

KSU

INTERNAL AUDIT & ASSESSMENT AND BOARD OF ASSESSORS:

A SYNOPSIS

(1st Edition, February 2018)

Development and Quality Culture Series

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Introduction

Dear Fellow KSUians,

Since 2010, the hallmark of continuous improvements and innovations in KSU has been enshrined in the KSU-QMS Handbooks 1 and 2 (4th Edition, May 2017). The system has weathered KSU's resilience to withstand changes but steadfastly adhering and adjusting to the changing environment and requirements. A crucial part of this is the ubiquitous Bi-Annual Internal Audit and Assessment by the KSU – BOA (Board of Assessors) who plays a central and fundamental role in the progress and performance assessment of KSU programs.

KSU went beyond ordinary assessment as its assessors are full trained and equipped with the performance excellence assessment approach. Our university appointed assessors is the stalwart of performance excellence whereby their QPAR (Quality Performance Assessment Report) meeting the 4 “A”s of Actionable, Aligned, Accurate and Appropriate requirements of a “national quality award” framework is the basis of the programs’ action oriented developmental planning.

The KSU 3 stages Performance Management System of Stage 1: Self-Study, Stage 2: Audit & Assessment and Stage 3: Developmental Planning has been commended by the international assessors in the KSU 2016 Institutional re-accreditation. KSU being the premier university in KSA, is proud to continue in its quality assurance strives to create and deliver on its commitments to society at large and drive KSA towards higher levels of academic recognitions and performance achievements.

Once again, we thank the whole KSU community for their continued support and work towards KSU commitment to go to higher lengths and heights of academic achievements.

Thank you.

Prof. Yousif Abdu Asiri, M.S., Ph.D.

Vice - Rector for Planning and Development



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1. Rationale of the KSU IAA (Internal Audit and Assessment)

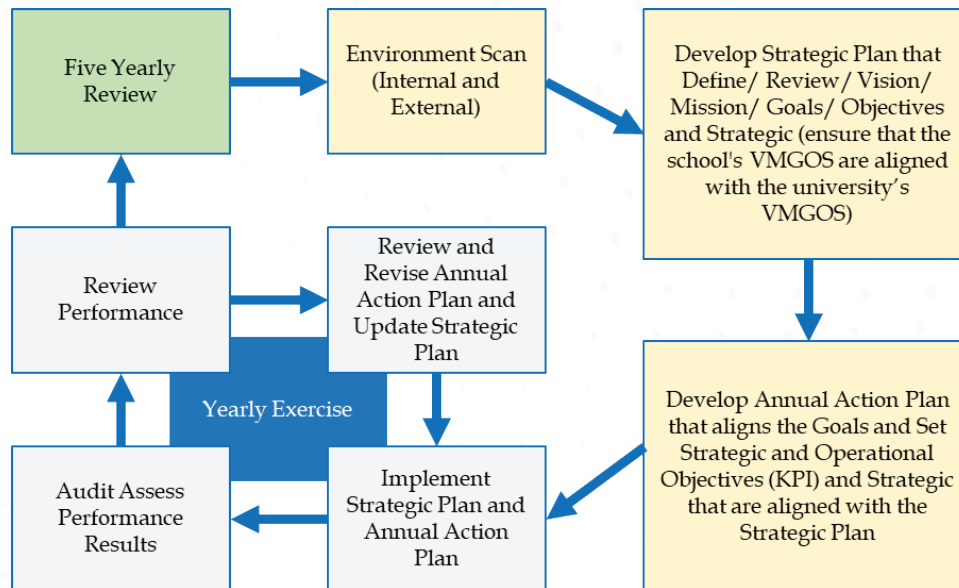
The main rationale of continuous improvements and innovations is for KSU to demonstrate and achieve high performance excellence levels in its IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) system in assuring its graduates meeting the minimum present EEC-NCAAA and future EEC-SAQF requirements through its bi-annual audit and assessment system. KSU internal performance audit and assessment is based on the internationally accepted performance excellence model of MBNQA (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award).

