



# **TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION**

## Report of the Third Cycle Quality Audit of Mauritius Institute of Education

October 2018

**Tertiary Education Commission**

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## Executive Summary

This is the report of the Third Cycle Quality Audit of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) by an Audit Panel appointed and acting on behalf, of the Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius (TEC). This audit, carried out in October 2018 is a thematic one focusing on Curriculum Development in Teacher Education and Research, as well as on the implementation of the recommendations of the second cycle audit.

The starting point for the audit was the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by MIE, supported by a list of evidences requested by the Audit Panel prior to the audit. The report consolidates the analysis of the SER, information gathered during interview sessions and additional documentary evidence submitted by the institution.

MIE is a unique higher education institution having played a major role in the development of the education sector in Mauritius by providing teacher education and developing curricula for the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Its programmes are jointly awarded by the University of Mauritius and the University of Technology, Mauritius. The MIE also benefits from its collaborations with University of Brighton and University of Kwazulu Natal in offering doctoral programmes. MIE was granted degree-awarding status in 2017 and has now higher ambitions for its three key mandates namely, educational research, curriculum development and teacher education.

The Panel recognises the effort made by MIE to implement a number of recommendations made during the second cycle audit. However, an action plan is needed to monitor the progress made with measurable and scheduled targets defined for key critical quality indicators.

An assessment of Quality Assurance (QA) at MIE shows a commitment to quality which is guided by the QA Policy, an in-house framework. The Panel noted a well-defined QA organisational structure and set of activities which take account of the participation of a large number of academic staff, as well as the involvement of key leading positions in the MIE structure. While the initiatives of having a set of surveys aimed at data collection to support QA, MIE should, as suggested by MIE itself, broaden its scope of QA activities to reach other areas such as research, curriculum development, administrative and support.

Curriculum development for Teacher Education, a pertinently chosen theme for the audit, has received much interest from the Panel as MIE's positioning on formal teacher education goes beyond mere acquisition of knowledge. The framing of a holistic education approach in the teacher education curriculum which is in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals is commendable. Added to this, is the development of level descriptors and professional standards in alignment with the National Qualifications Framework. To enhance the curriculum across programmes, the Panel recommended that soft skills be integrated and assessed explicitly. As a matter of high importance, the quality tools and templates used in monitoring course development process at all levels should be reviewed.

In terms of Educational Research, the Panel is appreciative of MIE's realistic assessment of its maturity in relation to its recently gained degree-awarding powers and not currently moving towards its own PhD offer but, instead, beefing up its existing international partnerships. As a matter of urgency in this area, MIE should develop a clear research strategy linked to its institutional strategy that spells out and underpins the interrelationship of research with other aspects of MIE's core mission. In line with its ambition to strengthen its research culture, a more open recruitment process of academic staff in areas of expertise that are viewed as priorities or where gaps have been identified at levels higher than lecturer levels, is required. The Panel also identified some challenges in the

preparation of postgraduate students for their research element. Support in writing research proposal, formulating researchable questions and the possibility of a pre-doctoral programme to support the transition from postgraduate taught to postgraduate research levels are recommended.

The complete list of recommendations is available in this report and it is expected that MIE will use the findings of the Audit Panel to strengthen and improve its QA system and its core activities.

# 1. Overview of the Audit

## 1.1 Background

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) by virtue of its Act has the responsibility to ensure, promote and monitor quality in tertiary institutions in Mauritius. The report of the Third Cycle Audit of the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE or the Institute) is published by TEC as a continuation of the cyclic academic audits conducted for publicly-funded institutions in Mauritius.

Publicly-funded tertiary institutions are required to undergo institutional academic quality audits. These audits adopt the audit process stipulated in the *Quality Audit Handbook for Tertiary Education Institutions* (2nd Edition) published by TEC in 2010. The purpose of quality audit is to assess the strength of the quality culture and the actions undertaken by the institution to ensure continuous improvement. Audits are also concerned with the existence and effectiveness of the quality processes in place at the institution to achieve its set objectives and produce the desired outcomes.

This report is an outcome of the quality audit carried out at MIE. Quotations and references taken from the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) provided by MIE for their quality audit are identified in this report as (SERp) and reference made to evidences submitted as (Annex). The membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix A and Appendix B defines abbreviations and acronyms used in the report. Figures are at Appendix C.

## 1.2. Terms of Reference of the Auditors

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

### 1.3 The Audit Process

In line with TEC's Quality Audit Handbook, a Panel was appointed in May 2018 to undertake the Third Cycle Quality Audit of MIE.

On 07 June 2018, MIE submitted its SER which was circulated to all Panel members for a preliminary analysis and any request for additional evidences to be submitted by MIE prior to the audit. The Audit Secretary liaised with the QA Coordinator at MIE regarding the additional evidences, interview sessions, facilities and resources to be made available for the audit.

The TEC Auditor, the local Panel Member and the Audit Secretary undertook a Planning Visit at MIE on 13 September 2018. During the visit, the arrangements to be made for the audit were finalised. Additional evidences requested by the Panel and the interview sessions were also discussed.

The Panel held its first meeting on Sunday, 30 September 2018 at the TEC to prepare the interview questions and finalise its plans for the audit. The audit exercise took place between 02 and 05 October 2018 at the MIE. In all the Audit Panel spoke with approximately 185 persons in the course of the audit, including the Director, Council members, members of various committees, academic and non-academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students including doctoral students, external stakeholders, alumni and international partners.

Two weeks prior to the audit, MIE was requested to advertise the Open Session to all staff/student/stakeholder of MIE who would like to meet the Audit Panel. Seven persons took advantage of this opportunity.

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

It is expected that MIE will use the findings of the Audit Panel to strengthen its QA system and also facilitate the improvement of its core activities. The decisions about the manner in which this is to be done are the prerogative of MIE. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the Institute's activities within the scope of the audit, the report does not identify every aspect of the QA system, and their effectiveness or shortcomings. The MIE will have to submit an implementation plan with timelines to the TEC and the implementation of the recommendations will be closely monitored.

The Audit Panel would like to thank the Director of MIE, Dr O Nath Varma, the QA Coordinator, Dr H Bessoondyal as well as the MIE team for their effective and prompt cooperation during the audit process. The Panel also acknowledges the outstanding support and warm hospitality received from MIE.

## 2. Commendations and Recommendations

### 2.1 Commendations

1. The personnel at the MIE is commended for its commitment to the advancement of the vision, mission and values of the institution.
2. The MIE is commended for having implemented in-house communications channels (e.g. board, digital screens) that help disseminate the MIE values, education philosophy and organizational culture to its members.
3. The MIE is commended for actively enhancing and promoting in-house capacity building sessions for academic staff to familiarize with the different quality standards, designing and developing teacher education curriculum.
4. The MIE is commended for having a well-defined, implemented and deployed QA organizational structure and set of activities, which does cover multiple levels of MIE activities, with the participation of a large number of academic staff, as well as the involvement of key leading positions in the MIE structure.
5. The MIE is commended for having a well-defined and rather comprehensive set of surveys aimed at collecting data that can support quality assurance and improvement of its teaching activities under the coordination of its Quality Assurance Division, with efforts already done to increase data reliability and collection, such as the use of clickers.
6. The MIE is commended for its endeavor to instil a broad quality culture at the MIE, namely by having quality assurance contact points at different parts of its organizational structure.
7. The MIE is commended for the perceived overall quality of teacher education and professional development programmes that it has been providing to the community of learners, which are equally recognized by students and employers as positive transformative experiences.
8. The MIE is commended for development of level descriptors and professional standards for undergraduate and graduate programmes in alignment with the National Qualifications Framework.
9. The MIE is commended for framing a holistic education approach in the teacher education curriculum. The introduction of programmes for holistic education, special education needs and provision of a support programme for students with low performance is in alignment with the UN sustainable development goals.
10. The MIE is commended for seeking and obtaining the widest possible feedback on its programmes from a wide variety of stakeholders.
11. The MIE is commended for having established and keeping in place a number of strong and efficient partnerships with national and international institutions for collaborative projects at Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels.



12. The MIE is commended for clearly recognizing the emerging nature of its maturity in relation to its recently gained degree awarding powers and for not currently planning to move towards its own PhD offer but, instead, to consolidate and strengthen its existing international partnerships.
13. The MIE is commended for its plans to consolidate its research governance by seeking to create an overarching Research Centre that integrates the Higher Studies Cell and the Research Unit.

## 2.2 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that an action plan be established to address, implement and regularly monitor the progress made on and achievement of recommendations, with clear, measurable and scheduled targets defined for key critical quality indicators.
2. It is recommended that the MIE further implement strategies that will embed a culture of innovation across all mandates, as well as in its quality assurance framework, in line with its Vision statement with the aim of achieving its aspirations to ‘Lead the process of change and innovation in education through research and innovative practices’ as per its Strategic Plan 2017-2021.
3. It is recommended that the MIE keep updating its buildings, equipment, spaces and facilities taking into account future trends, state-of-the art solution and its own strategic choices (e.g. e-books, meeting spaces for staff, 3D printers, arrangements for promoting holistic education, creativity and innovation, medical room etc).
4. It is recommended that the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 be revised, in line with the ambitions and priorities of the MIE with its newly degree awarding status, to include and elaborate on a clear action plan over the five years period, with specific KPIs, a time frame, and an effective monitoring system for implementation, as well as its deployment through aligned Strategic Plans at the MIE’s Schools level.
5. It is recommended that the MIE develop and implement a broader risk management policy on the basis of its strategic and operational risks.
6. It is recommended that the MIE take on a more prominent role in negotiating its priorities at the level of Ministry, including in the furtherance of its organizational restructuring plans and strategic initiatives as per its 2017-2021 strategic plan, to strengthen its degree awarding status and drive innovation, assuring also that the MIE Council supports further convergence and internal cohesion aligned with MIE ambitions, targets and activities.
7. It is recommended that the MIE, while keeping its mission and strategic role, is provided with additional autonomy, namely regarding decision making and financial management issues.
8. It is recommended that the MIE complete the definition, approval and implementation of its new governance structure (Annex 16) with particular reference to the balance of strategic and operational/managerial considerations as well as the articulation of various committees and how they fit into the organigram (e.g. Senior Management Committee, Senior Administrative Committee), reducing possible overlaps and assuring that clear reporting and communication lines are defined and implemented, as well as clarifying the roles to be played by each unit (e.g. Academic Board, Research Centre, Student Support Service).

9. It is recommended that the MIE further promote capacity building for academic staff (e.g. management skills) to better engage in management and leadership positions, as well as for administrative staff development.
10. It is recommended that the MIE ensure that further transparency, clarity and quick feedback are provided for all of its HR processes (e.g. recruitment of staff, appointment of staff to different roles and functions, staff development, staff promotion, performance appraisal), assuring that appropriate career paths, promotion criteria and decisions are defined, communicated and implemented for both academic and non academic staff.
11. It is recommended that the MIE urgently define and implement a clear workload policy applied to all of its academic and non-academic staff, assuring that it will promote a well balanced and flexible distribution in order to achieve quality in the three MIE strategic mandates, as well as to ensure that equitable opportunities for promotion across staff are made available.
12. It is recommended that the MIE further develop a strategic human resource planning and management approach for both academic and non-academic staff, which should include the recruitment of a well qualified HR officer, and the provision of equitable deployment of administrative staff to effectively support the different structures and committees at MIE, to better manage workload requirements at MIE as well as ensuring that national needs are being met.
13. It is recommended that the MIE consider the possible needs for additional human resources and a smart use of qualified staff to assure that within acceptable working load limits MIE does move into the future and meets its present and future ambitions.
14. It is recommended that the MIE, as suggested (SERp 34; Annex 7, p 7) adopt and implement a broader QA perspective and structure, together with the appropriate resources, in order to assure that adequate QA mechanisms and tools are applied not just to teaching but also to Research and Curriculum Development activities, as well as administrative and support activities, and also to conclude the approval and implementation of the corresponding revamped QA organizational structure (as presented in Annex 101).
15. It is recommended, as suggested (SERp 33) that the MIE consolidate its efforts of quality data collection and analysis, by reinforcing data quality and its fitness for purpose, updating the survey contents, making appropriate and integrated statistical analysis of the results obtained and assuring that the corresponding improvement loops are closed, leading to the practical implementation on the field of appropriate initiatives, as well as assuring that a broader coverage is obtained (e.g. apply SFQs to all modules).
16. It is recommended that the MIE consolidate the exploration of a wider variety of channels, such as forums, discussions or focus groups, to collect the voices, opinions and qualitative data from students and staff, and also that these mechanisms be also applied to alumni and employers. Strategic and better structured approaches are necessary for interaction with alumni and employers.

17. It is recommended that the MIE develop a quality manual to enable better diffusion of quality procedures and culture, ensuring that improvement loops and opportunities are closed, and that a customer focused process management approach is fully adopted across the organizational structure.
18. It is recommended that MIE review critically the templates used in monitoring the course development process at all levels.
19. It is recommended that the MIE adopt a more consistent and systematic approach for capacity building in order to better achieve its ambitions to develop and offer a wide range of programmes with well defined standards, in different modes of learning: freshly recruited staff should enhance their knowledge and skills in teacher education curriculum development and present staff should pursue continuing professional development; the induction process should be continually enhanced using feedback of peers, mentors and mentees; and all academic staff should be trained in the use of digital online mode of delivery of courses to achieve MIE's ambition to move towards a more blended mode of course delivery.
20. It is recommended that the systems of monitoring progression and completion rates on taught programmes be strengthened.
21. It is recommended that soft skills be embedded in the curricula and appropriately assessed across programmes.
22. It is recommended that MIE review the assessment strategies across all programmes and to emphasize formative evaluations on all modules where appropriate.
23. It is recommended that the MIE consider the development of a pre-doctoral programme to support the transition from study at postgraduate taught to postgraduate research levels; this seems particularly important in view of the seeming need of transition from a provider- to a student/researcher-led disposition.
24. It is recommended that the MIE, in the context of its existing partnership-based doctoral research programmes, focus on issues around retention, progression and timely completion, as well as taking the part-time nature of study more carefully into account in relation to programme design and the calibration of support structures.
25. It is recommended that the MIE develop a clear, overarching research strategy linked to its institutional strategy as well as a corresponding governance structure that explicates and underpins the interrelationship of research with other aspects of the core mission of the MIE. The research strategy should be accompanied by an implementation as well as dissemination plan.
26. It is recommended that the MIE, in line with its ambition to strengthen its research culture, seek to obtain Ministry approval for a more open recruitment process of academic staff in areas of expertise that are viewed as priorities or where gaps have been identified at levels higher than lecturer level.
27. It is recommended that the MIE strengthen its consideration of the relevance of the MIE's research efforts for educational policy and practice in Mauritius. For example, consideration be given to a stronger practitioner orientation of the MIE's research efforts with a focus on synergies with its own teacher education pedagogy, teacher education curricula, coursebook design activities as well as its work on subject didactics. Consideration should be given to the

strengthening of evidence-based inquiry as part of MIE programmes and how these efforts can be framed more explicitly as projects undertaken in partnership with schools and their staff.

28. It is recommended that the MIE review and strengthen its taught programmes at postgraduate level to better prepare students for the capstone research element; this, importantly, should include support with research proposal writing and with the formulation of researchable questions.

### 3. Progress made on the recommendations of the 2013 Quality Audit

Recognising the importance of quality enhancement and continuous improvement within higher education institutions, and the role of quality audits in ensuring the implementation of recommendations from previous audits, the 2018 Panel analysed the extent to which the 25 recommendations in the Report of the Second Cycle Audit of the Mauritius Institute of Education have been implemented. After considering the narrative and evidence provided by MIE in its 2018 SER, as well as supporting documents (Annex 96) and evidence that was collected during the site visit, the Panel saw, overall, significant progress in following up on some the 2013 Quality Audit recommendations, particularly in areas where MIE has institutional autonomy to address them. MIE has undertaken a number of reviews of its operations, with some work newly started following the change in degree awarding status, others in progress, and more to come in the short term and middle terms, in line with its Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

Recommendations 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 of the 2013 Second Cycle Quality Audit have been effectively implemented. Reasonable progress appears to have been made in implementing Recommendations 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 19, 20, although there remains some work to be done to complete these. Recommendations 1, 2, 5, 7, which relate to the degree of authority MIE has, or not, on governance and management matters, have not been implemented, but they do not fall under the scope of actions that MIE can carry out by itself.

