TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE QUALITY AUDIT OF THE
MAURITIUS COLLEGE OF THE AIR

APRIL 2009

Established in 1988 as a parastatal body under the Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources, the Tertiary Education 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. The Commission is also entrusted with the responsibility to promote and maintain high quality standards in post-secondary education through appropriate quality assurance and accreditation processes.

C O N T E N T S

1. OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

1.1 Background

In 2008, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake an Institutional Quality Audit of the Mauritius College of the Air. This Report of the Audit provides an overview of the audit process together with a brief summary of the findings, and then provides details of the Audit Panel's findings, commendations and recommendations. It is to be noted that the Government is in the process of Setting up the Open University of Mauritius (OUM) which might absorb the MCA. A brief introduction to the Mauritius College of the Air (MCA) is given in Appendix A; the mission, objectives, vision and goals of TEC are at Appendix B; membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D defines abbreviations and technical terms used in the Report.

1.2 The Audit Process

TEC bases its audits on each organization's own objectives, together with the audit criteria provided in the Quality Audit Handbook of the TEC. The purpose of the audit was to

    (i)   assess the strength of the quality culture;
    (ii)   determine the commitment to continuous improvement;
    (iii)   appraise the systems in place to determine academic standards;
    (iv)   evaluate the systems in place to ensure that measures taken to maintain and enhance quality were appropriate and effective; and
    (v)   establish whether the institution was embracing the concept of **fitness for purpose as well as fitness of purpose**.

Full details of the TEC audit process are available in the TEC Quality Audit Handbook (www.tec.mu).

On 31st December 2008, the MCA presented its Self Evaluation Report (SER) to TEC including its Strategic Plan. The Auditors were each sent a copy of the same. After scrutinizing the portfolio and supporting documents the Panel members agreed on specific lines of enquiry. The Audit visit took place from 28 April to 30 April 2009. In all, the Audit Panel spoke with approximately 126 persons during the Audit visit, including the Chairperson of the MCA Board, members of the MCA Board, the Officer-in-Charge, academic and general staff and students. The Audit Panel also met with the Staff Union. An open session was also held for the staff and students of MCA to meet with the Panel. A number of people took advantage of this session by coming forth to air their views. The Audit Panel gave a verbal feedback to the management and the senior academic staff of the MCA after the visit.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit visit, which ended on 30 April 2009 and does not take account changes that may have occurred subsequently. It records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the MCA as well as other information made available to the Panel during the visit. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the MCA activities, the Report does not claim to have identified each and every aspect of quality assurance relevant to the institution.

It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications. The TEC has not prioritised these recommendations, and recognises that it is the responsibility of the MCA to respond in a consistent and coherent manner.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction to Findings

The MCA has a rich history in the production of education media materials to support the curriculum at various levels in the education sector as well as catering for the non formal sector and the general public. To date the MCA has also offered courses/programmes with local and offshore partners to some 11482 learners. The Panel noted that MCA has no awarding powers.

The Panel noted with appreciation that during its history the MCA has received several awards and recognition for media production. The Panel observed that over the years the MCA has entered into a number of partnerships to offer a variety of programmes catering for the needs of specific category of stakeholders. The Panel however feels that these partnerships should be further strengthened and the roles of the partners as well as the MCA to be clarified.

The Audit Panel was able to get a fair and comprehensive picture of the vision, missions, and objectives of the MCA. The Panel appreciated the effort of the Members of the Board of the MCA for making provisions with regards to the strategic direction of the MCA especially at a time when the MCA is undergoing major changes in its structure. The Panel noted the apprehensions of the staff of the MCA during discussions regarding the setting up of the Open University of Mauritius. However, the Panel appreciated the commitment, dedication and of the contribution of the staff to the achievement of the MCA objectives. The Panel also noted with appreciation the quality assurance processes in the Printing Section and encourages its implementation to the whole institution.

The MCA is equipped with an audio studio and a video studio with facilities to produce audio visual materials in processional formats. The Panel noted with satisfaction the unique media production facilities and the Learning Resource Centre as a national repository of media materials which the Mauritian public has full access.

The building housing the MCA does not fully conform to the needs of tertiary education institutions and as such Government secondary schools infrastructure is used to conduct face to face sessions. This affects the physical and campus ambience. The MCA has to address the issue of space as a matter of priority. The Panel however appreciated the role of the tutors in supporting the positive student experience and contributing to the right academic ambience.

The Panel noted that at the time of the audit a significant number of top level positions were vacant in the establishment which seriously puts at risk leadership at the MCA. The Panel is of the opinion that the senior positions should be filled to strengthen the leadership function ensuring achievement of the MCA's objectives. The Quality Assurance Unit at the MCA was operating on an ad hoc basis and worked to complement the development of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) for the audit. The Panel is of the view that being a provider of

tertiary education, activities related to quality assurance should be embedded in the organisation and a permanent unit should be set up to further enhance the quality culture.

The Panel noted that research is taken up only by few individuals at the MCA and is very limited. In fact there was no evidence regarding research policy at the MCA. The Panel is of the opinion that MCA should work out a research policy and engage in research related activities and this should be reflected in the workload of its academic staff.

The MCA has a well structured support services to its students. However the Panel is of the opinion that the library facilities should be upgraded to better cater the needs of the students and also the MCA should set up a library Committee to deal with issues related to acquisition of learning materials.

The Panel also observed that there were shortcomings with regards to communication issues. The Staff Union was not aware of the contents of the SER as well as the members were not involved in its preparation. The MCA should ensure clear lines of communication at all levels and coordinate its activities in a more transparent manner across the organization.

The MCA has well developed structures and mechanisms to deal with staff matters but their proper implementation must be considered seriously. The Panel noted that the dissemination of the staff development policy among staff at various levels was uneven or lacked consistency and the MCA should develop appropriate mechanism for conducting training needs analysis. Moreover, the Panel is of the opinion that work processes and job descriptions should be revisited to ensure greater clarity in roles and responsibilities of staff.

With regards to teaching and learning, the Panel noted that the MCA has developed a sound mechanism for the management and delivery of the programmes it offers in collaboration with its partners. However the MCA must consider few issues raised by students during the audit such as delays in examinations results and supply of study materials from its foreign partners. Moreover, the Panel is of the opinion that assignments should be sent directly to the MCA and not to tutors by the students. The MCA should take the responsibility to distribute the assignments to the tutors. This will allow MCA to exercise better control in marking assignments and it will also facilitate providing timely feedback to students.

In view of the above, the Panel is of the view that although the MCA meets the general criteria of "fitness for purpose", it must consider ways and means of generalising and further strenthening its quality culture. A summary of commendations and recommendations follows. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the Report and are not prioritised.