The bi-annual IAA is the main performance excellence sustenance system as hosted by the DQD (Deanship of Quality and Development) and executed by the institution appointed members of the KSU – BOA (Board of Assessors).

It should be noted that the IAA is part of IQA (Internal Quality Assurance System) as mandated by the EEC-NCAAA and is enshrined as part of the KSU-QMS Handbooks 1 and 2 (4th edition, May 2017). This means that the IAA is to be implemented across board all academic programs in KSU in compliance with EEC-NCAAA requirements.

2. Overview of the KSU Bi-Annual Internal Audit and Assessment

Figure 1: Quality Assurance and Planning Cycle



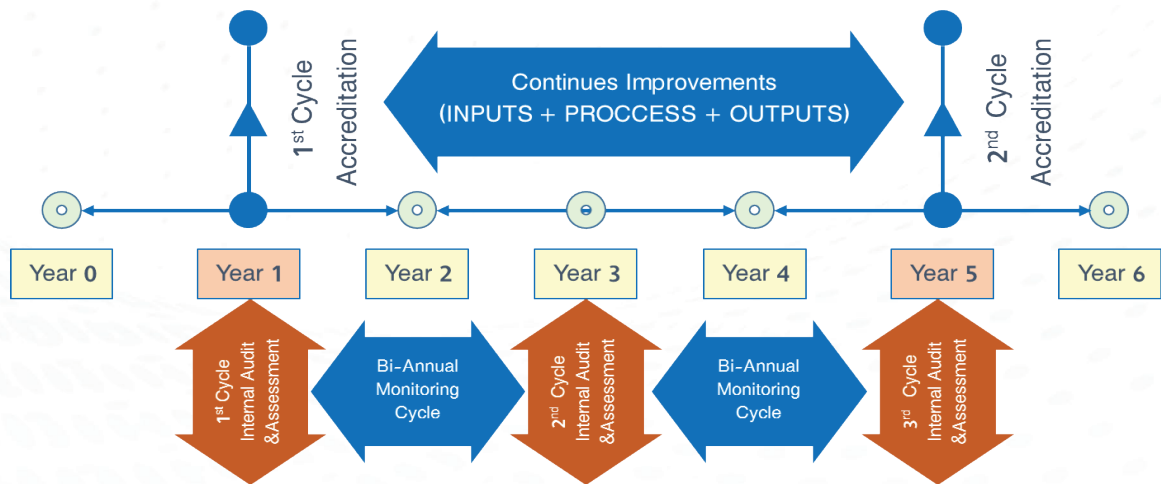
Source: Adapted from EEC-NCAAA (October, 2015)


The process of improving quality and continuous improvements and innovations involves (a) assessing current levels of performance, (b) the environment in which the institution is operating, (c) identifying strategic priorities for improvement and setting

objectives, (d) developing plans, implementing those plans, (e) monitoring what happens and making adjustments if necessary, and finally (f) assessing the results achieved. These steps involve a repeating cycle of planning and review that involves the critical internal performance audit and assessment (Figure 1). Major plans may involve a sequence of activities over a number of years, with a number of steps to be taken and results of each step assessed at stages within that longer term plan.

Although this planning and review cycle is presented as a set of steps in a linear sequence with set timelines, in practice steps may be repeated or changed in a flexible way in response to feedback and changing circumstances. For example, a review of performance may lead to a conclusion that goals or objectives need to be redefined and a new plan for development prepared as shown in the adapted version from EEC-NCAAA (Figure 1) above.

