



TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

REPORT OF THE QUALITY AUDIT OF THE MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

[CONFIDENTIAL]

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Established in 1988 as a parastatal body of the Ministry of Education & Human Resources, the Tertiary Education Commission has as objects to allocate government funds, promote, plan, develop and coordinate tertiary education and training in Tertiary Education Institutions under its purview in order to achieve an accountable and responsive system of high international

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Mauritius.

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OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

Background

In 2007 the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) appointed an Audit Panel to undertake a quality audit of the [Mauritius Institute of Education](#).

This Report of the audit provides an overview, and then details the Audit Panel's findings, recommendations and commendations. A brief introduction to the [Mauritius Institute of Education \(hereinafter MIE\)](#) is given in Appendix A; the mission, objectives, vision and goals of TEC are shown in Appendix B; membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix C. Appendix D defines abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report.

The Audit Process

TEC bases its audits on each organisation'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

On 01 September 2007, the MIE presented its submission (Self Evaluation Document) to TEC including its Strategic Plan. The Auditors were each sent a copy of the same. After scrutinising the portfolio and supporting documents the panel members agreed on a line of enquiry.

The Audit Visit took place from 6 to 8 November 2007. In all, the Audit Panel spoke with approximately 93 persons during the Audit Visit, including the Acting Director, members of the Council, the Acting Registrar, academic and general staff, full time and part time students. The Audit Panel also met with the Staff and Student Unions.

An open session was also held for any stakeholder of MIE to meet with the Panel. A number of people took advantage of this session.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 8 November 2007 and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. It records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the documentation provided by the MIE, as well as other information available to the Panel. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the MIE activities encompassed by the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings.

This Report contains a summary of findings together with lists of commendations and recommendations. A commendation refers to the achievement of a stated goal, or to some plan or

activity that has led to, or appears likely to lead to, the achievement of a stated goal, and which in Audit Panel's view is particularly significant. A recommendation refers to an area in need of attention, whether in respect of approach, deployment or results, which in TEC's view is particularly significant. It is acknowledged that recommendations in this Audit Report may have resource implications, and that this can pose difficulties for the Institution. Accordingly, TEC does not prioritise these recommendations, and recognises that it is the responsibility of the MIE to respond in a manner consistent with its local context.

CONCLUSIONS

This section summarises the main findings and lists the commendations and recommendations. Other favourable comments and suggestions are mentioned throughout the text of the Report.

Introduction to Findings

MIE has developed its Strategic Plan 2007-2015 based on its guiding principles and core values. The Strategic Plan is geared towards democratising access to training, continuous professional development, promoting educational research to inform policy, engaging in curriculum development and reinforcing principles of good governance, quality control and accountability. To achieve its Vision and Mission, MIE has developed Key Performance Indicators with specific timelines. The Audit Panel commends MIE for its strategic vision which provides directions for its future growth. MIE is encouraged to develop a year-wise implementation strategy with more realistic timelines. The Audit Panel is of view that MIE needs to revisit its communication strategy in order to ensure a shared understanding of its strategic priorities. The Audit Panel also recommends that MIE prioritises recruitment for senior management positions in order to strengthen leadership within the institute.

Governance at MIE is transparent. Decision making bodies such as the Council, Academic Board and Management have set up structured committees which ensure implementation of policies. However, the Audit Panel observed that the responsibilities, functioning and composition of these decision making instances need to be reviewed. MIE will also benefit from a more proactive system of decision making.

MIE's approach to Quality Assurance is conceptualised in its fifth goal. The Quality Assurance System at MIE is multilayered and provides for an interactive set up which encourages feed back. The Panel found that the quality approach is well embedded in most parts of MIE and commends the quality culture which is emerging. MIE needs to further strengthen its Quality Assurance Unit in order to nurture this quality culture in all institutional activities.

With a significant number of its academic staff being above 50 years of age, MIE is facing considerable staff turn over. Human Resource Planning needs to be more structured. The balance between full time and part time academic staff needs to be maintained at an appropriate level by filling the increasing number of vacant academic posts on Establishment.

The Panel observed that MIE has invested significantly in staff development. The efforts and resources invested by MIE for improving the qualifications of its staff are commended. However, the Audit Panel is of view that MIE is required to develop a Staff Performance Appraisal System to identify areas that need staff development.

Since its inception in 1973, the student population at MIE has increased 17 fold. Recruitment of students is done in consensus with important stakeholders of MIE. Pre-service trainees are recruited by the Public Service Commission and in-service trainees are recruited by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The Panel observed that drop out rate for Distance Education students is comparatively much higher than fulltime students. MIE needs to develop the supporting resources and structures to ascertain quality in Distance Education.

MIE offers a wide range of courses to cater for the diversity of the personnel in the education sector. Courses developed by MIE are tailor made for the Mauritian context and involve significant classroom based research. The programmes offered by MIE translate into a credit laddering system focusing on capacity building in teacher education. Over the years MIE has collaborated with several international organizations and institutions to ensure that its award is of international standards. The Audit Panel commends MIE for the diversity of its programmes.

One of the strategic goals of MIE is “to further invest in strategic research and related field...” MIE has carried out substantial action based research with teachers in schools. These research outcomes are used by MIE to improve on learning and classroom materials.

The Panel observed that group research by academic staff can be further encouraged. MIE does not have a structured research policy and thus the strategic importance of research is often undermined. The Audit Panel is of view that funds allocated for research at MIE is under utilised as academic staff often resort to external funding sources. The Panel recommends that MIE develops a clear Research Plan and identify its priorities and key research areas.