The Panel has analysed the current situation regarding each of the 25 recommendations made in the previous 2013 Quality Audit Report, leading to the comments and feedback provided below.

#### 3.1 Comments on 2013 Recommendations

- 1. It is recommended that the Council of the Mauritius Institute of Education undertake international research into models of operation and governance of institutions similar to the Institute's and develop an options paper with recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to guide the preparation of new legislation that will facilitate the Institute reach the goal of University status as set out in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020.**

MIE reported that it has analysed some models of operation and governance from other Teacher Education institutions and sent proposals (Annex 4 and Annex 100) to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (MOEHRTESR), but these have not been fully considered. The Panel found that these proposals (Annex 4 and Annex 100) were not totally explicit and did not make a case for changes in the operation and governance model, but rather discussed the strengths of MIE as a teacher training institution, and the challenges it faced in the absence of degree awarding powers, which have been recently given to MIE.

- 2. It is recommended that clearly-expressed terms of reference be established by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources for the Council of the Mauritius Institute of Education, as presently constituted, pending the revision of the MIE 1973 Act.**

Although the MIE Act has been amended in April 2017, and proclaimed in April 2018, to grant the Institute the degree-awarding status, the terms of reference of the Council remained unchanged, and the amendment in the Act does not bring significant governance changes.

- 3. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education, through the Council, develop terms of reference for the Academic Board, as presently constituted, and establish committees and reporting structures that enable the Board to be accountable to Council for academic governance and maintenance of standards through activities such as course development; academic policy; quality assurance and review.**

The terms of reference were developed (Annex 73), but these do not give a full insight of how the Academic Board is accountable to the Council, and its role, especially for maintenance of standards through course development, QA and review, vis a vis the Teacher Education Committee and other Committees, is not well defined. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5 in light of the changes being introduced at MIE.

- 4. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education Academic Board give priority to identifying policy gaps and to developing and implementing whole-of-institution academic policies including a stringent policy that ensures academic integrity in student work.**

The terms of reference of the Academic Board that were developed (Annex 73) included responsibility for the identification of policy gaps as well as the implementation of academic policies. Policy gaps have been identified by units such as the Higher Education Cell and the Teaching Education Committee. The following relevant policy documents have been developed by MIE:

- Rules and Regulations for Students (October 2015)
- Academic Standards (May 2017 and July 2018)
- Anti-Plagiarism (July 2018)
- Code of Ethics for Staff (January 2018)
- Standards for Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes (July 2018 and May 2017)

The Panel believes that it is too early at this stage to verify how these policies have effectively contributed to the enhancement of the teaching and learning environment, but regards the development of such policies as a positive practice and encourages MIE to ensure that these are clearly communicated to different levels and stakeholders of MIE, once they have been developed and approved by the Academic Board to ensure successful implementation. The Strategic Plan 2017-2021 of MIE which focus significantly on informed policy development using evidenced-based approaches (Annex 75) will be instrumental to steer MIE in effective policy development and deployment.

- 5. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education review its organisational structure with the goal of making clear distinctions between management and academic governance structures; consolidating the number of departments and committees; and clarifying the relationships between different levels of management and academic committees.**

This recommendation has yet to be fully implemented. The role and responsibilities of some MIE committees as well as their relationship to others are somewhat unclear from the SER (SERp 14-18). MIE has initiated a process of institutional reflection on its model of operation. Following consultation, committees have been set up to work on an organisational restructure, which has to be validated by the Council, to enable the Institute to achieve its set targets more effectively, as a degree-awarding institution, by the end of 2018. MIE needs, while undertaking the restructuring exercise, to ensure that different layers of responsibility are clear, including the need for ongoing review of the responsibilities of governing body committees. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

**6. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education review the deployment of administrative staff with the aim of achieving flexibility to provide support for core academic functions of curriculum development and research as well as to committees linked to the Academic Board.**

The MIE has implemented this recommendation of the 2013 Audit Report through the provision of support administrative staff to different committees, as well as by appointing research assistants on specific projects:

(i) The Curriculum Unit has been provided with administrative support so as to allow it to function effectively and meet targets set. Additionally, the Graphic Division has been attached to the Curriculum Unit so as to provide technical support in the development of textbooks and other curricular materials.

(ii) A support team comprising administrative staff, along with the services of research assistants, has been provided to the Research Unit to facilitate the implementation of current projects underway.

While the Panel acknowledges that MIE has undertaken laudable effort to meet this recommendation, with the change in awarding status, the Institute now has also to look into its Human Resource Development Plan to align it with the needs for human resource to shoulder its different activities, at the different levels, and also to plan and align with its budget. The Panel heard from academic staff involved in curriculum development for primary level education that additional administrative support would ease some of the administrative tasks they are presently undertaking.

**7. It is recommended that, given the range and importance of responsibilities associated with the position, the post of Deputy Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education be filled as a matter of high priority.**

This recommendation, which was set forward from the First Cycle Audit of MIE in 2007, has not yet been implemented. The post of Deputy Director was advertised but not filled due to procedural issues. Provision has been made in the current budget and the plan was to fill this strategic position in the financial year 2017-2018.

**8. It is recommended that the MIE Council and management give urgent priority to working with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to achieve full implementation of Recommendation 4 of the 2007 audit so that MIE has the necessary budgetary flexibility to operate effectively and in a longer term framework than at present.**



No significant changes were made to the funding model of the MIE when the act was amended. MIE remains accountable to the MOEHRTESR for all of its expenses. MIE reported some progress within the constraint in which it operates: a number of flexible measures have been introduced since a few years now, especially with regards to project implementation at Schools' level. The project leaders are responsible for the budget and expenditure related to their respective projects. This is further discussed in Chapter 5.

- 9. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education Quality Assurance System develop a conceptual framework for an extended quality assurance system anchored in the values and mission of MIE and thus facilitate the monitoring of progress on achievement of goals set out in the Institute's strategic plans.**

Since the last audit that QA at MIE have matured, together with additional resources and experience accumulated by the Quality Assurance Division (QAD). Different types of metrics, mostly related to teaching, are being collected, but it may be important to assure that the data collected is indeed used to close the loop through improvement actions, as well as that targets are defined for key performance indicators aligned with MIE strategic plans. An extended coverage of QA, encompassing all areas, such as administration, curriculum development and research, is being gradually put in place and will be operational by 2019, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

- 10. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education review the roles of the Quality Assurance Coordinator and the Quality Assurance Division to ensure there is an appropriately resourced base for implementation of an extended quality assurance framework including the provision of management information to support evidence-based decision making.**

The Panel noted some progress in the implementation of this recommendation. A full-time coordinator has been nominated at the Associate Professor level in 2015 to lead the activities of the MIE QAD, and the roles of this division have been enlarged. There are plans to further extend the scope of QA activities to all the MIE scopes that relate to its Mission, under a new Quality Assurance Framework, as will be further discussed in Chapter 6.

- 11. It is recommended that the review of the MIE Act 1973 ensure that Heads of Department are formally included in the recruitment process for academic staff and, in the interim, that processes are introduced to allow input by Heads of Department keeping in mind the finding of the Mauritius court on the constitution of Appointments Committees.**

The MIE Council has approved the inclusion of Heads of Departments (HoD) or a representative expert resource person in the recruitment process through regulations made under the provision of the MIE Act in 2017. However, it was reported to the Panel that appointment decisions are sometimes made without taking into full account the recommendations of the respective/corresponding HoD. The Panel suggests MIE to ensure that the voices of HoDs are not only heard in the Appointment Committee but formally considered in the appointment decision making processes.

- 12. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education place more emphasis on recruiting academic staff with expertise and experience to teach in the different levels of school education and that existing MIE staff recruited from the secondary sector be provided with opportunities to experience practical classroom teaching at primary and pre-vocational levels placement programmes and staff development.**

MIE reported some difficulties in recruiting staff in specialised areas, especially given that the recruitment policy limits recruiting academic staff to the lecturer level. Since 2011, and further in 2014, MIE has enlisted the services of resource persons from the primary sector. MIE also provides opportunities for staff development (through induction, in-house sessions, and Community of Practice, among others) and the professional practice component in programmes provides staff the opportunity to familiarize themselves with all levels in the education sector. The Panel heard from academic staff that MIE offers the possibility to work with colleagues from different departments, across disciplines and to engage in various academic activities to be able to handle different aspects of teacher training. The Communities of Practice set up by MIE (Annexes 18 and 96) can effectively contribute to sharing experiences in teaching practice at different levels, but many academic staff were not entirely aware of these set ups.

- 13. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education develop its approach to promotion of academics and ensures there is a programme of support for staff applying for promotion as well as a debriefing and counselling system for unsuccessful applicants so that they can remedy shortcomings relative to the promotion criteria.**

There is a process in place to enable all academic staff to present their achievements for promotion, based on a set of criteria (submitted during the audit exercise) and it was also confirmed through discussion with staff that a programme of debriefing and counselling, conducted by the Director, is in place for unsuccessful candidates to promotion. However, it was also reported to the Panel that this mechanism in place for promotion is not yet fully transparent and promotion exercises are also dependent on the budget allocations of MIE. The Panel therefore suggests that further efforts of communication to staff about the promotion system and criteria can be considered and implemented.

- 14. It is recommended that, taking into account the imminent introduction of a workload instrument for academic staff, consideration should be given to appropriate recognition for the full range of MIE priorities, including teacher education programmes, research and curriculum development.**

As per the SER, the MIE is still working on the design of a workload policy that will consider and acknowledge the range of activities in which its academic staff are engaged. A workload quantification template was developed and piloted, and feedback/suggestions have been provided by staff (Annex 96). MIE reports that consultation with staff is still ongoing in view of reaching consensus on a new model by the end of 2018, so that the corresponding policy can be made effective as from 2019. The Panel is concerned about the lack of an appropriate workload policy, this remaining a pressing issue at MIE given that academic staff reported that their workload is not structured primarily due to add-ons pertaining to policy decisions of the MOEHRTESSR, and is a huge challenge to manage. The Panel therefore re-iterates this recommendation and urges MIE to stick to its plan of reaching a consensus with staff and to have the policy effective as from 2019.

**15. It is recommended that staff mentorship at the Mauritius Institute of Education be institutionalised with clarification of roles for both mentors and mentees and with involvement of Heads of Schools and Departments as appropriate.**

Staff mentorship has been in place at MIE since 2007, through the Induction Programme. The system is now institutionalized, as defined by the Induction Programme Handbook. Furthermore, MIE is piloting a new system of mentoring, using a Community of Practice (CoP) approach which has been in place since 2017 (Annex 18), but at this stage MIE has not yet assessed the effectiveness of this mentoring system. The Panel also heard that not all staff are involved in institutional CoPs, but some have set their own CoP, with their colleagues, according to their common interests.

**16. It is recommended that the Quality Assurance Division at the Mauritius Institute of Education take on a more impactful roles in relation to teaching and learning through careful analysis and use of aggregate data about teaching quality and also through monitoring of academic standards based on de-identified peer review outcomes.**

The MIE QAD has implemented an elaborate system of data collection and analysis based on information obtained from different sources (e.g. SFQs, LFQs, EFQ). It is however important to assure that such data are converted into improvement actions, by closing the loop and supporting appropriate decisions. The Panel also suggests that MIE may define targets to be achieved for key performance indicators aligned with its Strategic Plan. This will also be further discussed in Chapter 6. Further monitoring of academic standards on the basis of de-identified peer review outcomes also deserves consideration.

**17. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education review its quality assurance processes for teacher education programmes and introduce a regular schedule for review with stakeholder input based on the current processes of external validation.**

MIE has in place an effective system to develop and approve teacher education programmes. With the newly developed Professional Standards and Level Descriptors for all programmes based on the National Qualifications Framework and international benchmarks, MIE is on the right track to improve its curriculum development process. There is also a regular review process in place, with a 5 year cycle, and programmes are also revised on a yearly basis to include minor changes, on the basis of feedback from academic staff and students. Feedback is sent by the QAD to Heads of Departments (in turn sent to academic staff), and to the Teacher Education Committee. The latter Committee has been empowered to evaluate programmes (Annex 9).

However, the Panel encourages programme review to also take further into consideration external feedback, given that as per the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75, pp 9), “The evaluations of teacher education programmes undertaken lately have revealed that different stakeholders find that the MIE is still doing too much of front loading, thus leading to over assessment and duplication”. The MIE has recently developed an Employers Feedback Questionnaire, where input from employers is collected to feed into programme review, and this is presently being piloted. The Panel could not confirm how and where feedback from external examiners is considered, given that these are not forwarded to either the Teacher Education Committee or to the Programme Committees, but rather to the Heads of Departments.

In the wake of the revision of MIE Quality Assurance Framework, the QAD is urged to ensure that relevant input collected from external stakeholders (employers, external examiners etc.) is further included in the review process, at the appropriate levels. The Panel also found that employers were particularly keen to be active participants in enhancing the quality and relevancy of programmes provided by MIE.

**18. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education formalise the process in place for the Practicum component of teacher training by establishing a system of supervision of trainee teacher at the school level and provision of a Practicum Manual.**

The teacher training programme consists of a School-Based Experience component. This is a process which is well in place, with the participation of the Head of the primary or secondary school where the trainee is posted. All trainees are supervised by one of their lecturers. There is no Practicum Manual as a separate handbook because each Course Handbook gives details on the practicum component. The Panel found evidence of the Practicum component bearing 16 Credits out of 40 in the Course Handbook for the Certificate in Special Education (Annex 84), whereas for the Post Graduate Certificate of Education, the Practicum component bears 17 Credits out of 45, comprising of Professional Practice seminars, School-Based Experience and Peer/Micro Teaching (Annex 10).

**19. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education institute regular consultations and surveys of employers' satisfaction with the Institute's graduates.**

An Employers' Feedback Questionnaire has been designed and piloted since 2017. The next phase will involve focus group discussions in a bid to obtain richer and thicker data, which would help to further assess stakeholders' expectations and thus improve the new programmes envisaged (beginning 2019). The QAD confirmed that consultation with employers is under consideration and that the questionnaire may have to be revised in order to extract and obtain also more qualitative feedback.

**20. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education develop a policy and implementation plan for the introduction of online learning for the Institute as a whole with an emphasis on articulation of the pedagogical foundations for blended learning and use of ICT to enhance learning.**

This recommendation has been partially implemented by the MIE. A report on 'Fast track training of all its personnel in the use of online teaching and learning platform' was commissioned by MIE in 2015 (Annex 9A) and the E-learning Implementation Policy (Annex 104) was updated in 2014. The Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL), which is responsible for technical and pedagogical services in the field of Open and Distance Learning, has been instrumental in the development of blended learning modules at MIE. About 47 modules are offered on a blended mode per semester, as of now, and many programmes of study include at least one module offered through this mode of delivery. The aim of MIE, as per its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, is to ensure that 50% of courses are provided through online modes by 2020. The CODL is confident that this target is reachable. However discussions with academic staff show that not all of them have been engaged in the development of online or blended learning modes for their programmes. MIE intends to employ more staff as instructional designers and lecturers in the CODL so as to offer more opportunities to enhance online learning. MIE still needs to articulate a detailed implementation plan to achieve 50% online

learning courses, in line with the needs of the Institute, with the appropriate systems in place to support its achievement.

**21. It is recommended that ICT facilities and internet connectivity at the Mauritius Institute of Education be upgraded and further developed to cater for the demand of the increasing number of students and staff, and to facilitate access to blended learning and fully online learning programme.**

This Recommendation was effectively implemented and aligns with the vision of MIE to be an innovative change maker for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (SERp 13), as well as with its overarching strategic goals (Annex 75, p 9) to strengthen the provision of technology-based content delivery so as to be a leader in the region.

A number of initiatives that have been taken at MIE in this field are the following:

- Development of a comprehensive IT policy, duly approved by the MIE Council in 2018;
- Provision of WIFI coverage across the MIE campus since 2016;
- Provision of laptops to all academic staff, including accessories, to help in course preparation, and to encourage the use of technology in the classroom and to facilitate research work ;
- Setting up MIE Cloud system with Microsoft Azure;
- Implementation of Fortinet solution;
- Implementation of interactive technology and systems in all classrooms, with internet access for teaching and NAS server technology (Network Attached Storage) for transferring all teaching materials and notes to students;
- Provision of equipment such as Clickers to facilitate some forms of assessment and even teaching in classrooms;
- Provision of access to digital reading materials (e.g. through Questia Implementation of Office 365 and Sharepoint);
- Setting up of an Incubator on development of interactive materials for educational use, funded by the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF), a francophone educational funding agency;
- Implementation of Class 21 – technology based and empowered classroom in Mauritius and Rodrigues (Rs 3.5m funding from MRC has been obtained for this project).