Figure 2: Principle of Internal Audit and Assessment with Accreditation Cycles





The ITQAN 2020: KSU – QMS main cyclic continuous improvements processes for quality practices accomplishments and achievements are the **Bi-Annual Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle**. The ITQAN 2020: KSU – QMS provides both the fundamentals of an IQA and requisite external review as this is done through the IAA (Internal Audit and Assessment) processes whereby the programs performance are assessed by an independent university appointed KSU Board of Assessors. This Internal Audit and Assessment is a bi-annual exercise to ensure continues improvements of the College or programs. This inherently means that a college or a program undergoes a minimum of 2 cycles of IAA in a 5 years mandatory EEC-NCAAA accreditation, and is interspersed with an annual monitoring cycle (Figure 2). The key mechanisms for the continuous improvements and innovations of the bi-Annual Internal Audit & Assessment as part of the 3 staged ITQAN 2002 KSU-QMS (May 2017) are:

- i. **The Self-Study report and performance scoring** – This constitutes the self-study of the program performance and their own performance scoring based on the Process Criteria ADLI (Approach, Deployment, Learning and Integration) and Results Criteria LeTCI (Level, Trend, Comparison and Integration).
- ii. **Audit and Assessment** – The 4 month’s internal audit and assessment of the programs is conducted by the university appointed KSU Board of Assessors. The IAA process by the assessors culminates in the QPAR (Quality Performance Assessment Report) of the programs performance in terms of its strengths and areas of improvements and its performance scoring.
- iii. **Developmental Planning** – Based on the QPAR, the program will develop a set of action plans to address its performance and these are incorporated as part of the college Strategic Plan and its annual operation plan.

3. Aims of KSU – IAA

Based on the mandated internal audit and assessment, the three key aims of the KSU – IAA on the ITQAN System in assuring the internal and external stakeholders of highly competent and qualified KSU graduates are:

- **EEC-NCAAA accreditation and other international accreditation bodies** – To attain the mandated National accreditation of EEC-NCAAA and other international accreditation or certification bodies that is specific to the collegial specialized field of studies.
- **Present EEC-NQF and future EEC-SAQF (Saudi Arabian Qualification Framework)** – Compliance to the NQF and SAQF requirements of baccalaureate, Masters and Doctoral graduate from KSU.
- **Strong Sustainable system for continuous improvements and innovation** – To accomplish and achieve the above mandated EEC-NCAAA accreditation, the internal quality assurance system as underscored by the ITQAN 2020 KSU Performance Management System for total and holistic quality-planning-information management in KSU. This is the sustainable integrated electronic platform for continuous improvements and innovations on a bi-annual basis of the quality audit and assessment based on the KSU-QMS performance excellence system subscribing to the KSU 2030 “Towards Excellence” and the KSA NTP 2020 and KSA Vision 2030 agenda.