Existing infrastructural resources at MIE can no longer satisfy the requirement of the Institute. Infrastructural and ancillary resources of MIE are being over utilised. Maintenance and upgrading of these resources have become a growing concern. Although MIE has made significant effort to include ICT in its teaching and learning, the Panel observed that the use of ICT as a means of administrative and academic support is at its minimum. MIE is recommended to develop an institution wide ICT Plan.

Although the Library budget has increased significantly since 1998, the library facilities of the MIE have shown several lacunas ranging from availability of books on shelves to its seating capacity. Moreover, MIE needs to reconsider its library timings to increase access to Distance Education learner.

In view of the above, the Audit Panel is of view that although MIE meets the criteria of “**fitness of purpose**”, the academic ambience and campus environment of MIE has to be significantly improved with essential support services to reflect that of a premier quality-driven institution.

A summary of commendations and recommendations follows. These are not prioritised by the Audit Panel. They are listed below in the order in which they appear in the Report.

Commendations

1. The Panel commends MIE for the effort invested in preparing the Self Evaluation Document which was prepared for the Quality Audit. **8**
2. The Panel commends MIE for its Strategic Plan that provides directions for its future growth and development and encourages the institution to develop a year-wise implementation strategy with realistic targets and timelines. **9**
3. The Panel commends MIE for the quality consciousness which is emerging in the institution and encourages the institution to work towards embedding quality across the institution in all its activities. **13**
4. The Panel commends MIE for the induction programme it has introduced for the newly recruited academic staff. **15**
5. The Panel commends MIE for the efforts and resources it has invested into improving the staff qualifications over the past few years and also appreciates the innovations staff are introducing to enhance teaching and learning in the sector. **16**
6. The Panel commends the wide range of education and training programmes MIE offers in Teacher Education and Management at different levels of education responding to the needs of the sector. **19**
7. The Panel commends MIE for the international collaborations it has been able to establish with reputed Higher Education institutions. **19**

Recommendations

1. The Panel recommends that MIE develops a clear communication strategy to ensure a shared understanding of its Vision and Mission as well as its Strategic Plan and strategic priorities. **9**
2. The Panel recommends that MIE gives priority to recruitment for the senior management positions that are vacant and the Panel notes that these vacancies might affect the leadership MIE requires to implement its Strategic Plan. **9**
3. The Panel recommends that MIE reviews its responsibilities, functioning and composition of policy making bodies such as the Council and the Academic Board to ensure their pro-active role in guiding the institution. **11**
4. The Panel recommends that MIE considers a more flexible approach to budgeting and ensures the dissemination of financial planning more widely among academic staff. **11**
5. The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens the functioning of its Quality Assurance unit to ensure the embedding of the quality agenda in all institutional activities. **13**
6. The Panel recommends that MIE reconsiders its human resource planning and development including staff deployment practices and career progression and ensure appropriate balance among various staff categories (full time and part time staff, academic and administrative staff). **14**
7. The Panel notes that MIE has identified the introduction of Performance appraisal for staff as its mid-term priority and strongly recommends that it be given priority in the short-term itself. The Panel also notes that staff apprehension of Performance appraisal and promotion be clarified in a consultative manner. **15**
8. The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its attention to staff development especially on emerging areas and uses the proposed staff appraisal to identify the areas that need staff development. **16**
9. The Panel recommends that MIE develops QA processes and guidelines and the supporting resources and structures such as on-line access for its Distance Education courses. **18**
10. The Panel recommends that, in view of the strategic importance MIE places on research, it develops a clear Research Plan and identifies its priorities, targets and timelines. **23**

11. The Panel recommends that MIE develops a clear Maintenance plan and ensure timely and systematic upgrading of the facilities and services available to students and staff in the institution. **24**
12. The Panel recommends that MIE develops a coherent institution-wide ICT plan and works closely with schools to ensure coordination. **24**
13. The Panel recommends that MIE gives priority to strengthen its management practices and procedures by appropriate ICT application. **25**
14. The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its Library resources and services with on-line services and other services including printing, photocopying and extended library hours to cater for the part-time students. The Panel also notes that the Library Committee has to be made functional to advise on these issues. **25**
15. The Panel recommends that MIE reconsiders its student feedback procedures including formats used, and ensures that they result in analysis and institutional actions. **25**
16. The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its academic ambience by providing opportunities and facilities for academic fora for staff and students. **26**

1 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The MIE was set up in 1973 by an Act of Parliament with a view 'to provide facilities and to engage in **educational research, curriculum development and teacher education** and thereby to promote the advancement of learning and knowledge in the field of education and, in particular, to provide a teacher education responsive to the social, economic, linguistic, administrative, scientific, agricultural and technological needs of Mauritius', under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MoEHR).

At its inception the MIE was supported by the UNDP and worked in close collaboration with the London Institute of Education. Over the years the MIE has extended its services to cater for the training needs of professionals in the pre-primary, primary, secondary schools of Mauritius. As a key player in the educational field, it is at present fully involved in curriculum planning, development and evaluation.

As the apex institution responsible for the education of teachers, the MIE is conscious of the crucial role it plays in helping Government to achieve its vision of world class quality education.

1.1 *Context for Audit*

The concept of institutional Quality Audit is still very new to Mauritius. After the advent of the new regulatory framework, the first cycle of Quality Audits started in 2005. It is expected that by 2009 all publicly funded Tertiary Educational Institutions (TEI) would have undergone a Quality Audit.

The MIE is the second publicly funded TEI to undergo a Quality Audit. Initially scheduled for October 2005, the Quality Audit of the MIE was postponed to November 2007 due to circumstantial reasons. The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division (QAAD) of the TEC undertook a monthly monitoring exercise with the MIE to ensure that the time plan for the Quality Audit was implemented for November 2007. On 01 September 2007, the MIE submitted its Self Evaluation Report (SER) to the TEC. The Panel appreciates the effort invested by the MIE in preparing its Self Evaluation Report in a very methodical and reflective manner with precise information about the institution.