**22. It is recommended that the Mauritius Institute of Education's Research Unit be reinforced to enable it to promote a research culture, optimise research potential of staff and work to a strategic plan that channels activities into areas of potential research strength such as curriculum development.**

The Research Unit has been set up to provide for a formal internal structure that would work towards sustaining the burgeoning institutional research agenda and culture at the MIE (SERp 20). The terms of reference were formulated:

- To initiate and coordinate research capacity building at the MIE
- To provide progress report on ongoing research
- To create forums to disseminate findings through activities such as workshops, seminars, and publications on a regular basis

- To assist Management in developing and monitoring its Strategic Plan for research

The Strategic Plan (Annex 75, p 6 and p 8) outlines the targets that the MIE is setting for itself is to provide academic staff with the latitude they require to engage in educational research and become more research active, as well as improvement required in that area. These topics will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

**23. It is recommended that Mauritius Institute of Education initiate discussions with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to achieve better integration and articulation of curriculum development frameworks, including for Kreol and Pre-Vocational area so that the Institute has enhanced guidance for curriculum development projects undertaken.**

MIE reported that it has been leading several national framework developments, including the National Curriculum Framework for Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (2015), the National Curriculum Framework For Grades 1 to 6 (2015), and The National Curriculum Framework for Grades 7, 8 and 9 (2016) (SERp 28) and that attention to Kreol language has been an integral part of these processes. Pre-Vocational education has also been completely reviewed as the new system is constituted of a new Extended Programme. The MIE has contributed in the design of this programme (SERp 42).

**24. It is recommended that in light of the new administrative framework for Rodrigues, arrangements be made for continuing involvement of the Rodrigues community in developing curriculum and teacher capacity strategies at the Mauritius Institute of Education.**

The Panel confirmed that the Rodrigues community was well serviced by MIE. The Institute works in close collaboration with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to provide support for training needs of Rodrigues. All the training offered in Mauritius in the course of the Reform project in education is replicated for Rodriguan teachers in Rodrigues on a regular basis. Academic staff from MIE travel to Rodrigues during the school holidays to teach on programmes.

With regards to curriculum development, Rodriguan teaching staff have been formally enlisted to be part of all the secondary textbook writing panels so as to ensure that textbooks are made as much relevant to Rodriguan as for Mauritian needs. However, given that resources are not equally available for teachers in the classrooms in Rodrigues, not all aspects of teaching and learning can be used in the classrooms. More attention should also be given to learning resources for Rodriguan teachers such as provision of e-books, as they do not have access to a library. Thus, the Panel also suggests MIE to ensure that the needs of the Rodrigues Community may be more specifically considered whenever feedback is collected.

**25. It is recommended that Mauritius Institute of Education develop strategies to allocate administrative support in addition to data collection and analysis services to support curriculum development teams.**

A Human Resource Management Plan would benefit MIE to improve its human resources practices. MIE has reported that following the 2013 Quality Audit, 44 additional support staff members have

been employed, and have been providing support to academic activities, including curriculum development teams. A dedicated Curriculum Development Section has been set up with resources and facilities since 2015, while Research Assistants have also been provided to support curriculum development teams.

Overall, MIE has handled and taken into consideration most of the Recommendations made in the previous 2013 Quality Audit Report, especially those over which it does have full handling and implementation autonomy, but yet MIE may benefit from a more systematic approach to the follow-up and monitoring of such Recommendations.

**Recommendation 1**

**It is recommended that an action plan be established to address, implement and regularly monitor the progress made on and achievement of recommendations, with clear, measurable and scheduled targets defined for key critical quality indicators.**

## 4. Institutional Context

The 2018 Quality Audit of the MIE is the third cycle audit focusing on two themes nominated by MIE: Curriculum Development for Teacher Education and Educational Research, themes which both fall squarely under the mandates of the MIE. In its SER, beyond addressing the two identified themes, MIE provides a comprehensive overview on the institutional context as well as its governance, management and operational structures to better explain its responsibilities towards its mandates as well as the boundaries within which it functions nationally (SER, Chapters 1-3).

This Chapter will report on the general institutional context, taking into consideration the recent adoption of the MIE (Amendment) Bill in 2017 and the proclamation in 2018 (Annex 5) and the ensuing changes in the legal framework which now enables the MIE to award its own degrees. The commitment of MIE to adhere to its stated Vision, Mission and Values will also be discussed.

### 4.1 Legal Framework

The MIE was established in 1973 by the MIE Act as the public teacher education institution responsible for pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education in the Republic of Mauritius, under the aegis of MOEHRTESR. The institution is the fourth largest student campus in Mauritius, with a current enrolment of around 4000 students (SERp 24).

Since its inception, the mandate of MIE (SERp 13), as laid out in its Act, has been “to provide facilities for 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.”

In line with its mandate, MIE has been instrumental to the development of the teacher training profession and the education sector in Mauritius through the provision of a variety of professional development programmes, including specialised programmes such as Special Educational Needs, to meet the changing needs of Mauritius and Rodrigues as well as that of a multitude of actors in the education sector. From in-service teachers to trainee teachers, from school administrators to inspectors and other educational cadres, as well as its own staff, the institution has trained more than 50,000 students in the education sector (Annex 77).

The second mandate of the MIE as per its Act is curriculum development, which was not a theme of this audit but which is a contextual reality that was repeatedly raised during meetings with both academic and non-academic staff. Curriculum development for all levels of school education is one of the specificities of the MIE, and also one of its distinguishing features, as well as a major responsibility of national interest, and directly involves almost 50% of the academic staff (SERp 27). Since its inception, one of MIE’s major tasks was the writing of all secondary school textbooks, until these activities were shifted to the National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (NCCRD) in 1985. All the while, the MIE continued to shoulder the responsibilities for the writing of textbooks as panel leaders for the primary sector. Given the urgent need to accelerate the process and functions of curriculum development in Mauritius, the responsibilities for textbook writing was



transferred back to the MIE in 2010 and the NCCRD was closed (SERp 28). With the changes in the education sector in the years 2000-2010, the MIE was also assigned the responsibility to develop the National Curriculum Frameworks for the pre-primary, primary and secondary sectors. In recent years, MIE was entrusted with the development of the new curriculum framework for post 2015, which incorporated the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, and which paved the way for the reform in the primary and secondary education sectors leading to the Nine Year Continuous Basic Education (SERp 28). The implementation of these reforms also gave rise to the charting of new curriculum documents as well as the development of new textbooks. Thus, since 2014, MIE has produced 124 textbooks for Grades 1 to 6 and 15 textbooks for Grade 7 in 2018 (SERp 29). The Panel learnt from staff that their involvement in curriculum development and associated activities had significant impact on their workload and their other roles at MIE and that institutional targets and deadlines were frequently moved to accommodate national ones, given that MIE has to prioritise work according to demands coming from the Ministry.

The third mandate of the MIE is educational research and one of the themes chosen by the MIE for this Quality Audit. Since the last Quality Audit, the MIE has strived to strengthen its research mandate by the reinforcement of its Research Unit in line with the recommendation of the 2013 Audit Panel 'to enable it to promote a research culture, optimise research potential of staff and work to a strategic plan that channels activities into areas of potential research strength such as curriculum development' (SER, Recommendation 22, p 42). This topic will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

During the Second Cycle Quality Audit, the 2013 Panel learnt that the 1973 MIE Act was under review to enable MIE to be 'further empowered to assume such responsibilities' in teacher training, curriculum development and research, as per the MOEHRTESR Strategy Plan 2008-2020 (MIE Audit Report 2013). This third cycle Quality Audit is timely: the MIE Act was amended in 2017 and now empowers MIE with degree awarding status (SERp 13), with its functions changing from 'to make recommendations to the University of Mauritius for the award and conferring of degrees' to 'award degrees, diplomas and certificates, whether on its own or jointly, with any tertiary education institution'. As a matter of fact, from its inception till 2017, MIE was only mandated to award undergraduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas, and in collaborations with other local universities, joint teacher training degrees, namely Bachelor of Education programmes in different disciplines. MIE has, since 1993, also leveraged its international collaborations with University of Brighton (UoB) and University of Kwazulu Natal (UKZN) to offer postgraduate awards, including programmes at doctoral levels (SERp 25). This will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

The Panel learnt that degree awarding status is for MIE a first, albeit small, step towards greater autonomy, which all staff welcomed, and towards university status. However, despite the change in the MIE Act to confer degree awarding powers to the institution, no additional significant changes were made in the new Bill to establish MIE as an autonomous educational institution with respect to its governance, operational and financial status. Examination of the documents related to the amendment of the MIE Act showed that amendments proposed (of the MIE Act) are minor ones in diverse subsections that are corollary to the main amendment of making MIE its own degree awarding body (Annex 100, letter from MIE to Ministry) and that MIE, being the executive arm of the MOEHRTESR and responsible for the Human Resource Development of the whole Education Sector, will continue to operate under the aegis of this Ministry. As the body responsible for Curriculum development at all levels in Mauritius, it has to work in very close cooperation with the same Ministry for effective implementation of Government Policy (Annex 100, Amendments to MIE Act). Meetings with stakeholders in various governance arenas confirmed that the institution remains governed by the

parent Ministry for many policy decisions, as well as for internal governing matters, as shown by the composition of the Council, the main governing and executive committee of the institution, with strong presence of MOEHRTE SR members (SERp 17).

Despite still operating within the Ministry's framework, the long-awaited awarding status will allow MIE to operate its programme independently, further establishing its recognition at the local and regional levels as a teacher training institution, as well as giving it more leverage in the collaboration with other universities.

## 4.2 Mission, Vision and Values

The MIE's Vision is 'To be a leader in professional development in the education sector and an innovative change maker for the 21st century' and its Mission is expressed as 'The Mauritius Institute of Education is committed to advancing professional standards dedicated to the making of an institution of excellence in teaching, curriculum development and research, while advancing creativity and engagement at all levels'. The MIE has also identified a set of guiding principles and values which are the founding stones of the institution (SERp 14). The Panel noted that the MIE's Vision and Mission statement are well-attuned to the needs of the education sector and that there is a stated intention and commitment to advancing professional standards towards excellence in its three mandates.

Given that MIE has had the monopoly for teacher education since 1973, it is *de-facto* the leading institution catering for professional development in the education sector and has trained the majority of educators in the last 45 years (Annex 77). The Panel also took note, through discussion with external stakeholders and examination of documents, that the MIE has effectively contributed to the advancement of the education sector through its leading role in the development of National Curriculum Frameworks for the sector as well as in the design of textbooks for the different levels of education (SERp 28).

The emphasis on innovation and creativity in the Vision and Mission and throughout the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75) is also noteworthy. Through interviews with staff and students, site visits and examinations of documentary evidence, the Panel observed that MIE was effectively introducing innovation across different activities: these ranged from the use of technology and innovative teaching and learning approaches in its classrooms to enhanced pedagogical practices, and to the development of standards and level descriptors for its programmes. The Panel also found that MIE is presently engaged in the provision of online and blended modes of teaching and learning, through its Centre for Open and Distance Learning, and intends to offer 50 percent of courses through online modes by 2020, as per the Strategic Plan 2017-2020.

In order to further achieve its Mission, in line with its new Strategic Plan, MIE needs to reconsider how it can better exploit the potential of its new status to further implement innovative approaches across its three mandates, covering innovation in teacher education, and with emphasis also on innovation in research and curriculum development.

## Recommendation 2

**It is recommended that MIE further implement strategies that will embed a culture of innovation across all mandates, as well as in its quality assurance framework, in line with its Vision statement with the aim of achieving its aspirations to ‘Lead the process of change and innovation in education through research and innovative practices’ as per its Strategic Plan 2017-2021.**

Through discussion with a range of staff, the Panel observed that the staff at MIE were deeply dedicated to their work and felt committed to advancing the vision, mission and values of the MIE, as reflected in willingness to serve on and participate in the different committees and working activities.

## Commendation 1

**The personnel at the MIE is commended for its commitment to the advancement of the vision, mission and values of the institution.**

The Panel also found that the vision and mission statements are effectively disseminated across the institution. These can be found on its website as well as in its Strategic Plan 2017-2020 (Annex 75). MIE’s values, education philosophy, and culture are also clearly disseminated and visible on the MIE campus on different media and spaces such as poster boards plastered on the walls outside and inside the MIE’s buildings as well as on digital screens.

## Commendation 2

**The MIE is commended for having implemented in-house communications channels (e.g. board, digital screens) that help disseminate the MIE values, education philosophy and organizational culture to its members.**

The Panel formed the impression that the MIE is committed to its mission, and has been constantly upgrading its buildings, equipment, spaces and facilities as reflected by the site visit conducted on the campus. The recent move to the new wing of the main building on campus has provided MIE a good opportunity to reconsider how it might exploit the potential of the new space for the introduction of innovative strategies, such as the recording studio, while additionally providing opportunities for repurposing the existing buildings to support innovation. The Panel is of view that in the furtherance of its Strategic Plan 2017-2021, MIE needs to keep updating its premises, as well as to enhance and upgrade its teaching and learning resources, including technology and e-resources, and taking into consideration the future trends in educational needs of its learners as well as the needs of its staff to engage in research activities.

## Recommendation 3

**It is recommended that the MIE keep updating its buildings, equipment, spaces and facilities taking into account future trends, state-of-the art solution and its own strategic choices (e.g. e-books, meeting spaces for staff, 3D printers, arrangements for promoting holistic education, creativity and innovation, medical room).**

## 5. Governance, Management and Resources

The findings of the Panel on matters relating to overall governance and management at MIE are reported here and will specifically cover the following topics: Strategic Planning; Governance and Management; and Human Resources Management and Planning.

### 5.1 Strategic Planning

MIE's Strategic Plan, was developed to serve 'as a guiding one for the Institute over 5 years, especially in the light of the MIE acceding to a degree-awarding status, and opening its horizons and doors to a wider range of clients, while embracing 21st century technologies, new learning modes, and opportunities to work towards achieving its full potential' (Annex 75, p. 7).

The Strategic Plan identifies the following five strategic goals: 1. Provide academic leadership in the field of teacher education; 2. Strengthen the provision of technology-based content delivery so as to be a leader in the region; 3. Position the MIE as a Curriculum Centre of Excellence for both local and international needs; 4. Strengthen the capacity of the MIE to conduct research so as to inform policy and practice; and 5. Lead the process of change and innovation in education through research and innovative practices (Annex 75, pp 19). The Plan focuses on the three core mandates of MIE, namely Educational Research, Teacher Education, and Curriculum Development, and articulates the strategic direction of the MIE for the five year term with key targets that the Institute has set under each mandate.

The Panel is of the view that MIE's strategic plan is a comprehensive, challenging and an ambitious plan that effectively aligns with its Vision, Mission and Values and has well defined strategic goals, processes and several strategic actions. However, it was not clear to the Panel how resourcing and budgeting decisions were taken into consideration in the development of the MIE Strategic Plan, given that MIE has identified that 'Budgetary constraints and the difficulty for the MIE to raise funds remain hindering factors' (Annex 75, p 8). Further, as MIE moves to redefine its institutional structure, it is also important that strategic planning is carried out within the new framework and that formal and inclusive processes are in place for resource requirements and that budget allocations are developed and implemented within the scope of MIE strategic framework.