Commendations
1. The TEC commends the unique nature of the Mauritius College of the Air and the way it caters for the educational needs of the country
2. The TEC commends the Board of the Mauritius College of the Air for making provisions towards the strategic direction of the Mauritius College of the Air
3. The TEC commends the commitment, dedication and team spirit of the Mauritius College of the Air staff in the achievement of the institution's objectives
4. The TEC commends the Mauritius College of the Air for the quality assurance processes in the Printing and Graphics Section and encourages its implementation to the whole institution

5. The TEC commends the unique media production facilities owned by the Mauritius College of the Air
6. The TEC commends the Learning Resource Centre as a national repository for media materials
7. The TEC commends the role of the tutors in supporting the positive student experience

Recommendations
1. The TEC recommends that the Advisory Council be further strengthened to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Mauritius College of the Air's objectives.
2. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should fill the vacant senior positions and strengthen the leadership to achieve its future objectives
3. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should set up a permanent Quality Assurance Unit and the institution should revisit its role to quality assurance
4. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should develop a research policy and engage in research related activities which should be reflected in the workload of its academic staff
5. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should be more proactive and visionary to make effective use of its unique facilities and the pool of talents it has developed over the years in media production.
6. The TEC recommends that a Library Committee be set up at the Mauritius College of the Air to deal with issues related to acquisition of learning materials and the Mauritius College of the Air should also upgrade its existing library facilities to better cater the needs of the students
7. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air's staff development policy and its implementation plan must be disseminated to staff at all level.
8. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should develop appropriate mechanism for conducting training needs analysis
9. The TEC recommends the Mauritius College of the Air to set up a structured mechanism for performance appraisal.
10. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should revisit the work processes and job descriptions to ensure greater clarity in roles and responsibilities of staff
11. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should ensure proper lines of communication at all levels in the organisation
12. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should rationalise the management of submission, marking and providing feedback to students regarding assignments
13. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air addresses as a matter of priority the issue of space and other infrastructure facilities.
14. The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air must clarify its role and responsibilities as well as that of its partners in its various partnership arrangements and strengthen the procedures for the management of examinations and related matters.

The TEC is aware of developments in connection with the setting up of the Open University of Mauritius. The MCA will start implementation of the recommendations as soon as the report is released. In the event of the absorption of the MCA by the OUM, the latter institution is expected to continue implementing the recommendations of the Panel.

2. ORGANISATIONAL OVERVIEW

The MCA is a parastatal body under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources. It operates under the MCA Act. The Mauritius College of Air (MCA) has been the outcome of the joint initiative of the Government of Mauritius and the International Extension College (IEC), U.K. The MCA has as objective to promote education, arts, science and culture through mass media and correspondence/Distance Education modes. It largely operates in collaboration/partnership with other organizations, thus acting as a facilitating institution to widen access to education and training. Being more a service organization, it is unique in its character and structure. The MCA also services other Ministries and non-Government organisations in its attempt to cater for those whose educational needs are not met by the formal educational system.

The MCA launched its first course in October 1972 in collaboration with the University of Mauritius. Following renewed interest in media and distance education in the wake of World Bank interest in funding the development of the educational sector in Mauritius, the MCA merged with the Audio Visual Centre of the then Ministry of Education in 1986 in a purpose-built complex at Réduit and has been carrying out the following activities:

1. Production of educational programmes for formal education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for broadcast.
2. Production of educational materials for non-formal and continuing education for broadcast and non-broadcast use.
3. Designing and printing of support material for such programmes.
4. Provision of advisory and consultancy services in the development of print and non-print material.
5. Development of national audiovisual resource centre for education and training.
6. Development of a resource centre for national as well as organisational requirements in professions of the media, development communication, distance education, adult and non-formal education.

The Panel noted with satisfaction that the MCA has been awarded the following:

1. A prize at a film competition in Berlin in 1992 for *"Les Barrières Coralliennes"*
2. The UNESCO prize for *"International Programme for the Development of Communication"* (IPDC) in 1993 for multimedia work done for the Ministry of Health on non-communicable diseases.
3. An award in 1994 at the Festival International du Film Maritime on *"Fishing in Mauritius"*

The Panel was informed that the MCA was recognized as a Tertiary Education Institution as from 1988. The Panel also noted that the MCA does not have awarding powers. It has to work out agreements with local and offshore institutions to offer programmes at the Tertiary level.

2.1 THE MCA BOARD

The MCA is administered by a Board which is responsible to ensure proper standards of corporate governance, compliance to statutory requirements and the regulatory obligations. The MCA Board currently has a Chairman and seven other members and works in a

decentralized manner. The Board has two standing committees; the Finance Committee and the Human Resources Committee.

The Board is appointed for a period of two years and an Advisory Council advises the Board on matters falling within the purview of the College, especially on issues concerning the production of programmes.

The MCA Board comprises the following:

- A Chairman
- A representative of the Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources
- The Director of the Mauritius College of the Air
- A representative of the Ministry of Finance & Economic Empowerment
- A representative of the Prime Minister's Office
- The Director of the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
- Two co-opted members nominated by the Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources.

2.1.2 Human Resources Committee

The Committee has been established to expedite the conduct of the Board Meeting. The Chairperson of the MCA Board leads this committee which also comprises four other members of the Board. The Committee considers recommendations from the MCA management pertaining to establishment matters and also involved in recruitment, selection and promotion exercises at the MCA.

2.1.3 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meets for purchases beyond "Quotation Committee" limits, i.e. more than Rs500, 000 but not more than Rs10, 000,000.

The Committee also meets:-
- to evolve appropriate policies;
- to evolve equitable distribution of government grant and revenue towards attaining the mission of the organisation; and
- to allocate budgets to Heads of Section and endow them with autonomy.

The Finance Committee is chaired by the Board member who is the representative of Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance & Economic Development and also comprises four other members.

2.2 MCA Advisory Council

There is also an Advisory Council chaired by the Director and which makes recommendations to the Board. The regulation of teaching, admission of students, the making of awards is not provided. Its members are from the Ministries of Social Security, Agriculture, Health, Women, Information Services and Education as well as the Private

Secondary Schools Authority, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the University of Mauritius and the MCA itself.

The Audit Panel heard concerns regarding the functioning of the Advisory Council. The Panel was advised that the composition of the Council no longer responds to the needs of the MCA and emerging sectors like Tourism and the BPO are not represented. It was noted that the Advisory Council has clear terms of reference and its composition is defined by the Act. Changes in the composition can only be brought about by amending the MCA Act. The Panel was of the opinion that the Advisory Council has an important role to play with regards to the proper functioning of the MCA. It comprises several stakeholders of the MCA and is a platform where the ideas and opinions of the stakeholders are taken on board and translated into actions at the level of the MCA in terms of audiovisual programmes to be produced as well as tertiary programmes to be offered by the DDE. The Panel strongly felt that the Advisory Council and its composition be further strengthened by the MCA.

Recommendation 1

The TEC recommends that the Advisory Council be further strengthened to contribute effectively to the achievement of the Mauritius College of the Air's objectives.

2.3 Object of the Mauritius College of the Air

The object of the College is to promote education, arts, science and culture through mass media and distance education methods.