Commendation 1

The Panel commends MIE for the effort invested in preparing the Self Evaluation Document which was prepared for the Audit.

1.2 *Strategic Planning*

The Strategic Plan 2007-2015 developed in consultation with staff and stakeholders clearly expresses the vision of the MIE. The MIE has developed its guiding principles and core values in line with its vision (SER p8).

The futuristic strategies developed by the MIE to ensure quality alongside expansion have been well articulated in the strategic plan. The MIE has developed Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to monitor its performance against the objectives set out in its Strategic

Plan. There are 164 institution-wide KPIs. These core indicators cover strategic research in education, quality Teacher Education and curriculum renewal and development.

The Audit Panel recognises commitment of the MIE to implement its Strategic plan and is of view that the MIE should develop a more realistic timelines to ensure sustainable embedding of its strategic goals across the institute.

Commendation 2

The Panel commends MIE for its Strategic Plan that provides directions for its future growth and development and encourages the institution to develop a year-wise implementation strategy with realistic targets and timelines.

The Audit Panel found ample evidence that stakeholders at different levels of the MIE are committed to implementing the Strategic Plan. While recognising the willingness of the MIE to implement its strategic plan, the audit panel is of view that size and dispersion provide Management with a range of Challenges. Networking at the MIE is at its minimum and the Panel recognises that there is a pressing need to set up forums for dialogue and also implement an ICT base network within the Institute. The Panel also observed that Vision and Mission of the MIE is not well understood and shared among its various stakeholders. In order to achieve its strategic initiatives it is important for MIE to review its communication strategies.

Recommendation 1

The Panel recommends that MIE develops a clear communication strategy to ensure a shared understanding of its Vision and Mission as well as its strategic priorities.

Due to the increasing number of vacant senior positions across the MIE, the organisational structure is not responding efficiently to the strategic intentions of the Institute. From various interviews, the Panel observed that there is a need for long term central direction and that several key responsibilities and positions are occupied by the same persons.

Recommendation 2

The Panel recommends that MIE gives priority to recruitment for the senior management positions that are vacant and the Panel notes that these vacancies might affect the leadership MIE requires to implement its Strategic Plan.

1.3 Governance and Management

1.3.1 MIE Council

The Council is the executive governing body of the MIE. It has the custody, control and use of the common seal of the Institute, is responsible for the management and administration of the revenue and property of the Institute and has general control over the conduct of its affairs; the Council takes such measures as it deems fit to achieve the objects of the Institute.

The Council is made up of a chairperson appointed by the Prime Minister, the Director of the Institute and other members from a wide range of stakeholders, including the chairman of the Public Service Commission, representatives from important Government Ministries, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Education and Human Resources, University of Mauritius and from MIE staff and students' organisations. This wide cross-section of representatives and their multidimensional perceptions and perspectives ensure that all opinions are heard and policies are geared towards meeting the goals and interests of the nation.

The MIE Council has institutional autonomy in determining quality and setting up standards of performance within the organization. The responsibility of policy implementation and maintenance is delegated to the Director by the Council.

In the Panel's view the governance structure of MIE does not sufficiently reflect the Institute's focus on strategic research and pedagogical innovations.

From the discussions, the Panel could deduce that although major concerns of the MIE are addressed at Council level, the MIE Council needs to develop a more proactive approach to the academic, infrastructural and technological needs of the institute

Although the MIE Council appears fully committed to the strategic direction in which the MIE is moving, the Audit Panel is of view that the needs of the MIE should be reprioritised. Pressing issues such as filling of vacant senior posts, efficient appropriation of funds, etc should be addressed so that the MIE can realistically implement its Strategic Plan.

1.3.2 Management

The Director of the Institute is the principal academic and administrative officer. The Director is assisted by three major cadres namely the Deputy Director, the Registrar and the Financial Controller, responsible for the Academic, Administrative and Financial matters respectively. They constitute the Directorate of the Institute.

Each section is organized hierarchically and staff members are assigned specific responsibilities, authority and power. They report to a Head, through whom communication is channeled, thereby allowing for vertical coordination. Ultimately, the whole organization is under the responsibility of the Director who is both the academic and administrative head. The management system of the Institute is a democratic one. Decisions, both academic and administrative, are taken through an elaborate network of consultation and participation.

1.3.3 Academic Board

The academic authority of the Institute has been delegated by the Council to the Academic Board.(AB) Its main mandate is to be responsible for the regulation and superintendence of the education and discipline of students, (section 1.2 of MIE Act 1984), SERp10.

The Board, chaired by the Director of the Institute, consists of the Deputy Director, the Librarian, Heads of Schools, representatives of Academic Staff of the Institute, and also representatives from the University of Mauritius, the Ministry of Education and Human

Resources, Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, MIE Students' Council, Teachers' Unions from the primary and secondary sectors, and other such members appointed by the Council.

The AB is the validation body for all educational programmes, examinations, awards and academic endeavors. It is responsible for the maintenance of academic quality and standards.

The MIE uses the AB as an instance where the presence of members from other institutions within the Academic Board provides to some measure the external validation of the academic activities of the MIE.

The nomination of representatives of the Student's Council and Teachers' Union on the AB ascertain that the main 'clients' of the institute are involved in the policy formulation process.

The AB fulfills its responsibilities through a structured network of committees in order to ascertain transparency in decision making and decentralized decision making processes.

Recommendation 3

The Panel recommends that MIE reviews the responsibilities, functioning and composition of policy making bodies such as the Council and the Academic Board to ensure their pro-active role in guiding the Institution

1.3.4 Financial Management

MIE derives its funds mostly from Government Grant which is monitored by the TEC. Its financial procedures are governed by the provisions laid down in the Financial Management Manual and the Pay Research Bureau (PRB). MIE is moving towards a project based system of budgeting (Medium Term Expenditure Framework).