The Panel urges MIE to reconsider, in a first place, its strategies within the Strategic Plan in order to focus on those of highest priority and in the context of its new degree awarding status. A clear and concrete action plan needs to be established for the coming years with specific and measurable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within the established time frame and budget, and to include a monitoring system which also has clear accountabilities and progress and performance reviews, comprising the short term and longer term change agenda within MIE. Given that the Strategic Plan identified the necessity to have 'consultative sessions with all academic staff and administrative staff in key positions, to engage in in-depth discussions, thereby articulating a common strategic direction for the Institute for five years' (Annex 75 p 5), MIE is also encouraged to work with its staff to set enabling plans for its schools and operational units (Research Unit, CODL, etc.), which will be aligned to and help to deploy the main institutional strategic plan. The Panel further urges MIE to communicate the implementation of its strategic plan to all of its stakeholders, including the Ministry, to ensure transparency in its practices and buy-in and support to the defined strategy.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**It is recommended that the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 be revised, in line with the ambitions and priorities of the MIE with its newly degree awarding status, to include and elaborate on a clear action plan over the five years period, with specific KPIs, a time frame, and an effective monitoring system for implementation, as well as its deployment through aligned Strategic Plans at the MIE's Schools level.**

The Panel queried the MIE regarding its Risk Management Plan, and was informed that 'MIE does not currently have a Risk Management Policy, however a Risk Assessment Analysis was conducted as part of the Strategic Analysis while working out the updated Strategic Plan' (Annex 163). The Panel was directed to the strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities and challenges identified by MIE in the preparation of its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75, p 8-10). The major risks identified by MIE, and which were confirmed through discussions with staff were: 1. the budgetary model within which MIE operates and the resulting constraints in raising funds; 2. The high, and volatile, workload of staff in curriculum development and textbook development, arising from the assignments delegated and emanating from policies of the MOEHRTESSR; and 3. Fluctuation in student intake related to government policies. The MIE, although well aware of these risks, has been coping with them within its capacities and capabilities.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**It is recommended that the MIE develop and implement a broader risk management policy on the basis of its strategic and operational risks.**

## **5.2 Governance**

The SER provided information regarding the governance and managerial structures of MIE, including the organizational (academic and administrative) structures and charts, as well as a description of the functions of different decision making committees, units and cells. The Panel was also provided with the proposed institution-wide restructure plan of the MIE (Annex 16), which the institution intends to implement as it moves to redefine its priorities as a degree awarding institution. This will be discussed further in the next sections.

### **5.2.1 Council**

At the top level, the MIE is governed by a Council, which is the executive body of the institution, and which has its powers, authorities, duties and functions set down in MIE Act 1973. The Council is responsible for the management and administration of the revenue and property of the Institute and has control over the conduct of the affairs of the Institute (SERp 17, MIE Act, MIE Amended (2017) Bill). The Council comprises up to 24 members, and as remarked in the last Quality Audit, in 2013, is dominated by Government department nominations, with the current Chair being the Senior Chief Executive of the MOEHRTESSR. From the records of the Council, the Panel found that the frequency of meetings, agenda setting, communications and recording of minutes all follow good international practices (Annex 161).

The Panel was concerned that some of the conclusions and recommendations of the 2013 Quality Audit, regarding governance at MIE, were still pending in terms of their implementation, despite amendment of the MIE Act. Through discussion with Council members and Management, as well as examination of documents, not enough evidence was provided indicating that the 2013 Quality Audit Recommendations with regards to governance were taken either at the level of Council or of Management. More consequential changes in the amendment of the Act in order to ensure that in line with international practices in the governance of academic institutions, the highest decision body of the MIE becomes more independent from the Parent Ministry, were not observed: even though MIE was granted degree awarding powers, the compositions, functions and responsibilities of Council remained basically unchanged.

The Panel noted that the Council's role was frequently being limited to approval of management and operational decisions, including infrastructural issues, financial matters, human resource oversight and day to day affairs of the institution, as reflected in the minutes of Council meetings (Annex 161). Although the Panel heard that the Council gives approval to academic and policy decisions, it does not seem to have a very active role in the framing of strategic functions at MIE and in the preparation of its Strategic Plan. The Panel also heard from MIE's representatives on Council that the MIE's priorities were often not those of the Ministry, and therefore institutional priorities have to be shifted to accommodate those of the Ministry, with tight national deadlines to be met. The Research mandate of the MIE, which was an obvious concern of academic staff throughout the Quality Audit, has not yet been given its due recognition as a priority, or allocated with sufficient resources. It was reported that MIE's budget for research, although it has been recently increased, was still less than that of other local universities. The Panel also heard from other sources that the Council often took decisions considering MIE within the whole education sector and not looking at MIE as a standalone institution, with its unique mandates of teacher training, curriculum development and research.

The Panel also met with other external members of the Council and was pleased to note the involvement of the Student Union as well as the representative of another local university. Although the Panel was informed that their voices were heard in the Council, their contribution was not effectively reflected in the minutes of the meetings provided to the Panel (Annex 161).

As mentioned previously, one of the functions of the Council is to approve financial matters at MIE. From discussions with the leadership, and documents read (Annex 100, p. 5) it was noted that degree awarding powers were granted with no changes in budgetary requirements of MIE, so as not to entail additional expenditure to the MOEHETESR, which is the main funding source of the MIE. MIE's other main source of funding comes from students' fees, but tuition fees for MIE's own awards are very low. Furthermore, the MIE is restricted by government policy in terms of the determination of programme fees, and therefore can only raise its own income through the offer of international postgraduate programmes. The Panel was also informed that although MIE has little capacity for negotiating its budget and is financially not autonomous, it has some scope for discretionary managing of certain expenses (up to Rs 1.5 M), within which it makes allocations to its planned priorities. Otherwise, all expenses have to be accounted for with the Ministry for disbursement of funds.

The Panel believes that since the Council has the final say on MIE's budget, before presentation to the relevant Ministries, the presence of members from the parent Ministry could be a potential asset to MIE, as the institutional priorities of MIE could be more effectively negotiated at the level of the

MOEHRTESR. Indeed, Panel heard that with regard to budgeting, it is the MOEHRTESR that makes recommendations to the Ministry of Finance when needs arise for additional funds.

The Panel concluded that the alignment of budget and the strategic planning processes were not clear either in the SER or the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75). There is a need for more clarity about the linkages between planned priorities of the MIE, including its organizational restructuring plans, and the strategic objectives to the budget process. The Panel urges the MIE to prepare a planning document aligned with its ambitions, targets and activities as detailed in its Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75), to be submitted for approval of the Council for further negotiation at the level of the Ministry. The Panel also recommends that the Council should review its roles, within the terms of reference of the Act, to better reflect its strategic responsibilities in supporting MIE in its moves to redefine itself as a degree awarding institution, as well as to be more proactively engaged in strategic planning to empower MIE in the furtherance of its three mandates.

The Panel also believes that MIE could be provided with more autonomy in decision making and financial planning from the Government. MIE should also explore possibilities to tap into other sources of funding that will further allow it to effectively plan its financial needs for the MIE's three mandates, including the deployment and funding of its research agenda in line with the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75).

#### **Recommendation 6**

**It is recommended that the MIE take on a more prominent role in negotiating its priorities at the level of Ministry, including in the furtherance of its organizational restructuring plans and strategic initiatives as per its 2017-2021 strategic plan, to strengthen its degree awarding status and drive innovation, assuring also that the MIE Council supports further convergence and internal cohesion aligned with MIE ambitions, targets and activities.**

#### **Recommendation 7**

**It is recommended that the MIE, while keeping its mission and strategic role, is provided with additional autonomy, namely regarding decision making and financial management issues.**

#### **5.2.2 Academic Board**

The academic governance of MIE is led by the Academic Board, which functions independently from the MIE Council. As per the SER (SERp 18), the Academic Board is responsible for the identification of policy gaps and the development as well as implementation of academic policies to ensure that MIE is fulfilling its mandate, especially with regards to the quality of the teacher education programmes offered, and educational research. It is also responsible for the award of diplomas, certificates and degrees. To assist the Academic Board in discharging its duties, there are several standing committees: the Teacher Education Committee, Evaluation Committee, Programme Committees and ad hoc sub-committees (Figure 1). The individual Programme Committees are informed by Programme Coordinators Committees and Course/Module Coordinators Committees.

The powers and functions of the Academic Board, as well as its composition are defined in the MIE Act. The Panel noted that contrary to the Council, the Academic Board comprised many internal academic and non-academic members, with the Director of MIE as its Chairperson and the presence

of Heads of Schools, representatives of the departments, the Head Librarian, the Registrar, a representative of the MIE Students' Union. External members include a representative of the MOEHR, representatives of local universities as well as members of the other education stakeholders. The Panel noted that now that MIE has received degree awarding powers, the terms of reference for representatives of previous partners for joint awards may have to be re-assessed, in order to emphasize academic and policy contributions to lead to more beneficial future partnerships. In view of developing an outcome-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of MIE's research endeavours, the Council had decided in August 2018 that the Head of the Research Unit will be a member of the Academic Board and "thus be in a position to develop these outcomes and have same approved." (Annex 165)

Given that the Academic Board is constituted of a majority of academic staff from MIE, the Panel expected the Academic Board to be driving policy decisions and strategic matters at MIE. However, discussion with members of the Academic Board and analysis of minutes of the meetings (Annex 160) led the Panel to conclude that the Academic Board derived its agenda mainly from matters arising from the other committees to which it is linked. The Panel found little evidence of discussions of substantive issues at the level of the Board, which meets quarterly to endorse recommendations related to validation of teacher education programmes and examination results.

Policy decisions in the sector are taken by the Ministry, and this was confirmed by the representative of the MOEHR on the Academic Board. Institutional policy gaps are identified mostly by other committees (Annex 71), including the Tertiary Education Committee, the Research Unit and the Higher Education Cell, and policies are then developed by ad-hoc committees. It was understood that all decisions made by the Academic Board were forwarded for final approval at the Council's level. However, the Panel could not ascertain an effective relationship between the Academic Board and the Council, and communication lines were also blurry between these two key governance authorities. There was no clear indication that the Academic Board was effectively fulfilling the expected role of academic governance at MIE and that it was exercising its authority, despite the provision in the Act that one of the functions of the Academic Board was to 'review annually the academic organisation and development of the Institute, with special reference to the effectiveness of the Institute's work in relation to its object to provide an education responsive to the educational, scientific, agricultural and technological needs of Mauritius, and arising from such review, report or make recommendations to the Council for the institution of new departments or other academic sections, for the establishment of additional academic posts or for any other development' (MIE Act). The Panel further learnt from members of the Academic Board that this instance was not formally involved in the development of the MIE Strategic Plan. The Panel urges the MIE to reconsider the role of the Academic Board in terms of its institutional and strategic roles and to exercise its power and authority towards fulfilment of the three mandates of MIE.

### 5.2.3 Management

As per the managerial structure (SERp16), the Director of the MIE is responsible for the overall management of academic and administrative affairs at the MIE (MIE Act). He is also a member of several committees at MIE, including the Council, the Academic Board, the Senior Management Committee and the Staff Development Committee. The Director is accountable to the Council (Figure 2).



As per the Management Structure (SER, p 16), the Director at MIE is supported in exercising his duties and responsibilities by a Deputy Director. The Panel is concerned that, despite several recommendations in the past Quality Audit Reports (MIE Quality Audit Reports of 2007 and 2013), the post of Deputy Director is still vacant. The position was advertised but was not filled due to procedural issues (SERp 38). The Panel was informed that interviews with candidates had already been carried out, and the post would be filled soon, given that this is a strategic position in the management of MIE.

The SER mentioned that the MIE is internally governed through a collegial system which groups staff holding key positions. The main decision making body is the Senior Management Committee (SERp 14), which as per its terms of reference (Annex 98) meets once a month to discuss matters relating to: Planning and coordination; Management issues of the various schools/departments; academic and non-academic issues; staff development; and to take decisions on all major issues. A Senior Administrative Committee was recently established to give a voice to administrative staff as well as to inform them of decisions taken at governance and management levels. The Panel found that the reporting and communication lines of these two committees were not very clear and it was also not apparent from the SER where they fitted in the general organizational structure of MIE.

The Panel looked at the academic committee structures reported in the SER (SERp 18-21) and noted that MIE has at present an organizational structure where it is striving to deploy its numerous activities. The existing committees, individually, seem to be functioning suitably within the scope of their terms of reference. At the same time, meetings with the different committees led the Panel to conclude that the organization in place provides room for possible duplication of agendas: given the size of MIE, the same academic staff, by virtue of their functions, are involved in several instances, often times discussing same matters, and this has significant impact on their workload.

The Panel is of view that the MIE, with the change in degree awarding status, has presently a window of opportunity to critically consider and develop an institutional governance and organizational structure to support the achievement of the institutional objectives as per its Strategic Plan 2017-2021. Indeed, the Panel heard that the current organization structure and academic governance dates back to the 1990s. One of the recommendations of the Second Cycle Quality Audit (Chapter 3) emphasises the need to review the academic governance structure of MIE, and the Panel learnt that MIE is presently in the process of reviewing its whole organisational structure (Annex 16). As stated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75), 'The current organisational structure of the MIE is not the best fit to circumvent issues' at the MIE. The institution 'has been functioning following a very structural framework, in terms of Schools and Departments/Units/ Sections, where academic staff were clustered according to their disciplinary expertise'.

The new framework will be 'steered towards projects, rather than disciplines'. The Panel learnt that a few committees were working to finalise the structure before submitting it for an institution-wide validation, and onward transmission to the Council for approval (Annex 16). The Panel supports MIE in its effort to move forward effectively with the restructuration plan, stressing also that it is important to strategically focus on the governance and management of the institution, in the context of defining roles and responsibilities of each committees and units, as well as establishing clear reporting structures and realistic terms of references and workloads for committees.

## Recommendation 8

**It is recommended that the MIE complete the definition, approval and implementation of its new governance structure (Annex 16) with particular reference to the balance of strategic and operational/managerial considerations as well as the articulation of various committees and how they fit into the organigram (e.g. Senior Management Committee, Senior Administrative Committee), reducing possible overlaps and assuring that clear reporting and communication lines are defined and implemented, as well as clarifying the roles to be played by each unit (e.g. Academic Board, Research Centre, Student Support Service).**

## 5.3 Human Resource Management and Planning

At present, MIE has 4 Schools and 1 Centre, which are further branched into 16 departments and 2 units, with 102 academic staff deployed across the different Schools (SERp 22) and a pool of 205 non-academic staff. MIE's academic staff profile indicates that it has 2 Professors, 16 Associate Professors, 33 Senior Lecturers and 51 Lecturers (SERp22). The Panel noted that a minority of academic staff had doctorate level qualifications, even those appointed as Associate Professors.

MIE has in place a set of documented systems, processes and procedures to manage its human resource. These include: Recruitment process (SERp22), Induction Programme Handbook (Annex 8), Staff Development Policy (Annex 2 and 169), and Promotion Criteria (submitted Annex 180). These are discussed further below.

### 5.3.1 Recruitment of Staff

The Panel learnt that in the last 10 years MIE has recruited more than 50% of its current academic staff, filling empty and new positions as well as replacing those going on retirement. From a total of 87 members of academic staff as stated in the First Quality Audit of 2007, there is a total of 102 academic staff in 2018..

Recruitment at MIE is governed by a structure in line with the Public Service Commission, which means that the institution is seriously constrained in strategising its recruitment as per its human resource needs. Appointment of academic staff is approved by the Council. Although it is stated in the Strategic Plan 2017-2021 (Annex 75, p 7) that 'the expertise of its staff is another forte of the Institute' and that 'the MIE academic personnel have a wide range of experiences in the field of education, both at primary and secondary levels', the Panel learnt that it was difficult to recruit qualified staff in some areas, as most recruited lecturers hail from the secondary education sector, and many lack pedagogical knowledge to teach teachers. MIE also confirmed that, at present, it is restricted to recruiting academic staff at the lecturer level, and can at best, then fast track the promotion of highly qualified and expert academic staff. This effectively limits MIE's flexibility to attract relevant expertise or to replace its retiring staff, for instance, at the Professor levels in identified priority areas, including educational research (SER, p 22). The present policy is that if specific expertise is needed, external consultancy services during a specific period of time can be requested. The MIE must thus rely on the expertise of its local and international partner institutions when it ventures in new areas of studies. Furthermore, this situation also increases the burden of training newly appointed, lesser qualified lecturers. The Panel encourages MIE to explore possibilities

of changing its recruitment strategy to bring in more senior and experienced staff, filling both expertise and institutional gaps.

### 5.3.2 Induction

A major dimension of quality, as stated by MIE (SERp 50) is the way in which it succeeds in developing a shared understanding of its structures and processes among all academic staff. The recruitment of academic staff from a wide variety of areas and academic background, is both an opportunity and a challenge. Whilst the wide experiences of the new recruits, in majority from secondary schools with an experience of teaching in specific areas, may benefit MIE, particularly in the preparation of the curriculum for schools and textbooks, most do not yet have any large experience in programme development for teacher education, teaching teachers and conducting research in teacher education.