In line with this object, the Mauritius College of the Air endeavours to:

1. provide equity in the educational system
2. upgrade the standard of teaching and learning
3. bring opportunities in life-long education
4. use modern methods of communication to service the educational needs of Government and non-Government organisations.

As mentioned in its Self Evaluation Report (SER), the MCA has as vision to be a "centre of excellence nationally and in the region in the use of information and communication technologies for education". As a provider of education through mass media and flexible methods, the MCA aims to be a leading institution in programmes for the pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including adult and continuing education for life-long learning, in a diverse range of disciplines.

Commendation 1
The TEC commends the unique nature of the Mauritius College of the Air and the way it caters for the educational needs of the country

The mission statement of the MCA is to develop high quality educational programmes to supplement, complement and enrich formal teaching as well as to enhance the availability of life-long education and training opportunities responding to the needs of the people of Mauritius by using the latest available educational technologies. The MCA endeavours to democratize education through the use of mass-media and through the use of flexible and open learning.

In pursuance of its mission, the MCA is committed to openness in the provision of service, in its decision-making processes and in the use of the collegial expertise of its staff. Its hallmarks will be innovation, initiative and teamwork and its ability to anticipate and effectively respond to the changes taking place in the educational and audiovisual scenes in Mauritius and to create better opportunities within its fields of competence. The MCA is committed to contribute to the creation of a learning society in Mauritius.

In its endeavour to emerge as a leading public entity promoting a learning society in disseminating knowledge, the MCA has devised a strategic plan for 2009 –2011. This has been finalised and approved by the MCA's Board. Its vision and mission and strategic objectives are as follows:

2.3.1 Vision
To emerge as the Republic of Mauritius, leading public entity that will promote a learning society

2.3.2 Mission
To promote education, arts, science and culture through technology

2.3.3 Strategic Objectives

To
- set up the Policy and Management of operations.
- be the focal point for the production and the dissemination of educational multimedia materials in the Republic of Mauritius.
- create a repository of local educational media based products that will enhance the delivery of education at all levels.
- increase access to further and continuing education at various levels.
- be the one-stop shop for the Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources and other public agencies in publishing print-based educational materials.
- be a regional training centre in Information and Communication Technologies.
- build up capacity in Information & Communication Technology and audiovisual engineering.

To achieve its vision and mission, the MCA has been structured into the following Divisions/Sections:

- Division of Distance Education (DDE)
- Educational Services Section (Media)
- Production & Engineering Services Section
- Administrative Section
- Learning Resources Centre
- Finance & Stores
- Graphics, Publishing & Printing Section
- Information System
- Internal Audit

The two main divisions are the DDE and Educational Services. The others provide support to ensure the smooth running of the organisation and delivery of the services.

The Panel queried on the fact that the strategic plan was of two years duration and requested the Board members to justify same. The Panel was advised that the two years plan was prepared in view of the prevailing uncertainty due to the imminent establishment of the Open University of Mauritius. The Panel was informed of the possibility of the MCA Act to be repealed and the institution being given altogether a new set up and structure.

However the Board members were satisfied with the achievement of the MCA over the last few years. The MCA had launched the "Let's learn differently campaign" with a view to improve the pass rates at both primary and secondary levels. The MCA is providing the necessary support to encourage the use of multimedia and ICT in schools. The Panel also noted that over the years the MCA has developed a pool of talent in the field of educational media production and trained staff in distance education.

Commendation 2

TEC commends the Board of the Mauritius College of the Air for making provisions towards the strategic direction of the MCA

The Panel also noted that senior posts were vacant at the MCA. At the time of the audit, the posts of Director, Deputy Director and Administrative Secretary were not filled following the departure of the former holders of the respective posts. The Board expressed its concern on this issue and informed the Panel that it does not have the power to advertise for the post of the Director but can only make a request to its parent Ministry. Moreover the Panel also noted that the institution has made provisions to advertise the post of Quality Assurance Officer. The Panel was of the opinion that the three top positions at the MCA were not filled at the time of the audit and this might lead to serious leadership problems and decision making at the institution.

Recommendation 2

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should fill the vacant senior positions and strengthen the leadership to achieve its future objectives

At the time of the audit, the designated Officer in Charge was responsible to ensure daily operations and ensure the achievement of the short term objectives of the MCA and also working holistically towards the achievement of the long term objectives. Despite the constraints faced by the MCA, it was observed that a good overall atmosphere prevailed among the staff and the right synergy was developed to get the work through at the MCA. This was also confirmed during discussions with Heads of Sections and other staff members. The employees showed a great sense of belonging and dedication to their work resulting in an excellent team spirit in the organisation.

Commendation 3

The TEC commends the commitment, dedication and team spirit of the Mauritius College of the Air staff in the achievement of the institution's objectives

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE

MCA claims to be committed to a quality provision of its services to its diverse clientele and it has invested into the following:

- Setting up a Quality Assurance System in the Graphics, Printing & Publishing Section which has been ISO certified since 2003.
- The services of two Consultants for setting up a quality assurance system for the management and delivery of ODL to its public wishing to improve their qualifications and obtain further training.
- Management made representations with the Pay Research Bureau for the creation of a post of Quality Assurance Officer. This has been approved and recruitment is awaited.

The Panel noted with appreciation that the Printing section obtained its ISO certification in December 2003 and was at the time of the audit in its 6th year of certification. The Printing section has a Quality Manual which defines the scope of registration to the ISO 9001:2000 standard, policies, objectives, procedures and processes. The Quality Objectives are identified and reviewed periodically to ensure consistency with the object of the MCA. The Printing section has a Quality Manual which defines the scope of registration to the ISO 9001:2000 standard, policies, objectives, procedures and processes. The Quality Policy is to ensure that

- quality Management System (QMS) complies with MS ISO 9001:2000 international standard
- all employees contribute towards the quality processes
- quality objectives are identified
- the Printing Section meets all its statutory, social and environmental obligations/requirements

The Quality Objectives are identified and reviewed periodically to ensure consistency with the object of the MCA as per the MCA Act. It is intended to have all sections ISO certified in future. Structured discussion with the staff of the Printing and Graphics Section revealed the level of confidence and satisfaction among the employees in ensuring high quality standards in the delivery of outputs to the customers of the Section.

Commendation 4
The TEC commends the Mauritius College of the Air for the quality assurance processes in the Printing and Graphics Section and encourages its implementation to the whole institution

The Panel was informed that the process of preparing the self evaluation report was a consultative one and the whole document was vetted by an external resource person. The Panel noted that despite the fact that there are clear guidelines to ensure quality in the tertiary education sector the MCA has resorted to implementing ISO certification. The activities of the MCA are quite diverse ranging from production and dissemination of audiovisual and print materials to dispensing distance education programmes. This was the justification provided for adopting the approach leading to ISO Certification. Moreover the Panel also observed that one officer of the organization was assuming the responsibility and coordinating quality assurance activities on a part time basis. There was a whole team dedicated to the preparation of the Self Evaluation Report and it was pointed out that the team was an ad hoc one and the institution has already made provisions to recruit a quality assurance officer. However at the time of the audit the quality assurance officer was not yet

appointed. During the discussion with the quality assurance team admitted that the MCA is lagging behind in comparison to other tertiary education institutions in matters related to quality assurance and the team felt that a dedicated Quality Assurance Unit should be set up. Moreover, given it does not have awarding powers, the MCA is subject to Quality Assurance controls from its partner institutions. The programmes on offer in collaboration with the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology Mauritius are subject to the quality assurance mechanisms of the awarding bodies.