From the various discussions, the Panel is of view that financial management at MIE inspires confidence. However, the Panel noted that MIE should reconsider the management of its cost centers to ensure optimum use of funds. For example, the Panel observed that funds allocated to research are under utilised. Staffs are not aware of availability of funds at MIE and they often seek external sources of funding for research.

Recommendation 4

The Panel recommends that MIE considers a more flexible approach to budgeting and ensure the dissemination of financial planning more widely among academic staff.

1.4 Quality

1.5 Quality at MIE

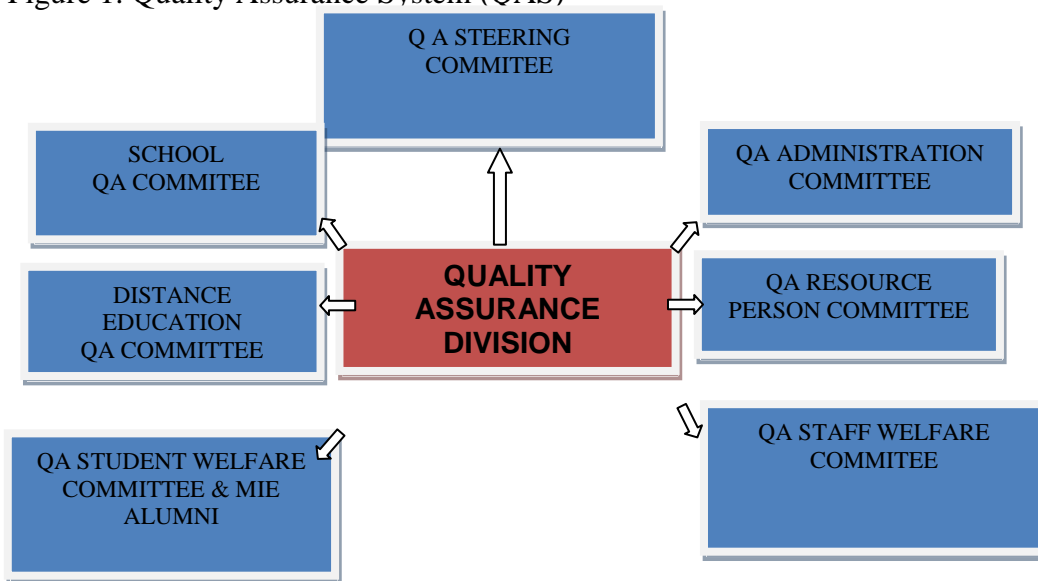
MIE’s approach to quality is conceptualised as its fifth goal as per its Strategic plan. The MIE has set up a Quality Assurance Mechanism to foster a quality culture across the Institute. Quality Assurance (QA) at the MIE was first introduced in 2001. In 2004 a formal plan for the implementation of the QA system was presented to TEC and adopted. It is based on a ‘fitness for purpose’ definition of quality.

The major objectives of the QA plan are to ensure:

- Continuous improvement in all its endeavours.
- Optimal utilization of resources.
- Relevance, adequacy, balance and integration and currency of programme.
- Provision of necessary environment for all staff members to be committed to a quality culture.

The system is designed to provide for an interactive set up which encourages a cohesive articulation of the various components of the structure. It is also meant to ensure a constant flow of information, both vertically and horizontally, through a network of committees as shown in the figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Quality Assurance System (QAS)



Source: SERp15

Responsibility for the management of quality is vested in the Quality Assurance Steering Committee. The Quality Assurance Division, (QAD) implements QA policy decisions, develops tools for QA, processes and disseminates all information to stake holders, for example the administration and interpretation of Lecturer Feedback Questionnaires, Student Feedback Questionnaires and Module information Sheets.

The MIE's KPIs and the evaluation instruments are used to inform the quality thinking and assure that the necessary data is available for management and staff to judge their performance and take the necessary steps to improve.

The Audit Panel found that the quality approach is well embedded in most parts of the Institute. Most staff interviewed by the Panel referred explicitly to the philosophy and how it applies to their work situation. The priority and attention given to quality by senior management has translated into action through the establishment of QA system. In 2008, the MIE plans to reward quality practices with an annual award of excellence for employee of the year.

With a view to increase the quality culture and quality consciousness among its staff members, one of the KPIs that MIE has identified for itself, is to establish a code of professional practice related to quality in 2008.

Commendation 3

The Panel commends MIE for the quality consciousness that is emerging in the institution

From the various discussions, the panel observed that although the quality approach has been embedded in the Institute, the functioning of the QA Unit and coordination among the different departments of the MIE needs further attention from Management.

The Panel is of opinion that the QA Unit could not provide the required leadership while it was not functional and hence it can be more instrumental in implementing the quality agenda of the MIE.

Recommendation 5

The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens the functioning of its Quality Assurance Unit to ensure the embedding of the quality agenda in all institutional activities.

2 PEOPLE

The sixth strategic goal of the MIE is

“Ensure the well being of staff and students in the institution.”

Source: SP p8

2.1 *Quality of Human Resources*

In 2007 MIE had on its establishment a total of 436 posts of which 99 were academic posts. There is 293 staff actually in post with a resulting vacancy of 143 posts. The number of academic actually in post, including 17 lecturers recruited in 2007 is 87. In 2007 MIE employed 75 part-time lecturers and 2 contractual full time lecturers.

The qualifications of the members of the academic staff presently employed are as follows:

Post Doctoral	1
Ph Ds	24
Masters	44
1st Degree/ Diploma	18

2.1.1 Recruitment of Staff

One of the KPIs of MIE is to set up a Human Resource Division by 2008 and to have a Human Resource Management Plan operation by 2009.