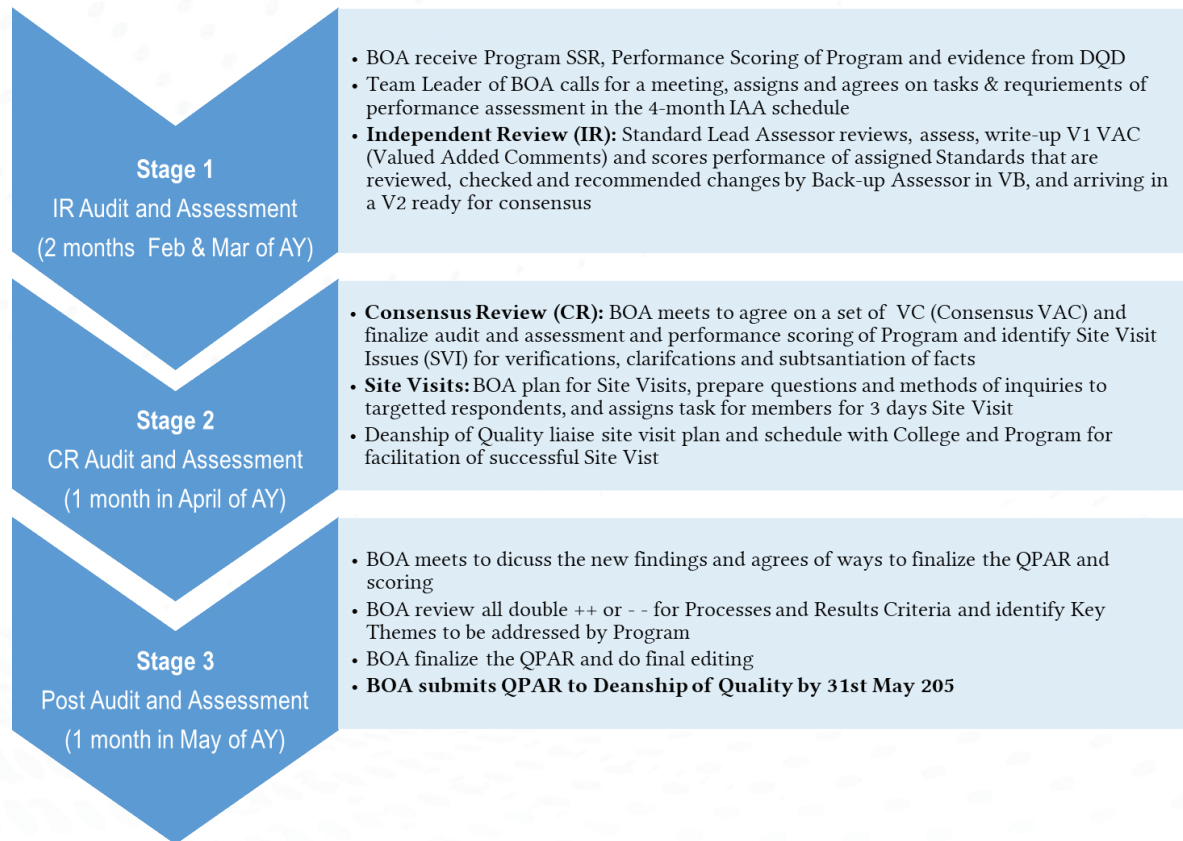
4. Key actors and responsibilities in the IAA Cycle

The 4 main key actors and defined responsibilities in the IAA Cycle are:

- i. **IAA teams of appointed KSU – BOA** – Their main responsibility is to execute and complete their responsibilities as institutional assessors in auditing and assessing the programs impartially, independently and professionally according to the KSU-QMS protocols. Their audit and assessment are recorded in the Actionable, Aligned, Accurate and Appropriate QPAR on the ITQAN System.
- ii. **DQD (Deanship of Quality and Development) Consultants** – Their main roles and responsibilities are in providing well planned and executed administrative organizational management of IAA on behalf of institution and support & facilitate the IAA teams of assessors to seamless and successfully complete their responsibilities as institutional assessors in liaison with the programs.
- iii. **Consultant for KSU – QMS**– The main role is to provide training to the new batches of assessors and provide oversight and assurance that the IAA protocols are adhered to by the above two key actors resulting in final QPAR for the program that leads to the developmental planning, all of which is ongoing annually on the ITQAN System.
- iv. **Supervisors of programs** – The action plans from the developmental planning will be the direct responsibility of the Vice Rectorate of Academic Affairs and Vice Rectorate of Graduate Studies and Research to follow-up, monitor and manage for actions as part of the College Strategic Plan.

5. BOA's workflow within annual Internal Audit and assessment (IAA) Cycle

Figure 3: 4-months work flow of Board of Assessors February to May of AY



6. Organizing aspects for Internal Audit and Assessment

The success of the Internal Audit and Assessment of the Program is based on the following factors:

- **Team management** – The team is managed by a senior assessor who is appointed by the University as Team Leader to ensure that the whole Internal Audit and Assessment of the Program is done professionally within the system protocols of the KSU Board of Assessors Standard Operation Procedures Handbook (March 2018) that defines the roles, responsibilities and code of conduct for the assessor.
- **Audit and assessment** – This should be done within the system requirements & protocols of the KSU – QMS Handbooks 1 and 2 (4th edition, May, 2017) to provide an objective audit and assessment of the program performance.
- **Team rapport** – The professional & competent support and rapport of the whole team is very critical to the success of the Internal Audit and Assessment process in an efficient, effective and amicable nature. This includes the mutual respect for others and listens to the opinions of others demonstrating professionalism, rationale and logical reasoning to arrive at a high impact valued added QPAR. The overall proposed assignment of work is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Proposed assignment of task responsibilities for team members