Recommendation 3

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should set up a permanent Quality Assurance Unit and the institution should revisit its role to quality assurance

4. RESEARCH

The Panel noted with concern that research is not a significant activity at the MCA. In fact there is no appropriate structure and policy to foster and encourage research at the institution. The budget also does not make mention of research or research related activities at the MCA. Given that MCA has as objective to promote distance learning and also audio visual production there was little evidence of research related activities undertaken in these particular areas. Research is considered as a vital area of growth of any post secondary educational institution and the Panel noted that the research record of the MCA is not impressive. There is very little research work undertaken at individual level. The Panel noted some evidence of research undertaken by the staff of the educational services unit for their own consumption. For the audit period under consideration there were three papers that were worked out and two are awaiting publications from the distance education division.

Recommendation 4

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should develop a research policy and engage in research related activities which should be reflected in the workload of its academic staff

5. MEDIA DIVISION

5.1 Educational Services Section

The Educational Services Section comprises academic staff involved in project coordination and production of educational media materials. These include audio, video, CDs, VCDs, DVDs and print items.

The target audiences range from pre-primary to primary and secondary school teachers and students as well as parents. They also consist of tertiary institutions, Ministries and Non-Governmental Organisations involved in adult education.

MCA programmes are broadcast via the national station, namely the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), with which the MCA has a Memorandum of Understanding for collaboration in production and broadcasting.

Workshops are also held by the Educational Services staff for teacher training at primary and secondary levels, for encouraging the integration of media in the classroom.

Within the Educational Services, its mission is:

- To provide a broad spectrum of educational services from pre-primary to tertiary and adult education in the formal and non-formal sectors.
- To use information and communication technologies to produce and disseminate educational audiovisual materials and to promote their use.
- To become a centre of excellence in the region for media based training.

The strategic objectives for the Educational Services as featured in the document were:

- To be the leading provider of continuing education and life long learning
- To ensure the successful use of media-based materials
- To optimize the human and physical resources towards future development

Interestingly the MCA has carried out an internal environmental analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Education Services. These are:

Strengths

- The MCA is well equipped with state-of-the-art equipment for multimedia productions.
- The MCA has a pool of qualified, skilled and trained staff in media production.
- MCA has amassed a reservoir of knowledge in the field of educational media production by being the only public organisation that develops and produces media materials for education.
- The Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources has designated MCA as its focal point for the Knowledge Channel of the MBC.

Weaknesses

- Absence of definition of Key Result Areas for delivery of media based materials by the MCA.
- The scheduling of our video programmes for broadcast on MBC is beyond MCA's control. There is no clear-cut broadcast policy.
- Scarcity of human resources for production of audiovisual materials.
- Scarcity of skills for the design and development of multimedia materials.
- Completion of projects is dependent on various sectors of activities.
- Planning of production is hampered by unexpected and/or urgent requests from external customers.

The MCA is equipped as follows:
- One audio studio with all necessary recording equipment to record high quality audio programmes in a controlled environment. We also have 1 audio editing suite to edit all the indoor audio, and on-location audio recordings which are carried out with 2 sets of portable professional equipment.
- One video studio equipped with four cameras, lights, together with all sound equipment to produce good quality indoor video programmes.
- 2 sets of equipment for on-location video recordings composed of cameras, microphones and all the peripherals for professional video recordings.
- 2 full-fledged video graphics computers (MAC based) to produce all the graphics needed for all our video programmes.
- 4 video editing suites to edit all the video programmes produced by the Media Division.

The MCA is also fully equipped to convert programmes produced on professional formats to DVDs, VCDs and CDs for distribution as per the MCA policy.

Commendation 5

The TEC commends the unique media production facilities owned by the Mauritius College of the Air

The MCA has continually strived to improve its production both audio and video. The Chairman of the MCA Board pointed out that the MCA has not formalised the use of any performance indicators. However, an evaluation report on the number of programmes in progress, the number of projects in the pipeline and the number of minutes of programmes produced is prepared on a monthly basis.. Training in the field of audio visual production especially regarding the setting up of a Media Training School within the MCA has not become a reality despite the idea being put forward. Moreover MCA cannot bid for media production within the industry. After discussion with the staff of the Media Division the Panel was of the opinion that the unique facilities at the MCA are not being utilised to its maximum. The studio is not being utilised to its maximum in a day. The MCA has to be more proactive, visionary and make effective use of its unique facilities and the pool of talents it has developed over the years in media production.

Recommendation 5

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should be more proactive and visionary to make effective use of its unique facilities and the pool of talents it has developed over the years in media production.

However, the MCA has constantly resorted to revisit the format of its production based on audience surveys carried out by itself and the MBC. It further spearheads the School Information and Technology Project (SITP) in providing the software.

The number of productions accessioned sector wise over the last five years is listed below. It covers a wide range of production types - sensitizing spots, corporate clips, coverage of educational events, studio-based programmes and documentaries.

YEAR	NO. OF AUDIO VISUAL PROGRAMMES		
	Primary	**Secondary**	**Continuing Education**
2004	**85**	**170**	**1245**
2005	**52**	**39**	**699**
2006	**79**	**89**	**227**
2007	**120**	**30**	**99**
2008	**43**	**149**	**212**

5.1.1 Primary Education Sector

The MCA Primary Education Sector is involved in the production of educational media materials to support the National Primary Curriculum Framework. The educational media materials are produced for two distinct audiences at primary school level: children and teachers. The learning materials produced for children in video or audio format aim at supporting and enriching curriculum contents while programmes produced for teachers aim at empowering them and enhancing their self and professional development. The MCA also organised training of teachers and inspectors about how to make an effective use of media materials in class. Some 2000 educators have been trained to-date.

The Media Integration Project (MIP) was initiated by the MCA in 2005 to promote MCA educational materials in Primary schools and to empower teachers in the use and integration of media materials in teaching and learning. The Media Integration Project (MIP) has been introduced in 44 preschools.

5.1.2 School Information Technology Project (SITP)

The School Information Technology Project was an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources to look into the integration of information and telecommunications technologies in the teaching/learning process. The MCA produced interactive multimedia CDROM using materials downloaded from the Internet which meet the requirements of the school curriculum and also include subjects like Geography and Science. The MCA is working towards positioning itself in this new line of production and meet the demands of students with different learning styles.

