Recommendation 22

It is recommended that UdM establish a central and secure examination unit for the University and set up an Examination Office on each campus.

Recommendation 23

It is recommended that a Controller of Examination be appointed to oversee the responsibilities of the University's examinations and to assign a dedicated staff for the Examination Office on both campuses.

Recommendation 24

It is recommended that each campus should have an Examination Office.

Recommendation 25

It is recommended that UdM establish its own moderation system for programmes awarded by UdM only and reduce its dependence on the French affiliation.

9. External Examiners

The Panel observed that faculties within UdM follow the French examination system that means the University requires approval of UdL prior to applying any decisions regarding external examinations.

The Panel recommends that a proper mechanism (policy and procedures) for the recruitment of external examiners should be established and the terms of reference for the appointment of external examiners must be developed and implemented. The period of service of external examiners and moderators should not exceed three years (as per TEC Handbook). The policy must specify how the University acts on external examiners' reports.

Recommendation 26

It is recommended that UdM institute a mechanism (policy and procedures) for the recruitment of external examiners and develop the terms of reference for the appointment of external examiners.

10. Research Degree Students

The Panel observed that there is no policy or procedure for the appointment of research degrees supervisors. The Panel was even told that some students have changed their supervisor without informing the University. Technically, this is impossible: no matter who a student talks to, their supervisor is the person approved in that role by UdM. It suggests a certain lack of self-assurance on the part of UdM that they would regard this informal activity by the student as 'changing supervisor'. The Panel believes that this is just one manifestation of UdM establishing a doctoral school when it is totally unready for such a step, with only a few PhD holders and active researchers among its staff.

As a result, the Panel strongly recommends developing a comprehensive manual for research students and research supervisors which should include roles and responsibilities, thesis submission guidelines, and guidelines for selection and change of research supervision. It is also recommended that all research students should be provided with adequate support through continuous monitoring of progress and feedback.

The Panel noted that there are currently research students enrolled with one or more external supervisor but without any supervisory staff from UdM. This is unusual, and calls into question what it means to say that the students will receive a UdM degree. It is therefore recommended that each research student should be supervised by a Panel of supervisors that includes at least one academic staff member from UdM and at least one member who is an active researcher in the relevant field.

No more doctoral students should be enrolled until TEC is fully satisfied that UdM is ready to do so, and at the very least the following recommendations should have been met.

Recommendation 27

It is recommended that UdM develop a comprehensive manual for research students and research supervisors which should include roles and responsibilities, thesis submission guidelines, and guidelines for selection and change of research supervision.

Recommendation 28

It is recommended that research students be provided with adequate support through continuous monitoring of progress and feedback.

Recommendation 29

It is recommended that each research student be supervised by a Panel of supervisors that includes at least one academic staff member from UdM and at least one member who is an active researcher in the relevant field.

Recommendation 30

It is recommended that no more doctoral students be enrolled until TEC is fully satisfied that UdM is ready to do so, and at the very least the above recommendations should have been met.

11. Collaborative Provisions

It has been noted that UdM has developed a strong collaborative arrangement with UdL by jointly awarding degree programmes. The “Accord Cadre” and the ‘Convention d’Association” between the two institutions elaborate on the terms of the cooperation in relation to the design and delivery of the programmes and ensuring sharing of resources and knowledge and access to e-resources. The students and staff have both favourably embraced the collaboration between the two institutions. UdM is commended for its collaborative arrangement with UDL leading to academic staff visits in France. The agreement also provides access for UDM staff and students to UDL online database for resources.

UdM students do not have the possibility to undertake a semester at UdL during the programme. However, UdM students have the possibility to carry out their industrial placement at Limoges and pursue a top-up programme at UdL after their diploma. Student exchange programme should be encouraged and structured between the two institutions. The Panel observed that academic staff at UdM have not developed research opportunities with academic staff of UdL. It is recommended that research initiatives be developed with UDL’s academic staff.

The collaborative arrangements with University of Northumbria and “Université de la Reunion” are still at an embryonic stage and the University will need to develop a clear strategy in areas where it will have beneficial impacts from such collaborations.

The University should collaborate with professional bodies to inform its programme reviews and accreditation initiatives.

Commendation 7

UdM is commended for its collaborative arrangement with UdL leading to academic staff visits in France and providing access to UdM staff and students to UdL online databases for resources.

Recommendation 31

It is recommended that UdM build up research initiatives with UdL academic staff.

Recommendation 32

It is recommended that UdM collaborate with professional bodies to inform its programme reviews and accreditation initiatives.

12. Industrial Links/Work-based Experience

The University has developed a very strong link with industry over more than 20 years, especially the Faculty of Sustainable Development and Engineering and the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology. Industrial placement is an important feature on all programmes at the University and is well incorporated in the curriculum. The industrial placements are credit-based and a student log book closely monitors students' progress. It was noted that students easily secure an industrial placement due to the good network that has been established over the years by academics. The prior work experience of academic staff in industry also facilitates the placements. UdM is commended for its strong industry linkage built through the network of its academic staff to accommodate industrial placements for students. Employers interviewed by the Panel, some of whom are representatives on the Faculty Boards, expressed their full satisfaction regarding the quality of students during the industrial placement. They particularly highlighted that students are well equipped with technical know-how to troubleshoot problems, have the right attitude, are proactive and ready to learn, and have good communication and interpersonal skills. It was also mentioned that some of the students had secured employment during their placement. The industry representatives on the Faculty Boards have mentioned their active role in providing inputs in curriculum design and validation. UdM is commended for the active involvement of the industry on the University's Faculty Boards.