Team Members	Main Task	Support Task
Team Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the team • Coordination and communication with Deanship of Quality • Finalization of QPAR and Performance Scoring • Evaluate performance of team members • Implement the mechanisms as shown in Figures 2 and 3 • Standard Lead for 1 and 2 	
Assessor 1	Standard Lead for Standards 4 and 10	Back-up Lead for Standards 1, 3, 9 and 11
Assessor 2	Standard Lead for Standards 3, 9 and 11	Back-up Lead for Standards 5, 6, 7 and 8
Assessor 3	Standard Lead for Standards 5, 6, 7, and 8	Back-up Lead for Standards 2, 4 and 10

□ **Role of the Team Lead (TL)**

- ✓ A Team Lead is responsible for leading the team in maintaining KSU standards for Internal Audit and Assessment of the Program as per the KSU – QMS. All tasks associated with the quality assurance of an independent and externally assessed Program must be carried out within the conditions, timeframes and arrangements as per KSU – QMS.

- ✓ The primary role is to support the team members to ensure that KSU – QMS standards are being consistently applied and maintained to ensure and assure quality performance audit & assessment of Program.
- ✓ All IAA activities are under the jurisdiction of the Team Leader as supported by the DQD as appropriate. There may be a requirement to undertake duties during weekends and holiday periods in his/her own time.

□ **Duties of Team Lead**

- ✓ Support the quality assurance processes in accordance with KSU – QMS policies and specifications.
- ✓ Lead all activities to ensure they are concluded within agreed time frames and that resources are used effectively and efficiently to achieve best value.
- ✓ Provide support to fellow team members prior to and during the internal audit and assessment period.
- ✓ Support in the performance assessment and management activity of team members as per the KSU – QMS Standards and Key Performance Measures.
- ✓ Team Leaders may be asked to undertake additional activities. These activities could include the following:
 - Prepare performance reports
 - Undertake in-service training
 - Participate in workshops/seminars/networking events
 - Contribute to developmental planning guides for programs

□ **Duties of Standard Lead (SL)**

- ✓ Take charge of the Standard as assigned as the key assessor for this standard to produce Value Added Comments (VAC) that meet the 4 “A”s requirements of being aligned, actionable, accurate & appropriate
- ✓ Support the Team Lead to ensure a successful internal audit and assessment
- ✓ Act as Standard Backs for other Standards as assigned to arrive at a set of VB (Version Back of SB) and V2 (Version 2 of SL) that are constructive to arrive at a VC (Consensus Version ready for the QPAR)

□ **Duties of Standard Back (SB)**

- ✓ Review and ensure that the output from the Standard Lead conforms to the good practices of audit and assessment as per the KSU-QMS
- ✓ To suggest constructive changes and agree upon a set of final Strengths / OFIs Assessment of the Process and Results Criteria in the VB version for the SL to settle on the V2 version ready for the Consensus agreement

7. General Schedule for Site Visits to be used by all BOA teams for AY

After arriving at an initial set of VAC (Value Added Comments) is the performance analysis, due to lack of evidential performance or lack of clarity, there is a need to organize a site visit with the main aims of (a) clarification for areas for improvements which are recorded as OFI (opportunities for improvements) and (b) verifications of strengths to ensure that they are constituted as key areas where the program is performing well relative to internal and external benchmarks. A typical schedule for a 3 days site visit to address SVI (Site Visit Issues) is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Typical Schedule of Site Visit

Schedule	Activities	Required Presence
DAY 1 08.30 - 09.30	KSU - BOA Panel arrives at the College and meets briefly before official full meeting with Program	KSU - BOA Panel
09.30 - 10.00	Welcome by Dean Meeting with Dean, Vice Deans of College and Head of Programs, College and Program Quality Committees	Dean, Vice Deans of College and Head of Program, College and Program Quality Committees
10.30 - 12.00	Overview of Governance and administration of Program in relation to College with short briefings covering Standards 1, 2 and 3 (Team Lead and all assessors).	Vice Deans, Head of Program and College and Program Quality Committees
12.00 - 13.00	Prayer and Lunch	