5.1.3 Secondary Education Sector

This sector provides media-based learning materials for young people aged between 12 and 20 years both formal that is they address the direct learning requirements of the school curriculum, and non-formal, addressing topics of general issues like health, economy, environment, career prospects and many more. So far the following areas have been covered: English Language and Social Studies at form I level and Mathematics and Science at form III level.

To encourage co-curricular activities in the schools, the MCA organizes on a yearly basis a number of competitions like Quiz, Brains' Trust and Reading Aloud amongst others.

In 2008, the MCA also initiated a new concept, the Project-Based Learning which promotes the student-centred approach of learning, engaging students in an inquiry process to develop projects, formulate hypotheses, collect and analyze relevant information and data and to articulate their ideas and findings.

5.1.4 Non-Formal Sector

The MCA has been working to meet the communication needs of individuals, the community, organisations and ministries. Its varied range of productions has helped to develop a social information infrastructure.

The MCA has produced a number of spots to sensitise the public on social ills such as the HIV, drugs and alcohol and other public campaign on non-communicable diseases, protecting your environment, road safety, and fire safety.

The MCA knowledge Channel aims at upgrading the level of education and the quality of life of the Mauritian nation as a whole. The Knowledge Channel provides an opportunity to increase access to education and give enrichment material to one and all.

5.2 Production & Engineering Section

The Production Unit of the Production and Engineering Section is responsible for all operational services which comprise all audio, video productions and dubbings which originate from Educational Services, Distance Education Division and production staff.

5.3 Engineering Services

The Engineering Services comprise three units namely:
- Audiovisual engineering
- IT
- Building Engineering

With converging technologies audiovisual engineering manages the investment into hardware for audiovisual production and DDE activities and the upkeep of those resources including the IT equipment Park. The IT unit conducts software development and maintenance of Management of Information Systems and IT Administration tasks in general. The Building Engineering Unit manages the maintenance of Building Services and generally undertakes maintenance of electrical systems and first hand maintenance using in house capacity.

The MCA has developed and is implementing Management Information Systems for the:
1. Graphics & Printing Department: The system is used to keep information regarding all printing projects and generate reports to analyse costs, wastes and use of human resources.
2. HR Department: The system is used to manage attendance, leaves and benefits of staff.
3. Stores Department - Fixed Assets: The system is used to manage location, cost, warranty, depreciation and inventory of all assets of MCA

The MCA is developing a new website which will provide online student services, and online marketing tools for MCA productions.

6. LEARNING RESOURCES CENTRE

The Learning Resources Centre (LRC), originally known as the Documentation Centre and later as the National Resource Centre, was set up in 1981. The opening hours of the LRC have been extended till late afternoon (6 p.m.) to suit the convenience of the students. Its collection of more than 33,000 items is strong on audiovisual materials. The acquisition policy of books was originally aimed at facilitating the professional tasks of the staff of MCA. With the emergence of the Distance Education Division the acquisition policy started to take into account the needs and requirements of students and academic staff.

The acquisition of audiovisual materials is aimed at providing audiovisual resources for primary and secondary schools as well as for the general public. The video collection was built up as a base of resources for broadcast and dubbing for primary and secondary schools and for the general public.

Commendation 6

The TEC Commends the Learning Resource Centre as a national repository for media materials

The book stock is relatively smaller. The main lending collection is reserved for staff of MCA, as it deals with professional literature. The books for the distance education students are located separately. Most of the books have been transferred to the library of Belle Rose State Secondary School, where the face-to-face sessions are held.

Seating capacity for more than 40 students is available in Réduit. Facilities for previewing VCDs and DVDs and for listening CDs are provided through the audiovisual carrels in the Learning Resources Centre. Two personal computers are reserved for students' utilisation of the Internet and for typing their assignments.

In Belle Rose SSS, the library can accommodate 40 students. The LRC also offers lending service to schools and through its Sales Service, MCA productions are made available to the public at subsidised prices. Moreover it arranges for dubbing of video and audio tapes for government-funded institutions and schools free of charge. As part of its outreach activities, the LRC takes part in fairs held regionally in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

During discussion with the staff of the LRC, it was noted that reference books are purchased upon recommendations from tutors. As such there was no evidence of a Library Committee at the MCA to cater for the increasing demands for reference materials by the students. The Panel felt that this issue be addressed as a matter of priority and a Library Committee be set up and be operational to deal with issues related to purchase of books. During the discussion with the students it was also pointed out that they have problems in accessing books available at the SSS Belle Rose especially during school holidays.

Recommendation 6
The TEC recommends that a Library Committee be set up at the Mauritius College of the Air to deal with issues related to acquisition of learning materials and the Mauritius College of the Air should also upgrade its existing library facilities to better cater the needs of the students

7. HUMAN RESOURCES

The Panel noted that the literature provided in this section of the SER was too theoretical and was not a concrete presentation of facts about this issue at the MCA. At the very outset it was pointed out by the Chairman that the forthcoming establishment of the Open University of Mauritius and the uncertainty resulting from this event has resulted in the lowering of the staff morale at the MCA. The Board and top management are facing the arduous task of motivating the staff to ensure smooth running of the organisation. As mentioned earlier in this report the MCA is facing serious leadership problems given that the three top positions in the organisation have been left vacant. The day to day running of the MCA is ensured by a nominated Officer in Charge. However the staffs of the MCA were of the view that decision making is delayed in certain cases due to the absence of senior leaders.

7.1 Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The Board govern the conditions of service of the employees of the College and in particular to deal with:
(a)   The appointment, dismissal, discipline, pay and leave and the security to be given by employees;
(b)   Appeal by employees against dismissal and other disciplinary measures.

MCA faces specific skills shortages in areas of operational services, printing, graphics design, production of educational programmes, engineering services, marketing, research and quality assurance. All salaries are graded by the Pay Research Bureau. Taking into consideration availability of funds and priority needs of the organisation, the Board approves upon recommendation from Management vacancies to be filled in each financial year.

Internal advertisement is issued in the first instance to give priority to internal candidates depending on posts to be filled. Appointment may be on contract, temporary, part-time or on one year's probation. In case internal candidates are not found suitable, then public advertisement is issued.

7.2 Induction of New Staff

At the MCA, the induction programme is designed to help the new members of staff to familiarise themselves with their new work environment. The new recruits are explained the 'MCA Office Instructions', the discipline, ethics and code of behaviour in the environment of a tertiary institution.

7.3 Staff Development

According to the self evaluation report one per cent of the personal emoluments budget is allocated for Staff Development, subject to availability of funds and practicability. The MCA has sponsored several employees as part of its Staff Development policy. During discussion with the academics, staff members and also with the Union it was pointed out that the latter have not been made aware of the staff development plan of the MCA. The Panel noted the good intention of the Staff Committee to introduce a graduate scheme for educational services staff thereby training them at the post graduate level in multimedia. This will help retention of staff particularly in the scare areas mentioned above. However the Panel is of the

opinion that the staff development policy and its implementation plan should be clearly communicated to all staff.

Recommendation 7

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air's staff development policy and its implementation plan must be disseminated to staff at all level.