Working sessions involving academic staff from MIE and other partner institutions, capacity-building workshops spearheaded by the respective Programme Coordinators, as well as regular in-house capacity building sessions also offer an ideal platform to disseminate information and ensuring a clear understanding of the goals set and quality outcomes (SERp 50).

As per the SER, all new academic staff follow the MIE Induction Programme (SERp. 22) in line with the Induction Programme Handbook (Annex 8). This programme is mandatory and operates over one year. All other academic staff of the MIE are also involved in the induction of new entrants, as mentors or as peer support.

As per the Induction Programme Handbook, induction consists of several activities which start with an orientation programme where staff learn about all aspects of the institution's mission and functioning. Professional development opportunities such as teacher workshops are specifically designed for the beginning teacher educators. All new lecturers are expected to carry out a minimum of 8 observations with the designated mentor/peer at MIE and 8 observations with mentor/peer at school (across different levels). These observations are followed by discussion and analysis of observed practices. A portfolio is submitted by the new recruits at the end of the induction programme to Management for evaluation and feedback.

Interviews with academic staff members, including newly appointed members of staff, indicated that staff's experience with the induction programme was asymmetrical. Some reported that the programme was very enriching while others found that it lacked clear structures, and that there were gaps in the training provided in specific areas of pedagogy. Induction is also provided for Curriculum Development, where academic staff are given the opportunities to join curriculum development committees to observe the process. This is mentored by the Heads of Departments. The Panel advises MIE to continuously improve its induction programme by using feedback from the lecturers who went through the process, and to formally extend the induction programme to sessional staff members and to administrative staff.

### Commendation 3

**The MIE is commended for actively enhancing and promoting in-house capacity building sessions for academic staff to familiarize with the different quality standards, designing and developing teacher education curriculum.**

### 5.3.4 Appointment of academic staff to committees

In relation to the deployment of staff in the different curriculum development committees, the Panel heard from academic staff members that they felt there was a lack of transparency and clarity in terms of their appointment as Programme Coordinators in these committees. Staff reported that there are no calls for interest to apply as Programme Coordinators and that no specific credentials are required to be assigned to this leadership position. Although the appointment was non-remunerative, many academic staff were concerned that arbitrary decisions at management level in the nomination process gave rise to undue advantages to some academic staff for future promotions. This also raises questions about the management of different roles and responsibilities to ensure that they are being executed effectively at MIE. The Panel therefore recommends MIE to set up a fair and transparent process of nomination of coordinators, on a rotation basis to ensure parity in opportunities, and to implement a process to appraise effectiveness of the system.

### 5.3.5 Promotion of Staff

Promotion of Academic Staff remains a major area of contention at MIE. Academic Staff are recruited at the lecturer level and are promoted after a defined period of time, provided that they meet the criteria for promotion (Annex 180). A Senior Lecturer position is, in general, obtained after at least five years in a position of Lecturer at the MIE or an institution of similar status. Appointment at the Associate Professor (AP) position requires completion of at least 4 years as Senior Lecturer at the MIE (SERp 22). An Appointment Committee is responsible for promotion, which is approved at the level of the Council. Despite the recommendation of the Second Cycle Quality Audit that 'MIE develops its approach to promotion of academics and ensures there is a programme of support for staff applying for promotion as well as a debriefing and counselling system for unsuccessful applicants so that they can remedy shortcomings relative to the promotion criteria', Academic Staff were critical of the system in place for promotion, which they claimed was not very clear or transparent. MIE has a set of promotion criteria where the weightage for the different criteria are explicitly provided (Annex 180). However, discussion with Academic Staff showed that the communication of promotion criteria needs further improvement. Promotions at MIE also depend on the available budget of the institution and hence subject to some additional uncertainty even if applicant met all the criteria for promotion. Promotion of non-academic staff was also discussed and it was noted that in some departments the career ladder was well defined, whereas this did not seem to be the case for others.

### 5.3.6 Staff development

Professional development activities are governed by the Staff Development Policy, dated of September 2015 (Annex 39), which applies to all staff, and covers a variety of schemes, ranging from long term studies, short term attachments, staff exchanges (including sabbatical leave) and participation in workshops/seminars/conferences, amongst others. The Panel also heard that other capacity building opportunities, such as in-house workshops facilitated by academic staff in curriculum development and research are conducted on Wednesday afternoons, which are dedicated to such activities. Non-academic staff also have access to training for their staff development. Requests for staff development are entertained subject to the availability of funds, and MIE's budget for staff development is less than 1% of its whole budget. Decisions are taken, upon discussion, by the Staff Development Committee (Annex 79). Academic Staff are in general positive about the

opportunities made available to them, and several Academic Staff have enrolled on the doctoral programmes of either UKZN or UoB in the past years. However, there was no indication that MIE had a framework in place to plan professional development on the basis of individual and institutional needs, and there was also no evidence of a systematic assessment of the performance of individual staff members to identify training needs. This gap in the planning of staff development activities needs to be further addressed by MIE, as the Panel also heard from some staff that the system for approving requests lacks transparency and fairness.

The MIE needs to further ensure that all decisions taken by the Staff Development Committee are well and quickly communicated to all applicants and to stakeholders in general, in order to ensure perceived fairness in the system. The implementation of the policy can be improved through clear guidelines on selection of staff for each specific type of need, thus promoting additional transparency.

Heads of School at MIE also have opportunities to participate in staff development programmes in their capacity as faculty. The Panel formed the view, however, that MIE could take further action to support Heads of School in gaining experience of, and meeting, the many management challenges they face, especially when they are newly appointed to the post. The Head of Schools position at MIE is a key one, as these, over and above their teaching, curriculum development and research duties, must provide both academic and administrative leadership in implementing institute-wide and school policies and strategies.

### **Recommendation 9**

**It is recommended that the MIE further promotes capacity building for academic staff (e.g. management skills) to better engage in management and leadership positions, as well as for administrative staff development.**

Overall, the Panel observed that several common issues of inconsistent and uneven implementation of human resource management policies and processes were reported during discussions with staff. The Panel therefore believes that MIE may further ensure that it faithfully implements its Human Management policies and processes in line with its core values of integrity, responsiveness, transparency and accountability, fairness, equity and inclusiveness (SERp 13).

### **Recommendation 10**

**It is recommended that the MIE ensure that further transparency, clarity and quick feedback are provided for all of its HR processes (e.g. recruitment of staff, appointment of staff to different roles and functions, staff development, staff promotion, performance appraisal), assuring that appropriate career paths, promotion criteria and decisions are defined, communicated and implemented for both academic and non academic staff.**

#### **5.3.7 Workload Management**

In general staff are very positive about the working climate at MIE, feeling a sense of community and a commitment to contribute to the educational mission of the institution, and the staff turnover values were rather low, as confirmed during discussion with staff. However, the majority of interviewees reported frustrations regarding workload and workload management at MIE. In addition to their academic work related to teaching and research, academic staff at MIE have to participate in

curriculum development and textbooks writing for the national curriculum. Through discussion with staff, the Panel felt that this last mandate of MIE is often prioritised at the detriment of the research mandate. Some relief is provided to Academic Staff by appointment of a large number of sessional lecturers and research assistants. However, this does not effectively address the increasing workload issue of permanent staff. MIE does not yet have a system in place to manage academic staff workload, although this recommendation was made in 2007 during the First Cycle Quality Audit, and reiterated during the Second Cycle Quality Audit. Heads of School, as per their duties (SERp 21) have to establish, on an annual basis, clear and equitable workloads for faculty which reflect their capabilities, expertise and ability to contribute to the objectives of the School and the MIE. Faculty workloads are to be submitted to the Director at the commencement of each semester. There is no evidence, from documents provided by MIE or from discussions with staff, that there is a system in place to distribute workload to staff in an equitable manner. MIE is presently designing a workload policy, given that it is aware of the range of activities that staff are engaged in. MIE is urged to act promptly on this identified policy gap. Decisions in designing this policy must be guided by the expected benefits to staff, but also giving consideration to striking a balance in workload assignment to ensure that both national priorities and institutional mandates are met. Furthermore, the workload policy should ensure the fair distribution of workload, and also serve to ensure equal opportunities for future promotion. Non-academic staff must also be included in the policy, and MIE should ensure that all academic activities are well supported by the non-academic staff, given that the latter is twice as numerous as academic staff.

### **Recommendation 11**

**It is recommended that the MIE urgently defines and implements a clear workload policy applied to all of its academic and non-academic staff, assuring that it will promote a well balanced and flexible distribution in order to achieve quality in the three MIE strategic mandates, as well as to ensure that equitable opportunities for promotion across staff are made available.**

To effectively implement human resource management activities, the Panel strongly recommends MIE to move forward with the appointment of the Human Resource Management Officer, a strategic position which was established in 2015. The scheme of service of this post explicitly covers the strategic and human resource management at MIE, and further includes: 1. the formulation and implementation of human resource policies, strategies and plans together with all supporting procedures, including organisation structures, recruitment, retrenchment and management succession; 2. the formulation of a human resource development policy and training plans on the basis of outcome of training needs analysis (Annex 81). The Human Resource Management Officer would also support MIE as a newly established degree awarding Institute to better plan the needs of additional human resources and to ensure smart use of its qualified staff to assure, within the workload constraints of staff, that MIE moves forward with the implementation of its Strategic Plan 2017-2021.

### **Recommendation 12**

**It is recommended that the MIE further develop a strategic human resource planning and management approach for both academic and non-academic staff, which should include the recruitment of a well qualified HR officer, and the provision of equitable deployment of administrative staff to effectively support the different structures and committees at MIE, to**

**better manage workload requirements at MIE as well as ensuring that national needs are being met.**

### **Recommendation 13**

**It is recommended that the MIE consider the possible needs for additional human resources and a smart use of qualified staff to assure that within acceptable working load limits MIE does move into the future and meets its present and future ambitions.**

## 6. Quality Assurance

Other Quality Assurance (QA) issues, more specifically related with the two themes chosen for the purpose of this third cycle Quality Audit (Curriculum Development for Teacher Education and Research in Education), will be addressed later on in this report. The focus of this chapter is on the broader analysis of MIE QA goals, activities, structure and results at a more global level.

In alignment with the MIE Mission, which states that “The Mauritius Institute of Education is committed to advancing professional standards dedicated to the making of an institution of excellence in teaching, curriculum development and research, while advancing creativity and engagement at all levels” (SERp 13; Annex 75), it is also stated, as its quality policy, that “The MIE is committed to work towards excellence by establishing a quality culture across all its services and in all its activities, namely in teacher education, educational research, curriculum development, administrative procedures and other support systems” (SERp 30; Annex 7, p 5; Annex 75).

To accomplish such a commitment, QA at MIE is guided according to its QA Policy Framework (Annex 7), which describes the present situation but also suggests the adoption in the future of a broader QA perspective as well as of a new MIE QA Organizational Structure (Annex 7). The critical role of QA for MIE is also recognized at the level of its strategic plan, which states that “QA is one of the most important areas of concern of Higher Education Institutions” (Annex 75, p 27).

For leading QA activities, MIE does have a well-defined QA structure, which includes its Quality Assurance Steering Committee (QASC), QAD and Quality Assurance Resource Person Committee (QARPC) (SERp 30; Annex 7), and both QASC and QAD have also played a key role in the MIE SER preparation. The QASC is chaired by the MIE Director and does include a number of leading individuals from the several areas of MIE activities. Overall, MIE QA structures and processes have been clearly improved and reinforced since the last Quality Audit conducted in 2013 (Annex 75, p 27).

### Commendation 4

**The MIE is commended for having a well-defined, implemented and deployed QA organizational structure and set of activities, which does cover multiple levels of MIE activities, with the participation of a large number of academic staff, as well as the involvement of key leading positions in the MIE structure.**

The MIE QAD was established in 2000 and since then has been assuming a more comprehensive role in terms of its duties, activities and resources. It is driven since 2011 by a full-time QA Coordinator under the rank of Associate Professor, comprising an additional team of six staff members (SERp 31; Annex 7).



Although the scope of QA activities and goals at MIE is intended to cover all of its activities, as mentioned above (SERp30, Annex 7), so far they have been essentially applied to teaching, as is recognized also by MIE (Annex 7). There are however plans to implement in the future a broader QA policy framework and structure (SERp34; Annex 7): “The MIE intends to extend the quality assurance mechanisms to other sectors namely administrative support services, curriculum development and educational research” (Annex 7, p 3).

#### **Recommendation 14**

**It is recommended that the MIE, as suggested (SERp 34; Annex 7, p 7) adopt and implement a broader QA perspective and structure, together with the appropriate resources, in order to assure that adequate QA mechanisms and tools are applied not just to teaching but also to Research and Curriculum Development activities, as well as administrative and support activities, and also to conclude the approval and implementation of the corresponding revamped QA organizational structure (as presented in Annex 101).**

MIE, under the coordination of its QAD, does carry out a rather comprehensive set of surveys (Annex 3A), mostly aimed at monitoring teaching quality. This includes namely the following ones: Employer Feedback Questionnaires; Quality Assurance in Curriculum Development Questionnaire; Questionnaire for Administrative Support Personnel; Questionnaire for Heads of Section; Several Student Feedback Questionnaires; and Lecturer Feedback Questionnaire.

#### **Commendation 5**

**The MIE is commended for having a well-defined and rather comprehensive set of surveys aimed at collecting data that can support quality assurance and improvement of its teaching activities under the coordination of its Quality Assurance Division, with efforts already done to increase data reliability and collection, such as the use of clickers.**

It is important to assure that all the data collected from surveys is defined and studied in order to support effective decision making and improvement initiatives taken at multiple levels, in a systematic and structured way, and by using appropriate statistical tools.

#### **Recommendation 15**

**It is recommended, as suggested (SERp 33) that MIE consolidate its efforts of quality data collection and analysis, by reinforcing data quality and its fitness for purpose, updating the survey contents, making appropriate and integrated statistical analysis of the results obtained and assuring that the corresponding improvement loops are closed, leading to the practical implementation on the field of appropriate initiatives, as well as assuring that a broader coverage is obtained (e.g. apply SFQs to all modules).**

Besides quantitative survey data, MIE also collects qualitative data, from relevant stakeholders, namely through Focus Group Discussions involving samples of trainees (SERp 32), with transcripts being provided to Programme Coordinators, regular meetings of different sorts of committees involving a variety of MIE staff, as well as Communities of Practice (Annex 117) and the Student/Staff Liaison Committee (Annex 119). It is important to assure that the voices collected under such settings are conveniently explored from a QA perspective, leading to the definition and implementation of improvement opportunities.

### **Recommendation 16**

**It is recommended that the MIE consolidate the exploration of a wider variety of channels, such as forums, discussions or focus groups, to collect the voices, opinions and qualitative data from students and staff, and also that these mechanisms be also applied to alumni and employers. Strategic and better structured approaches are necessary for interaction with alumni and employers.**

Both the documentation provided as well as the site visit interviews conducted provide evidence, that indeed, as mentioned above, “The MIE is committed to work towards excellence by establishing a quality culture across all its services and in all its activities” (SERp 30; Annex 7, p 5; Annex 75). This is due to the efforts of the MIE QAD but also of the network of people that interact with it and help to deploy and reinforce the MIE quality culture.

### **Commendation 6**

**The MIE is commended for its endeavor to instil a broad quality culture at the MIE, namely by having quality assurance contact points at different parts of its organizational structure.**

While avoiding by all means any sort of unneeded bureaucracy related with its quality systems and approaches, from a communication point of view it may help for MIE to establish a concise quality manual, able to convey in a single document what are its main quality goals, policies, structures and results.

### **Recommendation 17**

**It is recommended that the MIE develop a quality manual to enable better diffusion of quality procedures and culture, ensuring that improvement loops and opportunities are closed, and that a customer focused process management approach is fully adopted across the organizational structure.**

MIE has provided valuable contributions to Mauritius education quality since its creation for the past 45 years, namely through its impacts over more than 50 thousand students that have been trained there. For the past two decades or so, MIE has been following a more structured approach to define, implement and measure quality. Significant progress has been made since then, and in particular also with QA activities when compared with the situation reported when the last Quality Audit took place, in 2013. New initiatives and significant changes are now undergoing consideration about the future of MIE QA, and the Panel encourages MIE to take into consideration the comments made here

as possible guidelines for the forthcoming further QA moves that MIE is committed to define and implement.