Schedule	Activities	Required Presence
13.00 – 15.00	Site Visit to review documents for ALL Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards 1, 2 and 3 (Team Lead) Standard 4 and 10 (Assessor 1 and Assessor 3) Standards 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (Assessor 4 and Team Lead) 	Head of Program and Program Quality Committee (different rooms)
15.00 – 17.00	KSU – BOA Panel prepares Day 1 reviews and recommendations for Standards 1 to 3	KSU – BOA Panel
DAY 2 09.00 – 12.00	Discussion of Standard 4 and 10 with Program representatives (Assessor 1 and Assessor 3) Discussion of Standards 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (Assessor 4 and Team Lead)	Program Quality Committees and Program or Administration representatives (different rooms)
12.00 – 13.00	Prayer and Lunch	
13.00 – 15.00	Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Faculty Members Program Students Program Staffs Alumni Employment Market (by telephone) 	Program Faculty Members Program Students Program Staffs Alumni Employment Market (different rooms)
15.00 – 17.00	KSU – BOA Panel prepares Day 2 reviews and recommendations for Standards 4 to 11	KSU – BOA Panel
DAY 3 09.00 – 12.00	KSU – BOA Panel prepares Oral report on findings of assessment (closure of any additional missing or incomplete issues)	KSU – BOA Panel

Schedule	Activities	Required Presence
13.00 - 14.30	Briefing to Dean, Vice Deans of College and relevant Head of Programs, College and Program Quality Committees	Dean, Vice Deans of College and relevant Head of Programs, College and Program Quality Committees
14.30 - 15.00	Closing remarks by Dean of College or Representative	Dean or Representative

8. Details of roles, responsibilities and time frame of annual Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle

Table 3: Typical activities in the annual IAA Cycle

Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle (by Months of AY (for each Academic Year)	Academic Year		Activities	Responsible Party	Man-hours
	Month & Week	Month & Week			
	AY September to November	Month 1, 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop 1 - September Workshop 2 - September Workshop 3 - September 	Consultant for KSU-QMS or future certified trainer	45 in class & 50 hours external preparation
	AY December & January	Month 4 & 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and Inviting Programs for IAA Submission of SSR (with evidences) & Performance Scoring to DQD Organizing the IAA and teams based on submissions 	DQD as supported by Consultant for KSU-QMS	40 hours

Academic Year Month & Week		Activities	Responsible Party	Man-hours	
Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle (by Months of AY (for each Academic Year)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Days Refresher workshop in January - (1) appointment & contractual agreement with members of BOAs (2) Refresher course and developing QPAR on ITQAN 	Consultant for KSU-QMS or future certified trainer	10 hours	
	AY February	Month 6 - Week 1 &2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization of work by Team of 4 Members by Team Leader (TL) • Team members start the Stage 1 IR (Independent Review) on ITQAN 	IAA Team	20 hours
		Month 6 - Week 3 &4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SL (Standard Lead) prepare V1 of analysis and assessment leading to V1 VAC (Value Added Comments) on ITQAN • Each SL is assigned with 3 Standards as SL and review at least 3 Standards as SB(Standard Back) 	IAA Team	20 hours
	AY March	Month 7 - Week 1 &2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB (Standard Back) review V1 prepare VB of analysis and assessment leading to VB VAC (Value Added Comments) on ITQAN 	IAA Team	20 hours
		Month 7 -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB (Standard Back) 	IAA Team	20 hours