7.4 Promotion

For higher post, a two-stage interview is conducted. The vacancy in the higher grade in the same hierarchy is advertised internally subsequent to Board's approval and provision of funds. Heads of Section submit to the Secretary of the Human Resources Committee a comprehensive report on officers who are considered for promotion. The report underlies their performance, regularity in attendance, behaviour, attitude and their competence and ability to assume responsibility for the higher post. The Panel noted that there was a mass promotion exercise in 2007.

7.5 Training and Staff Retention

At the MCA, the following grades are considered to be in scarcity area:

1.   Technician (Engineering Services)
2.   Senior Technician (Engineering Services)
3.   Technical Executive (Engineering Services)
4.   Senior Technical Executive (Engineering Services)
5.   Senior Technical Executive (Operations)
6.   Head Operational Services
7.   Senior Printing Officer, Printing Officer
8.   Graphics Officer, Graphics Artist
9.   Coordinators

The Pay Research Bureau (PRB) has remunerated these grades adequately, inclusive of fringe benefits in some cases so that officers in the above grades do not leave the organisation to join the private sector. The Panel is of the opinion that only fringe benefits will not boost up the morale of the staff. Training is an important activity that should be undertaken to upgrade the skills of the staff as well as helping the institution to retain them. The Panel was informed that earlier training was organised in house with the collaboration of external agencies like DW Television or staffs were trained abroad. Of late such type of training is no more available. Given the very nature of the MCA and its link with multimedia, training is very important and should be an ongoing exercise. The Panel also feels that proper training needs analysis also must be carried out so that the institution has a significant percentage of trained and skilled staff.

Recommendation 8

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should develop appropriate mechanism for conducting training needs analysis

7.6 Staff Appraisal

Heads of Sections submit quarterly reports on the performance and conduct of new recruits or staff who have been promoted. Over the years, there has been a shift from confidential reporting to performance appraisal. There was little evidence of proper performance appraisal mechanism at the MCA. Discussion with the members of the MCA Staff Union confirmed this shortcoming at the MCA. With the introduction of Performance Management System recommended by PRB 2008, officers will be required to carry out and submit self-appraisal report regularly on their performance in their key-result areas. The MCA is yet to work out a proper mechanism to implement the Performance Management System.

Recommendation 9

The TEC recommends the Mauritius College of the Air to set up a structured mechanism for performance appraisal.

The MCA has evolved over time and the Panel noted that the same scheme of service is applicable for quite some time without being modified to take into account the reality of the sector. The MCA is highly dependent on technology implying that work processes must evolve continually. This should be reflected in the job descriptions of the various grades at the MCA. The Panel also noted that academics in the Distance Education Division are rarely involved in lecturing and teaching activities. They act mainly as facilitators. There is a need to clarify and demarcate the roles of staff in certain areas at the MCA.

Recommendation 10

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should revisit the work processes and job descriptions to ensure greater clarity in roles and responsibilities of staff

The MCA has also developed and implemented safety, health and environment policies and practices in order to comply with existing legislative and regulating frameworks. During the course of the year, a Safety and Health Policy was agreed upon and a Safety and Health Committee is functioning to ensure its implementation. The Panel noted with appreciation that the MCA has a policy of recruiting those who are physically challenged and that at the time of the audit it has 3 members on its personnel.

7.7 Meeting with Staff Union

The Panel also met with the members of the Staff Union. The members informed the Panel that they were not involved in the preparation of the SER and as such they were not aware of its content. The members also expressed their apprehension regarding the new direction the MCA is going to take. Moreover, they expressed concern about communication in the organisation. Though they meet with Management almost once a month their participation and involvement is not sought on many issues concerning the staff. They also showed concerns regarding staff development and training.

Recommendation 11
The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should ensure proper lines of communication at all levels in the organisation

8. DIVISION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

The core activities for the Distance Education Division as stated in the SER are as follows:

- ❑ Course/Programme Design for DE
- ❑ Instructional Systems Design
- ❑ Course/Programme Delivery
- ❑ Course/Programme Administration/Management
- ❑ Prospecting for new courses/programmes for DE
- ❑ Training of Tutors/Course writers
- ❑ Learner support.

The Division of Distance Education has as mission:

- To develop and maintain high quality flexible education programmes that enhances the availability of life-long education and training.
- To harness the collegial expertise of our staff and most appropriate information and communication technologies towards meeting the tertiary needs of the people of Mauritius so that they can cope with a changing environment.
- To become a leading centre for adult learning.

The Distance Education Division was set up in 1994 and was initially offering a 2-year Higher Certificate in Librarianship and Information Science in collaboration with Napier University (UK). As a first major DE project, MCA was assigned the responsibility of upgrading the academic qualifications of some five hundred private secondary school teachers. Subsequently DE courses/programmes for adult and continuing education were developed by the MCA on -

- Information Technology - IT in Everyday Life
- The maintenance of audiovisual equipment.
- Basic English for the Mauritius Telecom artisans having only primary level education.
- A pilot project offering two Télé Université (Canada) courses namely: Théories de la Communication and Rédaction Fondamentale, each worth 3 credits to Mauritian nationals, was implemented at the MCA.
- A Basic Teacher Training course for prospective secondary school teachers was developed and piloted with 40 teachers in Rodrigues - a then dependency of Mauritius. This was also offered to newly recruited teachers in Mauritius afterwards.

The Panel noted that the DDE is the interface between students following an award or non award programme and the MCA. The DDE is staffed by 6 academics, 1 Programmes Coordinator responsible for the administration and 12 support staff. The Panel also observed that the MCA has no awarding powers. The Panel held structured discussion with all the stakeholders namely the staff, the tutors, the partners and the students.

DE courses/programmes for professional development, upgrading of qualifications, up skilling etc. were either mounted and delivered by MCA or offered in collaboration with both local and offshore institutions. The Panel noted that with regards to the mounting of

Continuous Development Programmes, the MCA takes into consideration the training needs analysis conducted by the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs. The MCA has developed and offered a Continuing Professional Development course for public officers **"Customer Care & Quality Management"** at the request of the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

The Panel observed that the MCA has successfully implemented a lot of award and non award programmes. However many projects were not implemented due to unforeseen reasons as stated by the MCA staff. Some programmes were turned down by partners and others were shifted to other institutions. The DDE offers a variety of courses/programmes catering for the post secondary sector ranging from non-award short courses to Masters' programmes. It has designed and developed short Continuous Professional Development ODL courses for public officers.

The short course, the **"Information Technology in Everyday Life"**, designed and developed by the MCA to bring IT skills to adults through ODL, was awarded a Certificate of Merit for excellence in Distance Teaching by the Commonwealth of Learning based in Canada. This course also provided the inspiration for the Computer Proficiency Programme which took over the massification of IT proficiency in the country. 45,000 adults benefited from the course. DDE has designed and developed a flexible learning manual on E-Government Fundamentals for the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to assist Civil Servants in the implementation of the E-Government Policy.