## 7. Curriculum Development for Teacher Education

‘Curriculum Development for Teacher Education’ is one of the three mandates of the MIE and has been aptly chosen as the first theme for this Third Cycle Quality Audit. Whilst the previous audit focused on ‘Quality of Teaching’ and ‘Curriculum Development’ for the school education sector, in line with the National Curriculum Framework for pre-primary, primary and secondary school levels including the Pre-vocational Education, the present SER analyses the steps that have been taken by the MIE in the field of curriculum development for teacher education.

First, the development of teacher education curricula revolved around the need for the MIE to develop programmes that are internationally benchmarked and to diversify and consolidate its portfolio as a means to enhance learner autonomy and engagement, as well as providing for flexibility and mobility in response to the needs of education professionals (SERp46).

Secondly, in order to address the contextual needs for curriculum development for teacher education, the MIE has two structures, namely the Teacher Education Committee and the Higher Studies Cell, each having its terms of reference. On one hand, the Tertiary Education Committee is responsible for all teacher education programme development at the MIE, works with Sub-committees and Programme Committees whose responsibility is to develop the general aim, rationale and learning outcomes of the programme it is in charge of, before submitting same for validation at the Tertiary Education Committee level. A Teacher Education Programme Evaluation Committee has also been set up to commission regular and systematic evaluations (SERp19-20). The Teacher Education Committee also ensures that quality mechanisms are in-built at the different stages of the development of the curricula with appropriate level descriptors aligned with national and international standards (SERp47). On the other hand, the express purpose of the Higher Studies Cell is to set up and enact an agenda in order to expand the postgraduate portfolio of the MIE. This entails working towards the development and implementation of its own postgraduate degree programmes while maintaining the partnerships with international collaborators (Annex 11).

From the interview sessions with academic staff, the Panel confirmed the presence of structured procedures and guidelines for programme development. The guidelines describe the steps to be followed while designing new programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels such as meeting with a variety of stakeholders, establishment of working groups and committees for drafting programme documents. Programme development is initiated by the School Programme Committee and then submitted to the Programme Committee responsible for the design, development and review of each programme based on the relevant National Curriculum Framework and the input from internal and external stakeholders. Draft programmes are then forwarded to the Teacher Education Committee which is responsible for the internal validation of the new teacher education programme or programmes that have undergone review, following which, it is sent for approval by the Academic Board. The QAD also plays its role in monitoring the whole process and ensuring that all quality assurance procedures for the programme are adhered to (SERp18).

## 7.1 Teaching and Learning

As a premise to describe the context of its curriculum development for teacher education, the MIE positions itself within a paradigm which looks at formal teacher education as part of a wider process of becoming a teacher. It posits the development of appropriate knowledge *for, of and in* practice, as well as seeing learning to teach as a process of transformation that goes beyond mere acquisition of knowledge. Beyond addressing the theory and practice gap in learning to teach, it ambitions a humanist philosophy of teacher education in view of creating teacher identity in the crucible of critical reflexivity and collaborative critical enquiry, to be then articulated and infused into the MIE's teacher education programmes (SERp. 46).

The Panel, through its discussions with internal and external stakeholders during the sessions, thinks that this teacher identity merits to be defined more explicitly, so that students enrolling in courses provided by the MIE are better aware of the profile of teacher that MIE wishes them to become. The Handbook of Rules and Regulations for Students (Annex 6) and the Handbook of the Induction Programme of Newly Appointed Academic Staff (Annex 8) could, for example, define the end-product of MIE's mission: moulding all aspiring educators and in-service educators of Mauritius, and explicitly describing the profile of what an effective teacher 'is'.

However, the implicit knowledge could be felt as the Alumni of undergraduate and postgraduate courses who participated in the discussions are all thankful to MIE for their positive transformative experiences at both personal and professional levels. The Panel also discussed with alumni who, in some cases, had successively enrolled on different programmes of the MIE in the past years, and had effectively advanced in their career path. Students currently enrolled on different programmes also expressed their overall satisfaction with the quality of the programmes and of teaching and learning at MIE, which they claimed had effectively met their academic needs and improved their pedagogical skills to practice as teachers. The Panel also noted that MIE has a strong reputation within the education industry. Meeting with employers showed that, on the overall, they valued the contribution of MIE as a teacher training institution to the development of the sector and also recognised the innovative role of MIE in embarking on provision of training and capacity building in specialised programmes such as the Special Educational Needs programmes. On the basis of the standing of MIE in the local community, employers also recommended teachers in their schools to pursue studies at MIE.

### Commendation 7

**The MIE is commended for the perceived overall quality of teacher education and professional development programmes that it has been providing to the community of learners, which are equally recognized by students and employers as positive transformative experiences.**

## 7.2 Professional standards and level descriptors

The Panel noted that as a degree-awarding institution, MIE has taken the initiative to enhance public confidence in its undergraduate and postgraduate levels by ensuring that respective benchmarks, national and international standards are being met across the programmes offered.

A 28-page document of standards and level descriptors for graduate programmes titled “Setting standards and expectations for Master’s level programmes in Education and related fields” has been prepared by the Higher Studies Cell to ensure coherence in programme design and development across all postgraduate programmes. The Panel noted that the document has been validated by the Teacher Education Committee and approved by the Academic Board. The Panel learned that this document aligns with the National Qualification framework and was based on International guidelines for Master’s programmes followed by UK and other European universities. It also lays down an integrated policy for Master’s level programmes for the MIE by setting standards and expectations for Master’s programmes in Education in terms of the level and complexity of learning, structure, and assessment. These descriptors establish the notion of development of intellectual content and skills as a student moves through the different years or levels of a degree programme. Level descriptors also provide a broad indication of learning achievements or outcomes that are appropriate for a qualification at that level.

The level descriptors and the subject benchmarks for graduate programmes have been articulated in four main areas, namely: (i) Knowledge and Understanding (theoretical/ factual); (ii) Applied Knowledge, Understanding and Skills (which pertains to a field of study or practice); (iii) Generic Skills (cognitive/communication/ ICT) and (iv) Dispositions (inclination, qualities of mind and character). Since the descriptors are stated using discipline-free terminology, steps are taken to operationalize them in their contexts to derive “fit for purpose” programmes within the subject specialism. The development of level descriptors informed by international and national benchmarks is used as a basis to ensure coherence among MIE programmes, enables comparability and equivalence, pursues international recognition and allows for potential mobility needs (SER, p.48). It sets down the depth and complexity of each level of study and outlines the academic skills, knowledge and learner autonomy required to pass a programme or module at a particular level. Standards and level descriptors offer a navigating capacity to programme developers, designers and those responsible for programme implementation to determine appropriate learning outcomes and enact curricular and pedagogical choices to enable the achievement of standards compatible with international benchmarks.

Evidence was also provided to show that professional standards and level descriptors for undergraduate programmes and courses at the MIE have been developed and are in the process of validation. The professional standards will serve as standards for developing all undergraduate programmes and courses at the MIE. The professional undergraduate standards also cover four main areas, similar to the postgraduate standards, namely knowledge and understanding, applied knowledge, skills and understanding, generic skills and dispositions.

The Panel also noted through the SER (SERp 50) and evidence gathered during interview sessions about the efforts taken by MIE to create awareness and knowledge regarding standards and level descriptors through regular and on-going in-house capacity building sessions during Wednesday meetings.

## Commendation 8

**The MIE is commended for development of level descriptors and professional standards for undergraduate and graduate programmes in alignment with the National Qualifications Framework.**

MIE is further encouraged to ensure that these level descriptors are effectively applied to ensure that further positive impacts are obtained in the future.

### 7.3 Increase in the number of courses offered

It is noted that the range of courses offered over the past five years since the last Quality Audit has widened, as the MIE responded to the training needs of the education sector as identified by the MOEHRTESR. For example, with the proclamation of the Early Childhood Care and Education Act 2007 in June 2008, courses had to be offered in a more structured plan for the upgrading of all in-service staff in the sector; or with the introduction of the mother-tongue, KreolMorisien, in 2012, at primary schools, teachers had to be trained. With the successive educational reforms, more focus has been placed since 2012 on Special Education Needs (465 teachers, assistant teachers and carers following courses at the MIE), the prevocational sector (116 educators on one-off courses and 244 following the Teacher's Diploma Pre-Vocational Secondary), the Zone d'EducationPrioritaire (1009 educators trained), the introduction of digital teaching and learning (7581 school staff trained in the use of interactive boards) and the introduction of KreolMorisien (310 educators trained) (Annex 77).

The National Curriculum Framework of 2006 (SERp8, Annex 82) prepared by the MIE lays emphasis on "placing the child at the heart of our education", and thus creates the need to "bring about a major paradigm shift in our educational approach and practices, preparing the ground for the phasing out of the Certificate of Primary Education, and progressively replacing it with a child-centred and holistic system of evaluation that will include continuous assessment and diagnostic monitoring, accompanied by appropriate measures for remediation".

With the implementation of the Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education reform introduced as from 2018, more demand has been put on the MIE for the primary education sector. The MIE thus introduced in 2017 the Teacher's Certificate (Primary) for Support/Remedial teachers and the Teacher's Certificate (Primary) for the Holistic Education Programme with a first cohort of 51 and 61 trainees, as well as a Training for Trainers in Inclusive Education (Annex 77). These initiatives of the MIE are well aligned with its Vision to lead in professional development and to be an innovative change maker for the 21st century.

## Commendation 9

**The MIE is commended for framing a holistic education approach in the teacher education curriculum. The introduction of programmes for holistic education, special education needs and provision of a support programme for students with low performance is in alignment with the UN sustainable development goals.**

## 7.4 Quality tools for programme and course development

MIE acknowledges the importance of developing appropriate guidelines and templates that will inform and facilitate consistent programme development (SERp 46). As a result, several templates aimed at aiding programme and course development have been created. Among them are Matrix for Course Development (Annex 14) and Learning Outcomes for Course Development (Annex 13).

The Matrix for Course Development, which has been validated by the Teacher Education Committee, is identified as the main document for all subsequent course development at MIE. The 4x4 matrix was initially used during development of the BEd Primary programme and in this programme graduates are expected to demonstrate three overarching characteristics and the level descriptors were spirally constructed to demonstrate progression across the levels. Besides the Course Development Matrix, a template was generated to provide information on the module, which is titled Learning Outcome for Course Development (Annex 13).

Since both the matrix and template are the main documents for subsequent course development at the MIE, the Panel is of the opinion that further refinement of the matrix may be needed. The matrix for course development and the template learning outcomes for course development should have consistent styles and formats so that the documents are easy to navigate and to read. A unique identifier, typically a letter code for the type of document and a sequential number would be helpful for the purpose of identification and traceability.

The SER (SERp 49) stated that the template and matrix developed feature a section where the assessment tasks are included, but this however is not reflected in the matrix and template (Annex 13 and 14) that were presented to the Panel.

### Recommendation 18

**It is recommended that MIE review critically the templates used in monitoring the course development process at all levels.**

## 7.5 Online and Distance Learning

Recommendation 20 of the Second Cycle Quality Audit stressed on the development of a policy and implementation plan for the introduction of online learning for the MIE as a whole, with an emphasis on articulation of the pedagogical foundations for blended learning and use of ICT to enhance learning. Initiatives have been taken with regards to a fast track training of all the MIE personnel in the use of online teaching and learning platform, as well as enhancing the use of Moodle (Annexes 9A and 9B). The Panel gathered that the aim was to be able to offer 50% of the courses online. However, according to the documentation provided (Annex 9B), the features in Moodle are used by a handful of staff and the Moodle platform is mainly used as a repository rather than a platform to engage learners. It has been noted that MIE has yet to reach the targeted percentage for blended mode of course delivery for all its courses or the setting-up of webinars, and more systematic training is needed. The



ICT component of curriculum development for teacher education is becoming more and more important, thus the preponderant role of the CODL.

### **Recommendation 19**

**It is recommended that the MIE adopt a more consistent and systematic approach for capacity building in order to better achieve its ambitions to develop and offer a wide range of programmes with well defined standards, in different modes of learning; freshly recruited staff should enhance their knowledge and skills in teacher education curriculum development and present staff should pursue continuing professional development; the induction process should be continually enhanced using feedback of peers, mentors and mentees; and all academic staff should be trained in the use of digital online mode of delivery of courses to achieve MIE's ambition to move towards a more blended mode of course delivery.**

## **7.6 Feedback from stakeholders**

The Panel noted from the SER (SERp 47) that MIE, and more specifically the Teacher Education Committee, expresses the view on the importance of seeking and obtaining feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders throughout programme design and validation processes. Consultations in various forms are held on a continuous basis with stakeholders in designing and developing the programmes offered at MIE. Interviews with various external stakeholders also show that most of them are satisfied with the teacher education curriculum and are committed to helping MIE achieve its vision and mission.

Varying accounts of stakeholder involvement in developing specific programmes were highlighted during interviews. For example, in designing and developing the course on *Teaching Mauritian Kreol*, representatives from various departments including academic staff, students, government and private agencies, Mauritius Examination Syndicate, NGOs, and Universities were consulted. Meanwhile, during the interview with the MIE Council, it was also stressed that the collaboration with partner universities should continue and be enhanced and that curriculum development should continue to be based on stakeholder collaborations despite MIE's degree awarding status. The Panel noticed the involvement and determination of external stakeholders from industry and universities in consultations regarding teacher education curriculum development at MIE. This good practice could be extended to curriculum development and programme review.

As seen in Chapter 6, MIE provides quality mechanisms to gather invaluable feedback from internal and external stakeholders. The Employer Feedback Questionnaire which has recently been administered in several schools in 2017 to gather feedback from Heads of Schools (Rectors) about MIE graduates employed in their institutions will also be helpful to ensure currency and the relevance of the development and improvement of MIE teacher education programmes.

However, interviews with students show that they were not given enough feedback of results from the Student Feedback Questionnaires. The Panel strongly feels that MIE should ensure that besides students', all feedback gathered are effectively submitted to the different relevant committees and implemented in the process to improve programme quality and to better serve the intended purposes.

The Panel also found evidence for a wide variety of internal and external inputs and feedback regarding programmes offered by the MIE. The members of the MIE Council in 2017 comprise external

stakeholders from varying backgrounds and institutions. Among these are the Permanent Secretary, MOEHRTESR, representative from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 5 members appointed by the Prime Minister, Representative of UoM, 2 representatives of the MOEHRTESR, representative of MIE student's union, and Chairperson, Public Service Commission. Meanwhile, the MIE Academic Board members in 2017 also represented a wide variety of stakeholders, including partner universities such as UoM, OU, MGI, the Government Secondary School Teacher's Union, Director, Private Secondary Education Authority, the Mauritius Examination Syndicate, the Government Teacher's Union and the MIE Student Union. Through a Skype session, the Panel had the opportunity to hear positive and constructive feedback from stakeholders on Rodrigues Island. Although many external stakeholders are involved at high level at MIE, there were no evidence of quality input and how effectively they contributed to curriculum development. There is a need to leverage the involvement of the different external stakeholders.

### **Commendation 10**

**The MIE is commended for seeking and obtaining the widest possible feedback on its programmes from a wide variety of stakeholders.**

Both alumni and employers stated that they were willing and ready to contribute as external stakeholders towards improving the processes at the MIE on the basis of their experiences. The Panel found that these stakeholders are not yet formally included in the decision making processes. As previously mentioned, the MIE has recently designed and administered an Employers' Survey Questionnaires with a sample of employers, namely Heads of Schools (SER, pp 33), to gather their input on the relevancy and quality of knowledge and skills acquired by their teachers to meet the needs of their duties. The Panel encourages MIE to pursue its endeavour to seek systematic feedback from stakeholders, including alumni. Furthermore, the Panel also urges MIE to build a formal alumni network given that many of its own staff, and many employers are also alumni, and to develop approaches to establish stronger links with its stakeholders and to capitalise on the significant networks and the achievements of its past students, involving them in a range of institution-based activities, including curriculum development.