The pioneering Dual Training Programme (DTP) with the MEXA is a very commendable initiative, which comprises a good mix of work based experience and classroom studies leading to a Diploma. The DTP addresses a gap for the growing demand of qualified and trained technicians for the manufacturing sectors in Mauritius. It provides a means for the students to acquire the necessary skills as technicians and to adapt to the specific requirements of the industries.

In order to rationalise industrial placement across both campuses, it is recommended that an Industry Placement Office be set up to monitor and support students. It is also recommended that an Industrial Placement Manual be developed.

At the postgraduate level, the University works in collaboration with industry to carry out research leading to PhDs. Securing funding from the Mauritius Research Council under the Research and Innovation Schemes is highly commendable.

Commendation 8

UdM is commended for its strong industry linkage built through the network of its academic staff to accommodate industrial placements for students.

Commendation 9

UdM is commended for the active involvement of the industry on the University's Faculty Boards.

Commendation 10

UdM is commended for the pioneering Dual Training Programme (DTP) with the Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) which comprises a good mix of work based experience and classroom studies leading to a Diploma.

Commendation 11

UdM is commended for securing funding from the Mauritius Research Council under the Research and Innovation Schemes.

Recommendation 33

It is recommended that an Industry Placement office be set up to monitor and support students.

Recommendation 34

It is recommended that an Industrial Placement Manual be developed.

13. Community Service and Good Citizenship

Community service is not well defined at UdM. The staff and students, interviewed by the Panel revealed that they were not fully aware of any community service undertaken by the institution. However, they are prepared to support such initiatives. One of the objectives in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021, stipulates a commitment to "*Develop wider engagement with, and outreaching to the community*". In this line, the University must develop a comprehensive plan for community engagement which is adequately resourced to guide such initiatives and

ensure a coherent approach to include student and staff. Involvement of students through the student union is highly recommended.

Recommendation 35

It is recommended that UdM develop a systematic overall plan for community engagement.

14. Appendices

14.1 Appendix A: The Audit Panel

Dr David Woodhouse, Former Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
(Chairperson)

Dr Arun Patil, Associate Professor, Deakin University, Australia

Dr Vinaye Armoogum, Associate Professor, University of Technology, Mauritius

Dr Ramesh Durbarry, Director, Civil Service College, Mauritius

Dr Vivek Gupta Ramnarain, Acting Head Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division,
Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

In attendance:

Mr Tarkeshwarsingh Beeharry, A/Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer, Tertiary
Education Commission, Mauritius

Secretary to the Audit Panel:

Mrs Ansuya Sobhee-Runnoo, Programme Officer Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

Secretarial support:

Mrs Kavina Rambhunjun, Programme Officer, Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

14.2 Appendix B: Acronyms and abbreviations

Closing the quality loop	Acting on findings in order to improve a process or result
DTP	Dual Training Programme
IST	Institut Supérieur de Technologie
MEXA	Mauritius Export Association
OH&S	Occupational Health and Safety
OADRI	Objectives, Approach, Deployment, Results, Improvement
QA	Quality Assurance
SDIM	Swami Dayanand Institute of Management
SER	Self-Evaluation Report
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
UdM	Université des Mascareignes
UdL	Université de Limoges

14.3 Appendix C: Institutional Context*(Extracted from Udm SER 2017)*

UdM aims to rank itself amongst the leading multidisciplinary Universities in the region within the next decade. It endeavours to become the preferred choice for students, lecturers and researchers of Mauritius and neighbouring countries while securing world-class partnerships in teaching and research.

UdM comprises the following three Faculties:

1. The Faculty of Sustainable Development and Engineering
2. The Faculty of Business and Management
3. The Faculty of Information and Communication Technology

UdM is currently home to 881 students and has faced a drop in student intake since its inception. However, the intake of international students has increased since 2012. International students hail from a range of countries- Comores, Cameroon, Congo (RDC), Ghana, Madagascar, Rwanda, Nigeria, amongst others.

UdM has a partnership agreement with UdL under which both the Université de Limoges, France - certificates and the Université des Mascareignes certificates are delivered to students for those programmes that are jointly delivered. The agreement also allows joint curricula and programmes design and sharing of resources and expertise.

UdM is unique in the sense that it is the only University to offer courses bilingually, with modules being taught both in French and English.

History

UdM was founded in 2012 after a merger between the Swami Dayanand Institute of Management (SDIM) of Pamplemousses and the IST (Institut Supérieur de Technologie) of Rose-Hill. It is the fourth public university in Mauritius under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research.

The University has two fully operational campuses, one at Roches Brunes and the other at Beau Plan, Pamplemousses.

The Pamplemousses campus started off as Droopnath Ramphul Polytechnic in 1995 and later, became Swami Dayanand Institute of Management. This project was funded by the World Bank, as Mauritius needed manpower at the technical and middle management level to provide supporting services in the tertiary sector of the economy, such as Financial services, Accounting, Marketing, Offshore banking, Information Technology etc. The Rose Hill campus (ex IST) started as IPRH (Institut Polytechnique de Rose Hill) in 1998 and was renamed IST (Institut Supérieur de Technologie) after two years. It worked in collaboration with the IUT (Institut Universitaire Technologique) of Brives, Limoges.

Organisational structure

The governance structure of UDM is stipulated in the Université des Mascareignes Act 2012. The Board is the ultimate Governing body of the institution, and is backed by several other entities, including the Academic Council, the Faculty Boards, and committees such as

- Staff Committee
- Planning and Finance Committee
- Research, Consultancy and Innovation Committee
- Quality and Standards Committee/ academic sub-committee
- Occupational Safety and Health Committee