As at date (at the time of the audit) the MCA has offered the following courses/programmes:

Higher Certificate in Librarianship & Information Science	Napier University, Scotland
Diploma/Advanced Diploma in Transport	Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (UK)
CILT (UK) Level 5 Diploma in Logistics & Transport	
CILT (UK) Level 6 Advanced Diploma in Logistics & Transport	
Graduateship of the Institution of Fire Engineers	Stevenson College UK
Bachelor in Computer Applications	Indira Gandhi National Open University, India
Bachelor in Tourism	
Bachelor of Commerce	
Bachelor of Arts in English	
Certificate in Empowering Women through self help Groups	
Master in Business Administration	
Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management	
Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Management	
Postgraduate Diploma in Journalism & Mass Communication	
Master of Arts in English	
Master of Arts in Distance Education	
Certificate in Marketing	Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK
Advanced Diploma in Cooperative Studies	Ministry of Cooperatives

Diploma in Management	University of Technology Mauritius/FPBOU*
Teachers' Certificate for Pre-Primary	Mauritius Institute of Education
Certificate of Proficiency in the Management of ECD Services	Mauritius Institute of Education
Graduate Management Conversion Programme	University of Mauritius
Masters in Business Administration	
MSc Risk Management	
Certificate of Librarianship & Information Science for Library Clerks	MCA

*Federation of Parastatal Bodies and Other Unions.

The following demand-led short-non-award courses were also offered:
➢ Communication Skills
➢ Getting in Touch
➢ Teaching Spoken English
➢ Essay Writing Skills
➢ Techniques de la Rédaction

The total enrolment for the MCA on award programme is as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
157	356	415	478	379

8.1 Management and Delivery of Programmes

The Panel noted with satisfaction that the MCA has over the years developed a sound mechanism for the management and delivery of the programmes it offers in collaboration with its various partners. The DDE has documented several of its procedures in a quality manual following consultation with consultants in the field of quality management. A planner is issued at the beginning of each semester. It provides details about the modules/topics to be covered and the dates on which the sessions are held. The target dates for assignments are also indicated. These are planned to enable progress at a reasonable pace.

The Panel was informed that tutors are recruited through public advertisement and a database has been constituted. The selection of the tutors follows a comprehensive scrutiny of the CV submitted and the experience of the tutors. However in some cases especially regarding the programmes offered in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, the tutors are selected by the awarding body. All tutors are trained on key issues relating to ODL, Adult learning principles and Tutoring techniques. During the meeting with the tutors, the latter expressed their satisfaction with the overall organisation and delivery of the various programmes. Tutors are informed well in advance about the face to face sessions. Moreover the tutors were also satisfied with the support materials provided by the awarding bodies.

The Panel also met with a group of students and they expressed a lot of satisfaction about their experience with the tutors. The students appreciated the role of the MCA in delivering ODL programmes which suit them especially to cope with their work and studies at the same time. The students praised the tutors in helping them in their studies through proper guidance,

availability at odd hours (students can call their tutors for help) and in creating the right ambience and atmosphere for learning to take place effectively. The award they received also helped them in their career and the price they had to pay was very affordable.

Commendation 7

The TEC commends the role of the tutors in supporting the positive student experience

However the students eagerly pointed out the difficulties they encountered especially with the programmes from overseas. The study materials sometimes are received quite late which causes a delay in the studies. Moreover the Panel noted that some of the study materials date back ten years and were not updated. The Panel was of the opinion that some study areas are quite dynamic and changes in the study materials are to be brought quite often and at a regular interval. The students enrolled on the University of Mauritius or University of Technology, Mauritius programmes also mentioned about having access to library facilities of the awarding bodies. The Panel also enquired about how the programmes from the foreign awarding bodies are customised and was informed that the tutors had this responsibility and adaptations were also reflected in the assignments students have to answer.

The Panel noted with appreciation the learner support system at the MCA. It has opened a new Study Centre. The MCA organises induction sessions for all courses/programmes which enables all learners to get an overview of ODL and be aware of what is expected of them in this mode of delivery of learners. The induction session is also an opportunity to interact with all those involved in their programmes e.g. tutors, DDE staff, and peers. All relevant information and documentation pertaining to the courses/programmes are provided e.g. assignments, assessment, and support systems. The MCA also start with a few sessions on Study Skills and Writing Skills. These help learners to optimise on their time to derive maximum benefit from their programme.

Counselling forms an integral part of the ODL and MCA students benefit from counselling at two levels namely General Counselling and Academic Counselling. General Counselling often takes the form of pre-enrolment or in-course counselling. Prior to enrolment, learners are guided to make the correct choice of subjects. It is also made available to learners having difficulties in organising themselves for DE courses and for student debtors. Academic Counselling takes place either at the face-to-face sessions or additional sessions are organised when the need is felt. The aim is to explore areas of difficulty encountered by the learners. Very often peer group meetings are encouraged at the study centre.

Tutoring includes holding face to face sessions, correction and comments on assignments by tutors. The assignments are evaluated, graded and commented upon by the tutor. These are returned to MCA for recording purposes before re-routing to the learner. A turn-around time of a fortnight is anticipated. The tutoring services ensure a two-way communication between the tutor and the learner.

    I. The tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) enable the tutor to assess how the learners are progressing while the tutors' comments guide the learners to improve on their answers and future assignments.

    II. Moreover, the TMAs help to monitor the progress and the regularity of the learner through the course. Any discrepancy is noted and the learner counselled;

for example, learners who fail to respect the deadline for submitting their assignments are sent a reminder.

The Panel was informed about the procedures for receiving assignments from the students. The assignments are sent to the students at the start of the semester (there were delays in certain cases) and at the due date the assignments are sent directly to the tutor. The Panel was of the opinion that assignments should be sent directly to the MCA in the first instance and then distributed to the tutors. This will enable the exercise of proper control on the submission of assignments as per deadlines and also ensuring the timely provision of feedback to the students. During discussion with the tutors it was pointed out that some students submit assignments at their own freewill. The MCA itself has emphasised the importance of assignments in ODL in the self evaluation report.

Recommendation 12

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air should rationalise the management of submission, marking and providing feedback to students regarding assignments

At the time of the audit, the MCA had a lecture theatre which can accommodate around 74 students at one time and four tutorial rooms accommodating a maximum of seven students at a particular time. The MCA utilises space in Government Secondary Schools to hold the face to face sessions. The Panel noted that the building housing the MCA does not fully conform to the needs of tertiary education institutions. This affects the physical and campus ambience and does not contribute to positive student experience. The MCA has to address the issue of space as a matter of priority.

Recommendation 13

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air addresses as a matter of priority the issue of space and other infrastructure facilities.

The Panel also noted the operationalisation of the customised Distance Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS). Moreover an ODL charter has been developed for implementation. According to the SER, the DDE continues to strive in consolidating its DE initiatives through a two-pronged approach for its operations in an endeavour to continue widening access to education at affordable cost by:

1. Reviewing/forging/sustaining partnerships with both local and offshore institutions.
2. Initiating in-house course/programme design and development on a need- based demand-led strategy.