## **7.7 Cohort size and completion rates**

From 1976 to 2017, the total number of teachers trained during the past 41 years is 50,871, an average of 1240 yearly. As expected, because the implementation of the successive educational reforms concerning the primary school level, enrolment in courses for the primary sector represents 45% of overall enrolment; for pre-primary: 14.9%; for secondary: 21.6% and for other courses (mostly workshops) related to the curriculum: 18.5%. Figures 4 to 7(Appendix C) give an indication of percentage enrolment and course levels offered in the pre-primary, primary and secondary education sectors from 1976 to 2017 (Annex 77).

Notwithstanding the fact that the MIE is a training arm of the Ministry and therefore has to implement all projects and requests from its parent Ministry, it is noted with concern that some cohort sizes are very small, for example: 4 students for the BEd (Hons) FT Social Sciences in 2015-2016, 4 students for the Post Graduate Diploma in Educational PT in 2015-2016, 6 students for the Post Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management PT in 2015-2016 (Annex 77, Statistics 1 of

SER), 1 enrolled for the EdD (UoB) in 2016, 1 enrolled for the Bachelor in Education (UTM), 3 enrolled in the PGDEM in 2017 (Annex 77). This may be a matter of concern, particularly with regards to the courses jointly run with overseas universities. However, both the UoB and the UKZN informed the Panel they were very satisfied with the partnership with MIE, stressing upon the fact that the partnership was strong and benefitted both sides.

#### **Recommendation 20**

**It is recommended that the systems of monitoring progression and completion rates on taught programmes be strengthened.**

### **7.8 Integrating soft skills in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes**

The Panel commends MIE for developing standards and level descriptors for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and courses. Standards and level descriptors guide designers and programme developers in establishing appropriate learning outcomes, suitable delivery methods and assessment to enable the achievement of standards. The Panel concurs with the MIE that assessment should be comprehensive and not only comprise assessment of academic skills but also other skills, dispositions and competencies, including soft skills, where relevant for the degree award.

The professional standards for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and courses at the MIE cover four domains, namely knowledge and understanding; applied knowledge, skills and understanding; generic skills and dispositions. Despite its importance, the Panel however found that soft skills have not been explicitly and adequately addressed in the professional standards of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and in MIE courses.

Although there should be ample opportunities for MIE students to acquire soft skills through their academic programmes, these skills, however, are not explicitly outlined in the programme outcomes of the MIE. Interviews with undergraduate students raised the need for having more soft skills in the programmes, and they were concerned that soft skills that have not been given enough coverage in their programme. Meanwhile, interviews with stakeholders raised the importance of MIE graduates to be able to communicate effectively with different audiences and to possess certain values and be technologically savvy. Programme Coordinators have also stressed the importance of preparing students with enough soft skills before they join any programme as teachers.

Thus, the Panel would like to encourage MIE to make an intentional effort to further embed soft skills in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The overall aim is to provide MIE graduates not just with the four main areas of the standards but also to prioritize the 'must haves' and the 'good to have' soft skills needed to equip graduates with attributes that enhance their performance and career prospects.

#### **Recommendation 21**

**It is recommended that soft skills be embedded in curricula and appropriately assessed across programmes.**

## 7.9 Assessment

Assessments are necessary in standard-based curricula so that students will be able to track their successes and lecturers can determine whether the curriculum enables students to meet the standards.

The Panel noted that MIE has adopted outcome-based education in the teaching and learning practices of its academic programme. Assessment is designed to test the achievement of course learning outcomes, which in combination satisfy programme learning outcomes. Templates have been developed as a support mechanism to help staff design and align assessment tasks with module learning outcomes in terms of programme level. However, it was reported that a number of staff are still striving to master these skills (SERp 60). The Panel agrees with the MIE that it has to work out other strategies besides capacity building exercises and the online documentation provided for staff.

One of the templates developed to assist staff in assessment is the *Matrix for Mapping LO and Assessment* (Annex 174) to match student learning outcomes to assessment methods. This process ensures that all student learning outcomes will be assessed using a variety of methods. Completing such a matrix may assist programmes in developing comprehensive and effective assessment plans. The Panel is of the opinion that some modifications may be made to the existing template; including proper directions and a worked sample for an example of how to complete the template would be helpful.

While the initiative taken by MIE to develop a policy on assessment was commended by the 2013 Quality Audit, currently there is still no overall policy for assessment in place at the MIE. However, “*set and systematic procedures have been developed to ensure fair and transparent assessment of trainees*” (SERp60). The Panel noted that the Curriculum and Evaluation Department in 2016 developed a brief guideline for framing assessment to help departments devise and formulate their assessment methods. The document was initially written for the TDP and BEd (PT) Primary. The absence of a comprehensive policy on assessment leaves many aspects of assessment to the discretion of the programme team, including the choice of the type of assessment, methods of assessment and weightage of the tasks given. The grading structure, however, was quite consistent across programmes except for the Certificate in Special Education programme which uses a slightly different grading structure.

Assessment methods need to be varied, innovative and interesting for students while still possessing high degree of discriminating effect that classifies student according to their skills and abilities. The mode of assessment in the MIE comprises coursework (CW), continuous assessment(CA), written examinations (WE) or mix mode (CW:WE). The Master’s level programmes are fully assessed through coursework which is designed against the benchmark established at Master’s level (SERp 53). The doctoral UKZN programme is assessed with the submission of the final thesis (SER p55).

All modules in the Post Graduate Diploma in Education programme are assessed by means of 100% coursework only. The Panel found that most undergraduate modules do comprise a final written examination amounting to 70% of the total marks. Evidence gathered from programme handbooks depicts the inclination of many programmes to provide more weightage to summative evaluations such as the final written examination. Attention is drawn to the need to expertly complement summative assessment with formative assessment methods for appropriate learning outcomes to decrease the excessiveness of terminal assessment and to enhance the assessment *for* learning approach and not assessment *of* learning only.

## Recommendation 22

**It is recommended that MIE review the assessment strategies across all programmes and to emphasize formative evaluations on all modules where appropriate.**

### 7.10 Partnerships with national and international institutions

In its endeavor to enhance academic excellence, the MIE has established and sustained strong and efficient collaboration with many local and international universities to develop and run its programmes. The MIE's national and international partnerships provide an opportunity for direct connection and global academic exchange that enhances scholarship and the student experience.

At the postgraduate level, the MIE, in collaboration with the School of Education at the UoB, is presently offering the MA Education and the Doctorate in Education (EdD) programmes. UoB, ranked in the top 10 for education courses in England in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019 and the Complete University Guide 2019, is one of the UK's largest providers of education and teacher training with a long-established reputation for high quality courses. The EdD at the UoB was first validated in September 2000, and the programme provides a research-based, flexible, and practice-focused experience.

Besides these two programmes, the MIE in collaboration with UoB also innovates with the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PG Dip (Ed)). The PG Dip (Ed), as described in the Student Handbook, is accredited by the UoB and is recognized as part of the policy of the University implying that holders of the PG Dip (Ed) will be eligible for the 80 CATS point on the Masters in Education programme delivered jointly by MIE and UoB, making it more accessible to teachers.

MIE also works collaboratively with the UKZN, and is presently providing a three-year PhD programme that operates on a seminar-based cohort system. UKZN is one of the largest and oldest universities in the Sub-Saharan Africa, with a rich heritage of academic excellence. This PhD programme seeks to engage prospective scholars to become highly skilled and innovative researchers in education.

At the undergraduate level, the MIE has collaborated with established local partner universities such as UOM, UTM, and MGI. The Panel also noted that MIE has signed numerous memoranda including a memorandum of understanding on academic cooperation with UKZN, a memorandum of co-operation with UoB, a memorandum of understanding regarding academic co-operation with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), at India, and a memorandum of agreement with the Open University of Malaysia (Annex 171).

In the field of Special Education Needs, the MIE has collaborated with the University of Reunion and Centre d'Etudes Internationales Pédagogiques (CIEP).

## Commendation 11

**The MIE is commended for having established and keeping in place a number of strong and efficient partnerships with national and international institutions for collaborative projects at Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral levels.**

## 8. Educational Research

The 2017-2021 Strategic Plan of the MIE includes research in education as part of the institution's core mandate by committing to 'undertaking research so as to provide evidence-based grounded in the local context'. According to the strategic plan, the MIE aims at:

1. Informing policy decisions using an evidenced-based approach
2. Aligning teaching to international norms and contributing to academia through research in education
3. Establishing collaborative partnerships with international institutions
4. Encouraging South-South cooperation through sharing of findings and engagement in collaborative research.

Both the documentation provided as well as information collected during the site visit have yielded evidence demonstrating that the MIE has started to work towards these aims and, in some areas, has made good progress.

The Panel notes with interest the Higher Studies Cell publication on standards and expectations for Master's level programmes in education and related fields (Annex 12), which systematically delineates qualification and level descriptors and subject benchmark statements as well as standards of pedagogy and assessment.

There are also in place a fairly well-established doctoral partnerships of MIE with the University of Brighton (EdD) and the University of Kwazulu Natal (PhD). The meetings of the Panel with students on these programmes suggest that the programmes have transformational potential at the level of participants, but the impact of both partnerships on practice and policy is less clear yet, given that the number of completions is still small. Both partnerships have the potential to deliver strong benefits to the MIE but some fine-tuning is still required in terms of the structure of the programmes in order to ensure their suitability for a part-time mode of study. There appears to be a need also to ensure that the nature of study at the doctoral level is understood more fully by students, particularly in terms of the agency required on their part as emerging independent researchers as well as what scaffolding it is realistic to expect from a university doctoral level programme in general and the supervisor in particular. In terms of pre-requisites, it seems advisable to consider ways of bridging the gap between post graduate programmes taught and doctoral level study as, until the Master's level, work at the MIE has matured further, but the gap between both levels seems notable and the degree of preparedness of students, judging by their own accounts, appears still to be somewhat limited.

The doctoral partnerships with UoB and UKZN offer considerable potential in terms of capacity building particularly in relation to research supervision. From the evidence available it would appear that the baseline is relatively low still in terms of the number of members of staff holding a research degree as well as having successfully supervised to completion. Consequently, the MIE does not seem ready to invoke its degree awarding powers at the doctoral level by itself. Added to that, the volume of students enrolled at the Master's level appears to be still rather small and the MIE is only in the early stages of developing requisite expertise in enabling students to work at the forefront of their discipline at postgraduate taught level, as is also recognized by MIE staff.

**Commendation 12**

**The MIE is commended for clearly recognizing the emerging nature of its maturity in relation to its recently gained degree awarding powers and for not currently planning to move towards its own PhD offer but, instead, to consolidate and strengthen its existing international partnerships.**

**Recommendation 23**

**It is recommended that the MIE consider the development of a pre-doctoral programme to support the transition from study at postgraduate taught to postgraduate research levels; this seems particularly important in view of the seeming need of transition from a provider- to a student/researcher-led disposition.**

**Recommendation 24**

**It is recommended that the MIE, in the context of its existing partnership-based doctoral research programmes, focus on issues around retention, progression and timely completion, as well as taking the part-time nature of study more carefully into account in relation to programme design and the calibration of support structures.**

The Panel found little evidence as yet of research and evidence-based inquiry informing practice at the MIE and its partnership schools. Also, whilst some research-related partnership work in the Global South is in evidence, this appears more opportunistic than strategic at present.

The 2017-2021 MIE Strategic Plan sets out the following focus for research in education:

1. Harmonising structures and research priorities within the institution
2. Integration of research outcomes in teaching and curriculum development
3. Staffing, resources and capacity building for research
4. Enhancing master's and doctoral completion as a key area for targeted improvement

Across all these areas of strategic focus, whilst concerted efforts are in evidence, a considerable distance is yet to be travelled by the MIE based on the written and oral information submitted to the Panel. Staff at the MIE seem very committed to the inclusion of research in education as part of the core mission of the institution and warmly welcome it. For historical reasons, though, the current infrastructure to support research in terms of governance arrangements as well as resources, systems and processes is currently still in its infancy. This is one reason impeding the ability of MIE staff to make the sort of progress they appear to be able to make in areas such as coursebook development. In particular, the lack of recognition of research-related activity as part of the MIE's core business valorized inter alia in workload management and promotion terms seems a key inhibitor to research growth. Another inhibitor, arguably, is the seeming inability of the MIE to appoint staff that are more senior than Lecturer level. This arguably militates against accelerated research capacity building. Appointing more senior staff with a proven track record in research in education in key strategic areas would enable the MIE to strengthen its ability to build critical mass in research into teacher education, coursebook development and teachers and teaching. These are some examples where the close relationship of the MIE to the Ministry of Education and its rules is not always conducive and where a greater degree of autonomy would seem important and in keeping with the relatively recent change in status into an organization with degree awarding powers.

**Recommendation 25**

**It is recommended that the MIE develop a clear, overarching research strategy linked to its institutional strategy as well as a corresponding governance structure that explicates and underpins the interrelationship of research with other aspects of the core mission of the MIE. The research strategy should be accompanied by an implementation as well as dissemination plan.**

**Recommendation 26**

**It is recommended that the MIE, in line with its ambition to strengthen its research culture, seek to obtain Ministry approval for a more open recruitment process of academic staff in areas of expertise that are viewed as priorities or where gaps have been identified at levels higher than lecturer level.**

The MIE's Self Evaluation Report (SERp 65) identifies a number of helpful indicators for quality in research in education:

1. Consolidation of internal structures to promote the institutional research agenda
2. Development of guiding documents to frame research activities
3. Provision of funding, resources and capacity building to support engagement in research activities
4. Development of collaborative research endeavours with local institutions
5. Provision of academic platforms for the dissemination of research output
6. Engagement in research that informs teacher education curricula
7. Provision of opportunities to externalise the research agenda by establishing strategic international partnerships
8. Enhancing research through postgraduate provisions

The implementation of these eight indicators, arguably, still is in its early stages.

Of particular urgency is the harmonization of governance arrangements and research priorities. Whilst the MIE is planning on closely aligning its Research Unit as well as the Higher Studies Cell, conceptual and structural work is needed to strengthen current arrangements. This includes also the strategic level: although the Research Unit has developed a strategic plan to guide its work (Annex 125), it remains rather rudimentary in terms of intended aims, specific actions and key performance indicators. For example, the current plan does not set out any explicit and realistic targets expressed in key metrics such as the number of publications in peer-reviewed, international academic journals per research-active member of staff envisaged over a certain period of time, research grant capture, or invited keynotes at international conferences.

**Commendation 13**

**The MIE is commended for its plans to consolidate its research governance by seeking to create an overarching Research Centre that integrates the Higher Studies Cell and the Research Unit.**

In terms of governance, the MIE lacks a strong research committee which ensures that the relevant policies to underpin effective practices are in place and which guides the executive in making appropriate decisions about structures and resource allocation. For example, whilst clearly the MIE



has a small number of staff who are research active and does undertake efforts to promote scholarship and its dissemination through a number of projects and in-house and external dissemination events, the activities tend to be small scale – focusing mostly on case study work and following an action research paradigm – eclectic in thematic orientation and diffuse, driven by the research interests of individual members of staff rather than a coherent institutional strategy setting out overarching themes to guiding the research efforts across the MIE in order to maximise synergies. The methodological orientation and rigour of the work is not entirely clear from the evidence available. When the Panel tested out a list of research themes that had been supplied on staff, there was very limited recognition of them. This strongly suggests further work is required on consultation with and dissemination amongst staff. In so doing, the Panel would suggest consideration be given to the relevance of the MIE's research efforts for educational policy and practice in Mauritius, in particular a stronger practitioner orientation of the MIE's research efforts with a focus on synergies with its own teacher education pedagogy, teacher education curricula, coursebook design activities as well as its work on subject didactics. This strategic orientation would appear to have considerable traction with key stakeholders.

### **Recommendation 27**

**It is recommended that the MIE strengthen its consideration of the relevance of the MIE's research efforts for educational policy and practice in Mauritius. For example, consideration be given to a stronger practitioner orientation of the MIE's research efforts with a focus on synergies with its own teacher education pedagogy, teacher education curricula, coursebook design activities as well as its work on subject didactics. Consideration should be given to the strengthening of evidence-based inquiry as part of MIE programmes and how these efforts can be framed more explicitly as projects undertaken in partnership with schools and their staff.**

The MIE SER (SERp 74) identifies research labs attached to each School/Cell as a potential way forward. In the absence of a concept paper that sets out the operational detail it is difficult to judge the potential benefits of such an approach but there is the danger of diluting the potential impact of investment by proliferating it across different Schools and potentially diverging or overlapping research interests. The location of such entities at the level of Schools might make interdisciplinary working more difficult. The identification of higher order themes, such as technology-enhanced teacher education pedagogy or the development of an explicit framework around the research-practice nexus for programmes on offer at the MIE, might be preferable in this regard.