The Establishment of the MIE sets the upper limit to the number of posts per grade and defines the scheme of duty for each grade. MIE’s recruitment policy is strictly carried out on the basis of criteria approved by the Council without any ethnic, gender or age considerations. Recruitment, selection and internal promotion are carried out by the Appointment Committee through appropriate external and internal advertisement.

The conditions of service and salary scale for each grade are determined by the Pay Research Bureau (PRB), a governmental body responsible for determining the remuneration and conditions of service of employees of the civil services and the para-statal bodies.

MIE like most other publicly funded TEI is facing considerable turn over of staff with a significant number of academic staff being 50 years of age or older. In the next three years, 22 members of the academic staff will be retiring. With the increasing number of students, MIE has adopted several strategies to address this issue, including increasing the number of academic posts on Establishment.

Recommendation 6

The Panel recommends that MIE reconsiders its human resource planning and development including staff deployment practices and career progression and ensure appropriate balance among various staff categories (full time and part time staff; academic and administrative staff).

2.1.2 Induction Programme

MIE plans to increase substantially the number of full time academic staff with a 20% annual increase. In order to ensure optimum of human resource use, MIE has set up an induction programme to facilitate integration of new staff to its institutional functioning. The induction programme is spread over nine months and new recruits are supported by in-house senior colleagues.

In 2007, MIE had 17 new academic staff on board the induction programme. The Audit Panel found ample evidences that the induction programme has provided new recruits with a more profound understanding of the Institute's functioning.

Commendation 4

The Panel commends MIE for the induction programme it has introduced for the newly recruited academic staff.

2.2 *Performance Appraisal*

Promotion for academic and senior administrative staff, as per MIE Act, is carried out by an Appointments Committee made up of the Director of the Institute, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and a Chairperson and two other members appointed by the Minister of Education and Human Resources.

For all other staff members, promotions are made by an Appointment Committee made up of three members appointed by the Council.

Criteria for promotion are approved by the Council and are advertised in-house. Selection is made on the basis of a self-assessment portfolio and an interview for academics. Administrative staff is promoted through an interview only. MIE is presently reviewing criteria for promotion for academic staff, in consultation with Staff unions, in a bid to improve them further. The setting up of an Appeals Committee is being considered to address grievances of staff.

From the SERp14 it is noted that MIE has so far, no formal staff performance appraisal system. The Institute acknowledges that an effective system of performance appraisal is a valuable tool to identify, amongst others, good practice, aspects of performance that need improvement and areas where staff need to be supported.

The Panel observed that a performance appraisal system will be an effective tool to further improve accountability and transparency in MIE's functioning. MIE will be introducing a performance appraisal system as one of its mid-term priorities. From the various discussions, the Panel deduced that MIE staff is apprehensive to being formally appraised and reluctance was observed from various quarters. The Panel also notes that the MIE will have to strengthen staff confidence in accepting a formalised performance appraisal system.

Recommendation 7

The Panel notes that MIE has identified the introduction of performance appraisal for staff as its mid-term priority and strongly recommends that it be given priority in the short term itself.

2.3 *Staff Development*

In recognition of the importance of continuous professional development for both academic and non academic staff, the MIE has implemented a multi-pronged staff development policy which focuses on the following:

- facilitating enrolment for undergraduate, post graduate and doctoral studies
- providing short term fellowship or attachments to foreign universities
- enabling participation in national and international workshops
- empowering staff in key areas through links developed with foreign universities
- encouraging staff members benefiting from staff development programmes to share their knowledge and experience through in-house forum

Source: SER p37

The Panel is of view that the staff development policy of MIE has contributed significantly in enhancing the qualifications of staff. Both academic and non academic staff is generally satisfied with the transparency supporting the staff development policy.

The Panel found MIE's initiative to sponsor all newly recruited members of academic staff to follow the MA Education programme very commendable and recognizes the effort of MIE to strengthen the professional expertise of its more senior staff.

Commendation 5

The Panel commends MIE for the efforts and resources it has invested into improving the staff qualifications over the past few years and also appreciates the innovations staff are introducing to enhance teaching and learning in the sector.

However the Panel observed that MIE does not possess a structured staff development policy. Although the staff development funds are being used optimally, the Panel is of opinion that MIE should prioritise areas that need staff development.

Recommendation 8

The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its attention to staff development especially on emerging areas and uses the proposed staff appraisal to identify the areas that need staff development.

2.4 *Students*

2.4.1 Profile

According to the SERp 17, the total number of students enrolled at MIE in 2007 was 6240. 2784 of them were enrolled on regular courses and 2480 were on distance mode.

MIE has since its establishment had a considerable increase in its number of students from 367 in 1976 to 6240 in 2007. As the sole provider for pre-service, in-service and continuing professional development for all professionals in education, the student profile of the MIE is diverse.

In 2006, the gender ratio for all teacher education programmes was 1F:1.5 M. In the recent years there has been an increasing demand to accelerate training for both in-service and pre-service trainees in large numbers. MIE is committed to respond to the training needs of the MoEHR as they arise.

2.4.2 Student Recruitment

The policy of MIE is to ensure that equal opportunities are offered to every prospective candidate and access to training is open to every teacher in Mauritius and Rodrigues. The admission policy of MIE is clear, inclusive and widely publicised.

Selection procedures are based on criteria approved by the Academic Board. Pre-service primary trainee selection is done by the Public Service Commission (PSC). The MoEHR selects all in-service trainees for primary and secondary sectors except for private secondary schools.