Academic Year Month & Week		Activities	Responsible Party	Man-hours	
Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle (by Months of AY (for each Academic Year))		Week 3 & 4	review and confirms V2 of analysis and assessment leading to V2 VAC (Value Added Comments) on ITQAN		
	AY April	Month 8 - Week 1, 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TL calls for team's consensus meeting to arrive at 90% QPAR (Quality Performance Assessment Report) Readiness on ITQAN Team prepares SVI (Site Visit Issues) 	IAA Team	30 hours
		Month 8 - Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 days Site Visit (5 Days when SAQF is enforced) 	IAA Team as supported by DQD	20 hours
	AY May	Month 9 - Week 1, 2 & 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IAA Team prepares final closure for QPAR on ITQAN 	IAA Team	20 hours
		Month 9 - Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TL informs DQD of official closure of QPAR on ITQAN 		
	AY April - May	Month 8s & 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating next Academic Year IAA by planning for (1) Invitation & Selection of qualified candidates as per criteria, (2) action plans for KSU-BOA workshops and IAA Finalize list of candidates and workshop schedule 	DQD as supported by Consultant for KSU-QMS	30 hours

Academic Year Month & Week		Activities	Responsible Party	Man-hours	
Internal Audit and Assessment Cycle (by Months of AY (for each Academic Year)		and send official invitation			
	AY June	Month 10 – Weeks 1 to 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DQD completes a final review of QPAR on ITQAN and address any issues on incompleteness or inadequacies of QPAR DQD officially submits the QPAR to Programs for Developmental Planning 	DQD as supported by Consultant for KSU-QMS	30 hours
New AY	Based on QPAR, the Program develop and implement annual action plans as part of College Strategic Annual Operation Plan on ITQAN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Action plans of Developmental Planning of the programs are monitored and managed by the programs' direct supervisory authority for monitoring and performance follow-up and decisions making. 	Vice Rectorates of Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies	Annual follow-up in the Planning Management System on ITQAN

Basically, in KSU, the key activities of the annual Internal Audit & Assessment Cycle are summarized as follow:

- i. **September – November of AY** - The selected candidates undergo the KSU prescribed 45 hours conducted in 3 workshops of 15 hours each with take

home assignments whereby the candidates are evaluated based on their overall performance in assessment competencies.

- ii. **January of AY** - A one day “Refresher Course” is held for old and new assessors whereby they are officially appointed as KSU Assessors for and academic year for the annual IAA.
- iii. **February – May of AY** - In this period there are two main sets of activities of:
 - a. The actual audit and assessment is conducted by the teams of assessors that results in the QPAR, and
 - b. The planning for the next academic year intakes and training of new assessors and the master plan for the next academic year IAA exercise.

Table 4: Summation of Total administrative and assessment Man-hours

Time Frame	Responsible Party	Man-Hours	Activities
Annually (8 months)	DQD	150 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, organize and manage annual IAA professionally and efficiently • Key support and serving to the IAA teams during the 4 months period of IAA • Support and service programs in the submission of all required documents for the bi-annual IAA
Months 6 to 9 (4 Months)	IAA Assessors	150 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each IAA team to audit and assess the assigned program professionally and close all IAA including submission of QPAR during the 4 months period

Table 4 summarizes the annual key responsibilities of the BOAs and the DQD during the annual IAA processes with the overall man-hours and key activities as follows:

1. **IAA Team** - 150 Man-hours work on IAA leading to QPAR over a 4 months period.
2. **DQD** - 150 hours (110 hours in Months 4, 5, 8, 9 and 10 in the pre- and post-IAA periods plus additional 40 hours of support during the IAA period).
3. **KSU - QMS Consultant** - 150 hours including 95 hours of in-depth training and 55 hours of consultation to IAA teams during the 4 months period, and the DQD's consultation and performance throughout the year and monitoring the IAA and DQD performance on ITQAN.

Reference

- EEC-NCAAA (Education Evaluation Commission - National Center for Academic Accreditation and Evaluation), (2015), *“Handbook for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Saudi Arabia, Part 1, The System for Quality Assurance and Accreditation”*, October 2015.
- KSU, *ITQAN 2020: KSU - QMS (Quality Management System) Handbook 1 (4th Edition, May 2017)*, Vice Rectorate for Planning and Quality, Deanship of Quality and development, KSU University Press, Riyadh, KSA, 2018

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