At present both the Higher Studies Cell and the Research Unit would appear to be covering aspects of work supporting the MIE's efforts in research in education. However, the work of both bodies does not appear to be well aligned and there appears to be limited interaction across both. Also, the role of both bodies in the wider governance and management structure is not really clear, for instance when one tries to understand if the Research Unit does have the power to mandate structures and policies for the MIE, for example in areas such as institutional thematic priorities, ethical approvals or the approval of research bids being submitted to internal and external funders. Or if it does have the financial means to implement capacity building initiatives or to seed research incubators, as well as being or not able to influence institutional promotions arrangements and decisions of the staff development panel or the procurement of research-related technological infrastructure. It is not also clear if it does govern the development and quality assurance of research partnerships with local, regional and international partners.

The research strategy should be accompanied by an implementation plan clearly setting out the necessary enabling structures and infrastructure, in particular processes for monitoring the quality and integrity of applications for research funding underpinned by accurate costing and ethical clearance procedures. At present, there appears to be no process that supports, monitors and quality assures bids for research funding, that ensures consistency and synergy across the MIE and articulates them with staffing and resource requirements. Also, there appears to be no systems to judge the quality of outputs or to monitor the systematic dissemination of research.

As part of capacity building for research in education at the MIE the Panel felt that thought should be given to the strengthening of evidence-based inquiry as part of MIE programmes, particularly at post graduate taught level, and how these efforts can be framed more explicitly as projects undertaken in partnership with schools and their staff. Discussions with students pointed to a desirability of the strengthening of research literacy as part of the MIE's taught provision with students at all levels raising the issues of formulating researchable questions and implementable research plans as challenges for them and employers expressing the distinct desirability of a stronger focus on practitioner-based research capacity building in schools around schools' developmental priorities. Whilst some evidence was presented about research that informs teacher education curricula (e.g. SERp 70, Section 8.8), it did not become clear from the documentation or meetings to what extent the work undertaken to date emerges from and/or impacts on curriculum development of programmes offered at the MIE.

#### **Recommendation 28**

**It is recommended that the MIE review and strengthen its taught programmes at postgraduate level to better prepare students for the capstone research element; this, importantly, should include support with research proposal writing and with the formulation of researchable questions.**

The MIE Strategic Plan rightly identifies PhD completion rates as an important area of focus. From the evidence presented it would appear that numbers of completion are still low and a very high proportion of students are requiring extensions or suspensions of regulation to enable them to complete their period of study. Systematic data was not available to the Panel but conversations with a sample of current students suggest that a main reason for this is high workload and a certain lack of recognition of the fact that students by-and-large if not exclusively work full time.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: The Audit Panel

Prof Pedro Manuel Tavares Lopes de Andrade Saraiva, Full Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Coimbra, Portugal (Chairperson)

Prof Norbert Pachler, Pro-Vice-Provost: Education, University College London, and Pro-Director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation, UCL Institute of Education, University of London

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sharifah Norul Akmar binti Syed Zamri, Associate Professor of Mathematics Education, Department of Mathematics and Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, Malaysia

Dr Gilberte Chung Kim Chung, Executive Director, Service Diocésain de l'Éducation Catholique, Mauritius

Dr Shaheen Motala-Timol, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer, Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

Mrs Ansuya Sobhee-Runnoo, Programme Officer, Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius (Audit Secretary)

## Appendix B: Abbreviations and Acronyms

CODL: Centre for Open and Distance Learning

HoD: Heads of Departments

MGI: Mahatma Gandhi Institute

MIE: Mauritius Institute of Education or the Institute

MOEHRTESR: Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research

NCCRD: National Centre or Curriculum Research & Development

OU: Open University of Mauritius

QA: Quality Assurance

QAD: Quality Assurance Division

QARP: Quality Assurance Resource Person

QASC: Quality Assurance Steering Committee

SER: Self-Evaluation Report

TEC: Tertiary Education Commission

UoB: University of Brighton

UoM: University of Mauritius

UKZN: University of KwaZulu Natal

### Appendix C: Figures

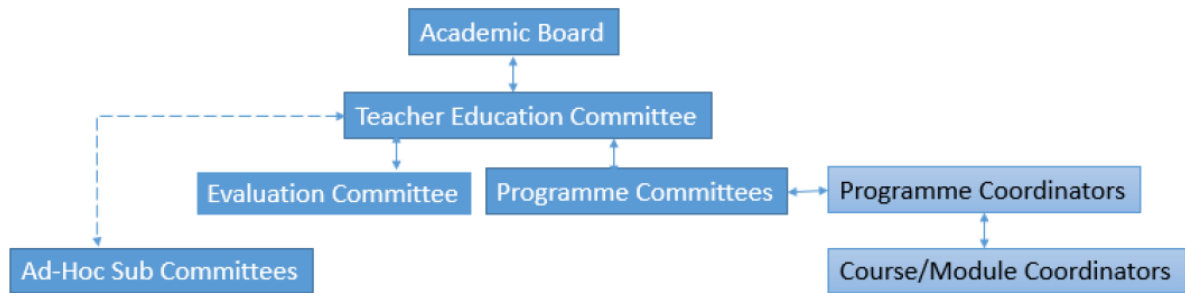


Figure 1. Academic Governance  
 Source: MIE Self-Evaluation Report (SERp 18)

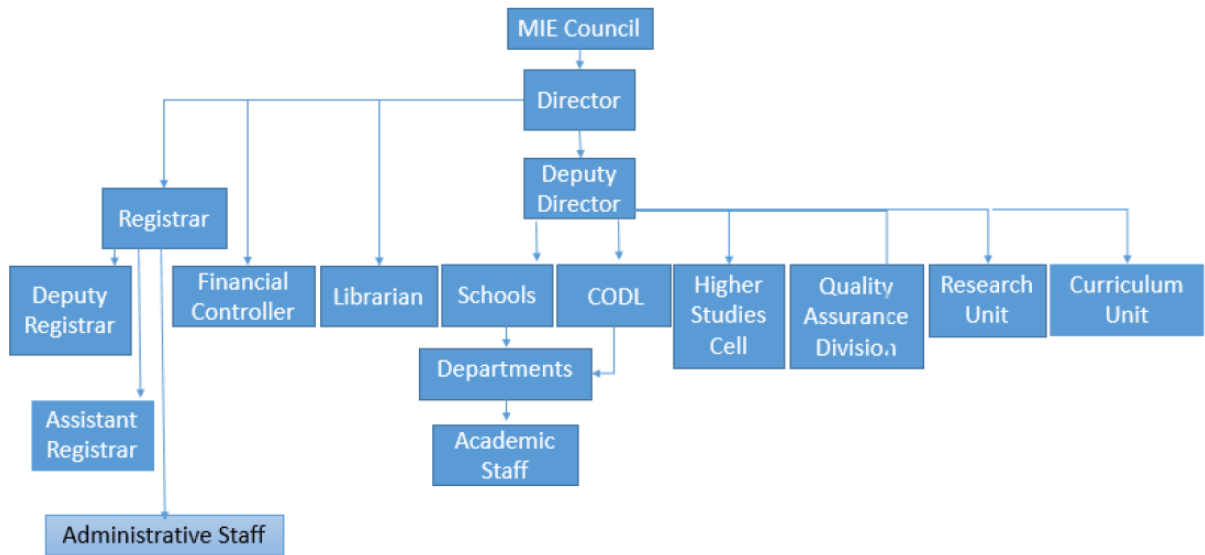


Figure 2. Managerial Structure  
 Source: MIE Self-Evaluation Report (SERp 16)

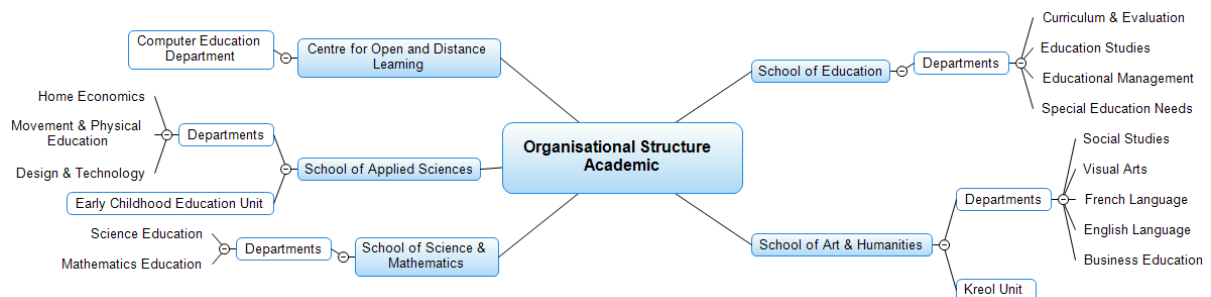


Figure 3. Academic Structure  
 Source: MIE Self-Evaluations Report (SERp 16)

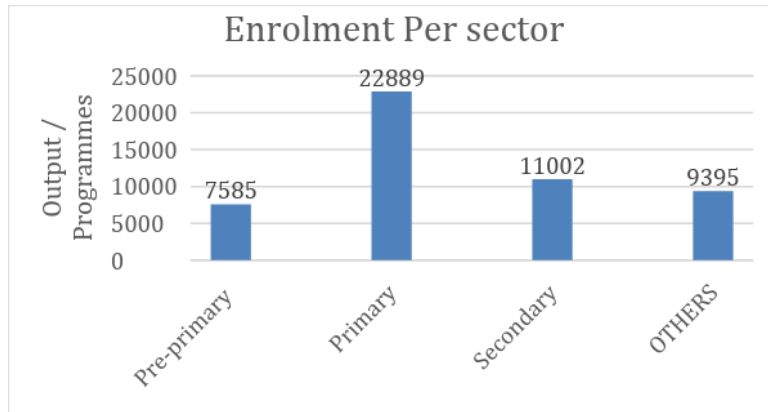


Figure 4: Enrolment per sector from 1976 to 2017

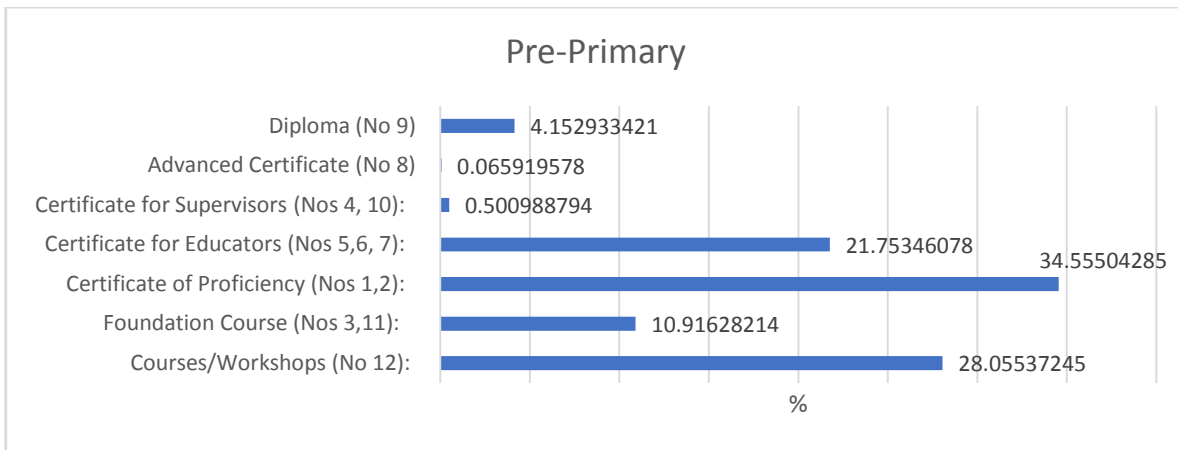


Figure 5: Demand as per level and type of course offered for pre-primary

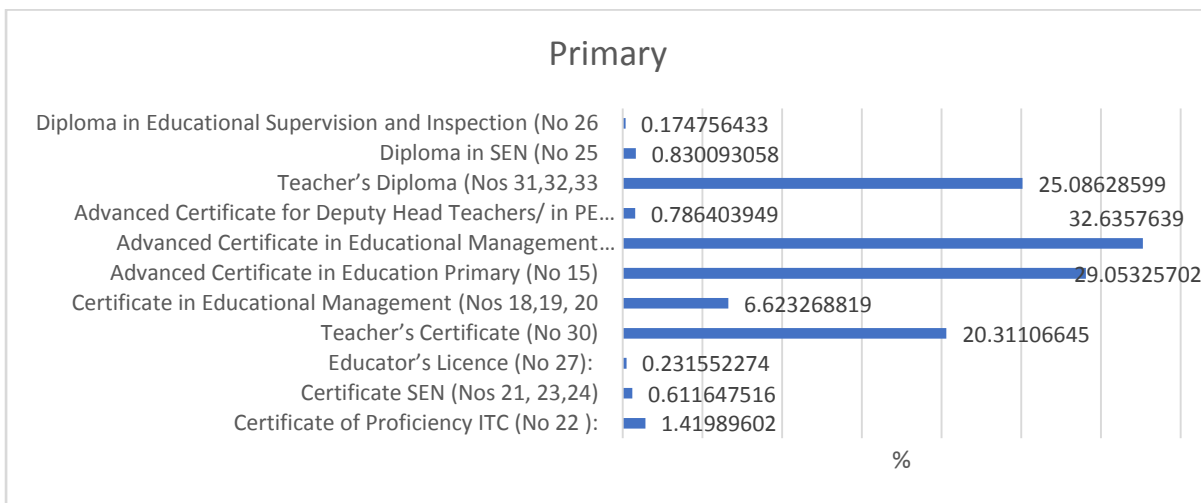


Figure 6: Demand as per level and type of course offered for primary

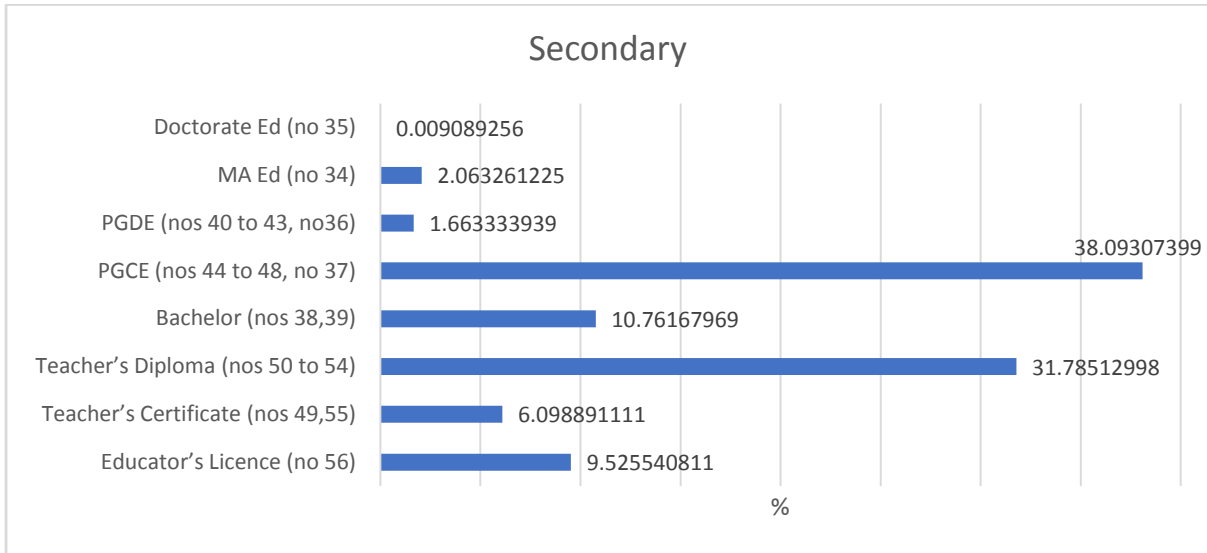


Figure 7: Demand as per level and type of course offered for secondary school teachers