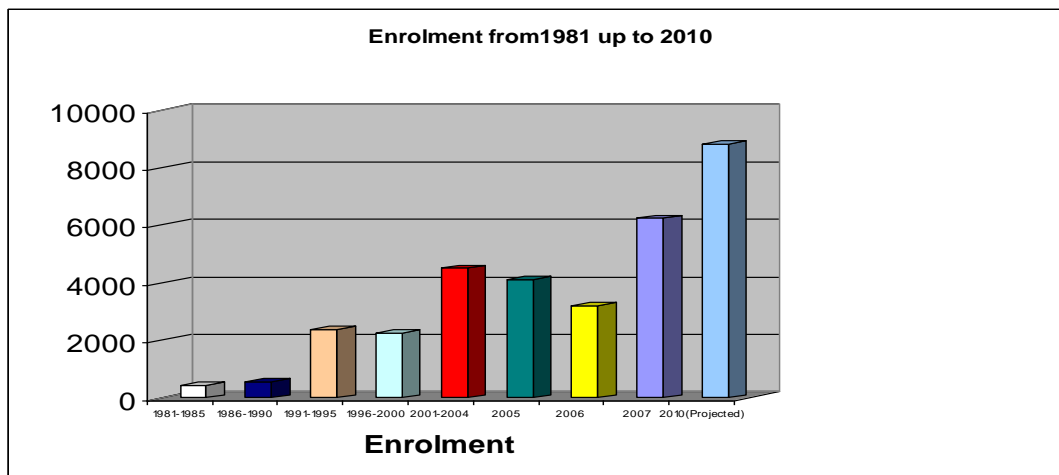
Admission and registration are carried out in consultation with stakeholders such as the schools and Teachers' Union.

Student selection at the request of the MoEHR for the academic year 2006-2007 was as follows:

Programme	Number
Teacher's Diploma Primary	700
Teacher's Certificate Pre-Primary	475
Proficiency Cert of Pre-Primary Education	757
Advanced Certificate in Educational Management	180
Advanced Certificate in Education	332
Induction Courses: (Newly appointed Education Officers)- 6 months	152
Teacher's Diploma Primary (in-service))	1060
Post Graduate Certificate In Education	442

Source: SERp16

According to the SERp17, it is projected that by 2010, the student population will reach 8831.



Source: SERp18

2.4.3 Drop-Out Rate, Pass Rate and Wastage

For regular face-to-face programmes, the average pass rate per cohort is around 99%. From the SERp20, it can be deduced that the drop-out rate for secondary and primary, (in-service) trainees is insignificant and the drop-out rate for primary pre-service trainees has varied from 0 to 7 % over the years.

For Distance Education programmes, the drop-out rate has varied from 3 to 36% over the years. From the discussions, the Panel could deduce that the MIE is concerned about the high level of drop outs. Several informal reasons have been expressed to justify the high level of drop-out; however the Panel observed that MIE has not taken any formal action to address this issue.

Recommendation 9

The Panel recommends that MIE develops QA processes and guidelines and the supporting resources and structures such as online access for its distance education courses.

2.4.4 Staff and Student Welfare

From '*goal 6- Ensure the well being of staff and students of the institution*' of the strategic plan the panel observed that MIE is determined to improve its campus ambience. A committee has been set up to redefine workload of staff & students. Offices for student and staff welfare have been set up and are already operational.

MIE is also keen to increase the opportunities for professional/social exchange between staff, students and alumni. The MIE alumni have been extended to all students with a planned calendar of activities. Extra curricular activities such as in-house debates are encouraged. However, the Panel observed that existing facilities such as the gymnasium are not being used optimally for the recreational purposes.

3 EDUCATION

MIE is committed to: *'Providing quality service in education'* - SPp9.

The SP Goal 7 further states that:

Promote MIE as a focal point for Teacher Education in the region.

3.1 *Educational Management*

3.1.1 Academic Portfolio

MIE offers a wide range of courses to cater for the diversity of the personnel in the education sector. Its courses have been developed to fit into the existing educational system which includes a diversity of stakeholders ranging from pre-primary teachers to school psychologists. MIE now runs a Teacher Diploma Course for primary pre-service trainees who could initially follow only a certificate course.

MIE has provided opportunities for teachers to move up the ladder through a progression, from Proficiency to Certificate, from Diploma to Degree programmes and eventually a Master's in Education. This credit laddering system has contributed significantly in capacity building and career progression of professionals in the education sector.

Commendation 6

The Panel commends MIE for the wide range of education and training programmes it offers in teacher education and management at different levels of education responding to the needs of the sector.

Being the sole public provider of teacher education in the country, MIE has sought international partners and peers to collaborate with and benchmark its programmes. From different forums, the Panel could deduce that over the years, such international collaborations have added value to the portfolio of MIE programmes. The MA Education programme which is run jointly with the University of Brighton is very popular among students and has been successful in many ways. The MIE would benefit from extending its work with other similar institutions internationally.

Commendation 7

The Panel commends MIE for the international collaborations it has been able to establish with reputed Higher Education institutions.

3.2 *Curriculum Design and Implementation*

MIE has developed the following criteria to maintain the quality and standards of its programmes:

- a) **Relevance**: this is achieved when the programmes are satisfying the needs of the trainees in a comprehensive manner.

- b) **Referential adequacy:** this occurs when the programmes are designed and implemented in line with International benchmarks.
- c) **Coherence and Integration:** this criterion is satisfied when the programmes cover all essential elements, give just importance to each one of them and integrate them in a rational manner to form a comprehensive gestalt
- d) **Currency:** this takes place when all the components of the programmes are designed and implemented, reflecting best practices.

Source: SERp22

In order to satisfy these criteria, MIE undertakes training needs analysis with local stakeholders such as the MoEHR and other employers to determine the key local requirements and ensure contextual relevance. Feedback from external examiners is also used as international referents to enable international comparability of MIE programmes. MIE has set up Programme Committees to set up departmental and interdepartmental deliberations to ensure coherence and cohesiveness programmes.