8.2 Collaborations/Partnerships

Establishing and sustaining collaboration with a range of local and overseas institutions, have been a major strength of the MCA. In fact, over the years, the MCA has developed collaboration successfully with –
- University of Mauritius
- University of Technology, Mauritius
- Trade Unions

- Mauritius Employers Federation
- Mauritius Police Force
- Mauritius Telecom
- Ministry of Cooperatives
- Mauritius Institute of Education
- Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (Mauritius & UK)
- UNICEF
- Early Childhood Care and Education Authority (Ex PSTF)
- Ministry of Civil Service and AR
- Napier University, Scotland
- Curtin University, UK
- Telé Université, Canada
- International Extension College, UK
- Commonwealth of Learning, Canada
- Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK
- National Extension College, UK
- Oxford Open Learning, UK

The Panel took note of the various memorandum of understanding that the MCA has with different awarding bodies. On a general note the role and responsibilities for each party are defined. However the Panel noted some areas for consideration during discussion with the staff of the DDE tutors and students. Regarding the foreign awarding bodies it was pointed out that the results are delayed in some cases and even assignments as well as study materials are received late as mentioned earlier. This might create severe difficulties for the students in properly pursuing their studies. Concerning the local partners, there is some ambiguity regarding conduct of examinations and the role of the MCA is not properly defined. The staffs of the DDE are not clearly aware of their role on the issue of examinations. The Panel is of the opinion that the MCA is only a provider and the examinations issues are to be handled by the awarding bodies. Moreover, the MCA is not properly equipped to handle security and management aspects of examinations.

Recommendation 14

The TEC recommends that the Mauritius College of the Air must clarify its role and responsibilities as well as that of its partners in its various partnership arrangements and strengthen the procedures for the management of examinations and related matters.

An open session was also held and five people took benefit of this activity to express their opinion about the MCA. The issues raised in the open sessions like skills underutilization, communication problems, purchase of books, improvement in the job description have already been considered throughout this report under appropriate headings.

The Panel appreciated the initiative of the Government to set up OUM which will among other things absorb the MCA. Under such a scenario, the OUM will have to continue the implementation of the recommendations mentioned in the report.

Appendix A: Mauritius College of the Air

History and Location

The Mauritius College of the Air is a parastatal body under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources under the MCA Act. It is in fact the embodiment of two institutions, that is, the MCA and the Audiovisual Centre. It is located in Reduit.

The MCA launched its first Distance Education course in collaboration with the UoM in 1971. Within the Tertiary Education Institutions, the MCA was identified as the focal point of delivery of DE. It was expected to contribute towards project management, course design, media production, regional support systems and training in DE. Pedagogical inputs were to be provided by the other TEIs i.e. MIE, MGI, UOM in the area of their competence. The MCA was recognised as a TEI in 1988.

Academic Profile

MCA offers a wide range of courses, aiming at working towards equity in education, at supporting teaching and learning, at promoting adult and continuing education and at improving the quality of out-of-school education.

The institution has involved in running some DE courses/programmes for adult and continuing education were developed by the MCA such as Information Technology - IT in Everyday Life, The maintenance of Audiovisual equipment, Basic English for the Mauritius Telecom artisans having only primary level education, A pilot project offering two Télé Université (Canada) courses namely: Théories de la Communication and Rédaction Fondamentale, each worth 3 credits to Mauritian nationals, was implemented at the MCA and A Basic Teacher Training course for prospective secondary school teachers was developed and piloted with 40 teachers in Rodrigues - a then dependency of Mauritius. This was also offered to newly recruited teachers in Mauritius afterwards.

Along with this, MCA also offers professional courses in collaboration with both local and offshore institutions to some 11482 learners. Moreover, the institution offers non-award courses such as Communication Skills, Getting in Touch, Teaching Spoken English, Essay Writing Skills, and Techniques de la Rédaction.

Furthermore, since the extension of the MCA to include a DDE in 1994, the DDE has widened participation in education/training by offering a variety programmes through Open Distance Learning catering for the post secondary sector ranging from non-award short courses to Masters' programmes. It designs and develops short Continuous Professional Development ODL courses for public officers. It also develops and produces flexible learning materials by publishing popular self-learning manual, for SC and HSC levels. The MCA offered the Information in Everyday Life course providing the inspiration for the CPP which started paving the way for massification of IT proficiency in the country through the 45,000 adults who benefited from the programme. DDE also offered learning manual on E-Government Fundamentals for the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms to assist Civil Servants in the implementation of the E-Government Policy.

APPENDIX B: TEC'S MISSION, OBJECTIVES, VALUES AND VISION

- **Vision**

The vision of the TEC is to Make Mauritius the Intelligent Island of the Region in the Global Village

- **Mission**

The mission of TEC is to Position Mauritius in the Region as a world-class Knowledge Hub and the gateway for post-secondary education

- **Goals**

The goals of TEC within the plan period 2007-2011, will be to:

1. Create an enabling environment for Mauritius to emerge as a Regional Knowledge Hub and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence
2. Contribute significantly in the rapid transformation of Mauritius into the rank of developed countries
3. Develop Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as an instrument to increase access to postsecondary education and lifelong learning locally and regionally
4. Bring postsecondary education provision in line with international standard and quality
5. Encourage institutions to mount programmes that are relevant to the needs of learners, the country and the region
6. Promote and enhance teacher education and training in order to raise standards of feeder system to postsecondary education
7. Instill the principles of good governance, transparency and accountability in the postsecondary education system
8. Ensure optimum use of resources in the TEIs
9. Sustain research and consultancy
10. Foster regional and international understanding and cooperation through a diversity of studentship and overseas institutions
11. Reinforce and empower the TEC to fulfill its mission and objectives

APPENDIX C: THE AUDIT PANEL

- Dr Stella Antony, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency (Chairperson)
- Dr M S Shyamasundar, Deputy Advisor, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India
- Dr G Reddi Luthmoodoo, Senior Lecturer Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius.
- Mr Vivek Gupta Ramnarain, Acting Head, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division, TEC, (also acted as the Audit Secretary)

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The following abbreviations and definitions are used in this Report. As necessary, they are explained in context.

AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
CILT	Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport
CIM	Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK
DDE	Division of Distance Education
DEMIS	Distance Education Management Information System
DW	Deutsche Welle
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communication
LRC	Learning Resources Centre
MBC	Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
MCA	Mauritius College of the Air
MES	Mauritius Examinations Syndicate
MGI	Mahatma Gandhi Institute
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MIP	Media Integration Project
MoECHR	Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India
NGO's	Non Governmental Organisations
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUM	Open University of Mauritius
PRB	Pay Research Bureau
QMS	Quality Management System
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SITP	School Information Technology Project
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEI	Tertiary Education Institute
TMA	Tutor's Marked Assignments
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UoM	University of Mauritius
UTM	University of Technology Mauritius