MIE recognises that the SFQ administered by the QA Division is also an alternative mechanism to evaluate its programmes.

MIE follows a constructivist pedagogical approach to curriculum mounting, whereby the curriculum is driven by the learner's interests and where the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning.

Thus MIE is enabled to design and implement curriculum both in terms of content and experiences and determine relevant and adequate learning outcomes.

3.3 **Curriculum Monitoring**

MIE has developed a system which is based on accountability, clear expectations, understanding of each individual's role in enabling the attainment of curricular objectives. Programme committees are set up to ensure that an enabling environment is created for curriculum implementation and that resources are available for appropriate delivery.

Course coordinators report regularly to the programme committee on the general progression of courses. This exercise also enables the Committee to take collective decisions regarding emergent issues across departments. On the other hand, monitoring also occurs at the School and Departmental levels through meetings that take place periodically.

MIE thus ensures coherence in all aspects of curriculum planning. The course coordinator is not only the academic leader in the department for a particular programme but also the administrator of the programme. As such, s/he is responsible for planning, monitoring the process and guaranteeing that transactions are in line with programme objectives. (SERp30)

3.4 **Curriculum Review**

Revision of the curriculum is carried out after analysis of the SFQ, the Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate Report and of stakeholders' views such as the MoEHR. Curriculum revision is a continuous and ongoing activity. MIE provides sufficient

flexibility to allow for an approach that takes the needs and demands of the trainees into consideration.

Curriculum review cannot take place on a yearly basis. However at MIE there is sufficient flexibility to enable course tutors to include emerging issues, especially as the curriculum in schools might change and that demands periodic readjustment.

3.5 *Teaching*

The instructional processes used at the MIE allow students to develop higher order thinking. Trainees are provided with materials and given tasks which are within their experiences and school realities.

MIE foresees Distance Education (DE) as becoming the preferred mode of learning due to its cost effectiveness and is also least disruptive for the school system. The total DE intake accounts for a third of MIE's student population.

3.6 *Learning Support*

MIE provides a wide range of learning support to ensure that students' learning and progress are continually monitored. Students benefit from on-line tutoring and discussion forums, one to one supervision of dissertation at PGCE, B. Ed and MA Ed Levels. Special counseling for students with poor attainment is also provided. Students from Rodrigues also avail of audio/video conferencing and packages.

3.7 *Quality of teaching*

3.7.1 Teaching Evaluation

MIE administers Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) which provides significant insight into trainees' perception of course content, delivery and support. Trainees' comments are, as far as possible, taken into consideration while planning for the following semester as action cannot be initiated during the ongoing semester.

The Panel observed that SFQ system of feedback is well appreciated among students and staff rely significantly on SFQ to evaluate teaching.

4 RESEARCH TRAINING

MIE's SP p18

“To further invest in strategic research in education and related fields to encourage innovation and inform policy”

MIE's research strategy is oriented along 4 interconnected fronts:

- a) To inform policy and practice at school level
- b) To create a pool of knowledge and expertise in specific areas
- c) To develop understanding of emergent educational phenomena and problems
- d) To help improve practices in teacher education

Source: SERp33

Since 2000, MIE has sponsored a number of staff research 12 PhDs and 27 Masters to the tune of Rs 7.3m.

MIE encourages systematic collaborative research and infuses research at all levels of academic deliberation and programme delivery. The interdisciplinary aspect of research generates added advantage of producing richer insights in educational phenomena. Such researches have been commissioned at national and international levels.

MIE has also partnered with regional and international organization such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC), New Partnership for the Development of Africa (NEPAD) and the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) and in doing so, significantly increased the scope of its research activities and the number of research active staff.

4.1 *Action research with Teachers in Schools*

As part of its strategy to ensure quality and relevance of its courses, MIE encourages action research. This is achieved through the action research component at under graduate and post graduate levels, involving a major dissertation or project. These dissertations thus constitute a research base which supports the practices of students and academic staff. MIE staff is also encouraged to engage in research which influences programme design and curriculum transaction.

The action base research carried out by MIE in ZEP (Educational Priority Area) primary schools is an innovative practice which seeks to develop better partnership among schools, MoEHR and MIE.

The research outcomes are used by MIE to improve on learning and classroom materials.

4.2 *Appraisal of Research Activities*

The research mandate of MIE can be broadly categorized in two, firstly at improving the quality of education in Mauritian classrooms and secondly at enhancing the quality of teacher education courses.

Although MIE's contribution in both categories cannot be undermined, the Panel observed that MIE is yet to create a research enabling environment. Group research by academic staff can be further encouraged.

The Panel observed that since MIE does not have an established research policy, provision for academic and logistic support to staff involved in research is not optimised. Despite availability of funds at MIE, staff is often required to seek external funding.

With a view to reinforcing the research culture at MIE, the SP (2007-2015) has elaborated several KPIs. One of the objectives of MIE is to have at least 50% of its academic staff engaged in international research.

Recommendation 10

The Panel recommends that, in view of strategic importance MIE places on research, it develops a clear Research Plan and identifies its priorities, targets and timelines.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE & SUPPORT SERVICES

5.1 *Infrastructure*

Over the years, MIE equipped itself with the necessary infrastructure and support mechanisms. However, the widening scope of its activities, the diversity of disciplines taught and the increase in students' enrollment have added pressure on its resources. Although MIE has tried to deal with these demands by investing in long term resources such as the MIE Tower, the existing infrastructural resources of MIE can no longer satisfy its requirements.

The Panel observed that due to over utilisation of resources, maintenance of existing infrastructure has become a growing concern at MIE. Facilities and services available to staff and students of MIE can no longer respond to the growing needs of the Institute.

Recommendation 11

The Panel recommends that MIE develops a clear Maintenance plan and ensures timely and systematic upgrading of the facilities and services available to students and staff in the institution.

5.1.1 Information Technology Services

MIE is conscious of the increasing importance of ICT in its day to day activities. There are three computer laboratories within its premises and it has purchased a wide variety of ICT equipment. In 2004, MIE created the Experimental Multi Media Laboratory to provide staff and trainees with the latest technology to assist in the development of interactive pedagogies. MIE provides facilities for use of laptops and LCD projectors to all tutors who make a request.

From the various discussions the Panel observed that MIE has met with some resistance with regards to the usage of ICT by some in-service students which is mostly due to their age profile and insignificant exposure to ICT.

MIE has increased the facility for online tutoring, online forum for students' exchange. The online facility is gaining popularity especially among young and middle age in-service students. MIE envisages extending online tutoring to more courses.

Recommendation 12

The panel recommends that MIE develops a coherent institution wide ICT plan and works closely with schools to ensure coordination.

The use of ICT as administrative support at the MIE is at its minimal. Staff and students have expressed the need for better maintenance and upgrading of existing ICT facilities. From feedback obtained, the Panel also observed there is a strong need for MIE to equip itself with up to date facilities and also implement more managerial ICT based practices.

From MIE's SP p31, MIE recognises those more modern mechanisms for communication and the setting up of a Management Information System and a Student Information System as its middle term priorities.

The Panel observed that MIE should not compromise on such an essential support at the detriment of Quality.

Recommendation 13

The Panel recommends that MIE gives priority to strengthen its management practices and procedures by appropriate ICT application.

5.1.2 Library

MIE is aware of the need for quality library services to its staff and students. The present library facilities do not satisfy the requirements of MIE. The institutional concerns pertaining to the library ranges from policy implementation, functioning of the Library Committee, administration of library resources, to availability of holdings.

Although the library budget has increased significantly from 1.1m in 1998 to 2.0m in 2007, the services of the library are not responding to the needs of the organization. Policies with regards to library facilities are stagnating. Moreover, the Library Committee, which operates under the purview of the AB is also not functional.

Staff and students of MIE have expressed their concerns regarding the shelf capacity and sitting capacity which are inadequate. The timings of the Library have also been evoked as part-time students very often cannot avail of its facilities.

The lack of ancillary services such a photocopying, also does not allow for optimum use of the library facilities.

Recommendation 14

The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its Library resources and services with on-line services and other services including printing, photocopying and extends library hours for cater to part-time students. The Panel also notes that the Library Committee has to be made functional to advise on these issues.

The Panel noted that grievances pertaining to library facilities have been addressed at different instances and that feedback pertaining to the library facilities have not been addressed to the satisfaction of the staff and students thus defeating the purpose of such mechanisms.

Recommendation 15

The Panel recommends that MIE reconsiders its student feedback procedures including the formats used, and ensures that they result in analysis and institutional actions.

5.1.3 Academic ambience and campus environment

The Panel observed that the existing campus environment cannot cater for the increase in student population and the new strategic initiatives of MIE. MIE as it is does have a

conducive academic ambience reflecting a premier quality conscious educational institution. The poor quality of ancillary and infrastructural resources hinders the academic climate of the institution. The Panel also noted that essential minimum amenities such as common rooms for staff and a student centre are non-existent. These amenities will contribute to enhancing the campus environment and the sense of belonging at MIE.

Recommendation 16

The Panel recommends that MIE strengthens its academic ambience by providing opportunities and facilities for academic fora for staff and students.

APPENDIX A: MAURITIUS INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

History and Locations

MIE was set up in December 1973 in the wake of pressing needs and challenges of the post independent period. The four year plan 1971-1975 established a direct correlation between education and the economic, social, cultural and political development of the nation

Originally entrusted with the responsibility for the professional development of teachers of the secondary schools, the MIE has, over the years, extended its services to the whole educational sector. It now caters for the training needs of professionals (teachers, school administrators, mentors, inspectors etc...) in all the pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools of Mauritius¹.

The Institute has up to now trained over 20,000 teachers at these levels. It has presently on roll 6240 trainees and offers 31 different programmes, both in-service and pre-service, ranging from certificate to master's level.

Academic Profile

The MIE offers a wide range of courses to cater for the diversity of the personnel in the education sector. It provides in-service as well as pre-service training and covers all sectors, ranging from Pre-Primary to Secondary. Its courses have been developed to fit into the existing educational system which includes a diversity of stakeholders with a specific profile (teachers, mentors, educational social workers, school psychologists, inspectors and teachers in the educational priority areas).

The professional expertise of staff has enabled it to maintain high standards of quality even in the face of high staff-student ratio. The Institute has presently on roll a student population of 6256, including 2891 students enrolled on programmes offered through distance.

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

Prof V S Prasad, Director, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India
(Chairperson).

Dr Antony Stella, Audit Director, Australian Universities Quality Agency.

Dr Ved P Goel, Advisor to the Rector, Lerotholi Polytechnic, Lesotho.

Mr V G Ramnarain, Acting Head Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division,
Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

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

AB	Academic Board
B Ed	Bachelor of Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LFQ	Lecturer Feedback Questionnaire
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MoEHR	Ministry of Education & Human Resources
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PRB	Pay Research Bureau
PSC	Public Service Commission
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAD	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division
QAD	Quality Assurance Division
QAS	Quality Assurance System
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SERp	Self Evaluation Report page
SFQ	Student Feedback Questionnaire
SP	Strategic Plan
SPp	Strategic Plan page
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEI	Tertiary Educational Institution
ZEP	Education Priority Areas
