



# International Quality Review

## Mid-Cycle Review

Macao University of Tourism

**Review Report**

April 2025

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## About this mid-cycle review

This is a report of a mid-cycle review conducted by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) at Macao University of Tourism. The mid-cycle review included desk-based analysis and a review visit to the institution. It was conducted by a team of two reviewers, as follows:

- Dr Rong Huang
- Mr Alan Weale.

The full International Quality Review (IQR) in April 2022, resulted in a published report. The QAA review team concluded that Macao University of Tourism met all 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(ESG\)](#). The team identified eight features of good practice and made eleven recommendations.

This mid-cycle review evaluates progress against the key actions since the IQR and considers any significant changes that may impact on the ability of Macao University of Tourism to continue to meet the ESG standards.

## Outcome of the mid-cycle review

From the evidence provided, the review team concludes that Macao University of Tourism is making **satisfactory progress** since the April 2022 International Quality Review and that the period of validity of the IQR be extended to June 2027.

## Summary of IQR outcomes

### Overview of the institution

The Macao University of Tourism (UTM) offers degree programmes as well as professional training in a wide range of culture, tourism and hospitality management-related disciplines. UTM consists of three educational units (faculty): Faculty of Creative Tourism and Intelligent Technologies (FCTIT), renamed from the School of Tourism Management (STM); Faculty of Innovative Hospitality Management (FIHM), renamed from School of Hospitality Management (SHM) and Institute of Executive and Professional Development (IEPD) renamed from School of Continuing Education (SCE). The FCTIT and FIHM offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree programmes, while IEPD provides short-term professional diploma and certificate-based training.

UTM's mission is to become a leading higher education institution in tourism and service industry studies that equips students with professional knowledge and technical competence in preparation for their future leadership responsibilities in the industry. To fulfil the above mission, the University has the following three characteristics:

**Unique identity:** the University operates independently, specialising in providing higher education and professional training in tourism and service industry management. **Integration:** it blends the best approaches to academic development and professional training. **Internationalisation:** it seeks mutually beneficial cooperation with similar institutions abroad, actively promoting international learning experience among faculty and students.

Several key strategies that are intended to foster the long-term development of UTM have been implemented since the last review. These include Enhancing Academic Excellence and Recognition; Strengthening National Identity and Regional Integration; Diversifying and Innovating Teaching and Learning; Fostering Industry Collaboration and Community

Engagement; Expanding Recruitment and Internationalisation; Improving Management and Administration; and Modernising Campus Infrastructure and Technology.

Despite the key strategic aims of UTM, the University notes that there are significant challenges to be faced that cannot be ignored. Currently, UTM is limited by its campus size and facilities. However, UTM sees this as presenting a new opportunity for expanding its campus and modernising its facilities. In recent years, UTM has expanded rapidly with newly renovated buildings integrating the latest technology to enhance teaching and learning. See the section 'Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources' at paragraph 43.

UTM has identified a lack of flexibility in its operation and human resources management which it states may constrain its development to a certain extent. Nevertheless, this has also been noted as a critical factor motivating faculty members and management to innovate in their approaches to teaching, learning, research and administration.

Considering UTM's rapid expansion, the workload (especially in teaching) is higher than usual, but the University management expresses its commitment to supporting faculty and staff to maintain high morale and a strong sense of community.

## Good practice identified by the 2022 International Quality Review

- The comprehensive, systematic, international consideration in programme design and development that aligns with the institution's educational philosophy and educational goals (ESG Standard 1.2)
- The efforts to achieve the internationalisation mission, which are comprehensive, and actively promote student-centred learning (ESG Standard 1.3)
- The extensive opportunities and support that the students receive in practicum and internships to develop their knowledge of the industry (ESG Standard 1.3)
- The monthly meetings of the Pedagogic Council, which facilitate agile responses to student feedback on learning, teaching and assessment (ESG Standard 1.3)
- The involvement of various stakeholders in the admission process (ESG Standard 1.4)
- Great efforts to offer opportunities for and promote the professional development of faculty members (ESG Standard 1.5)
- The continuous efforts of UTM to invest in modern, clean and technology-enhanced facilities and venues, which not only provide an excellent environment for contextualised teaching delivery but also enhance the student learning experience (ESG Standard 1.6)
- Proactive engagement of staff in the review mechanisms of the curriculum, with task forces and teams allocated for the review purposes, with a report at the end of each stage and specific conclusions and findings (ESG Standard 1.7).

## Recommendations of the 2022 International Quality Review

The QAA review team made the following recommendations to Macao University of Tourism to take action to:

- develop a consistent approach to include in all official documents the date of the official approval (ESG Standard 1.1)
- implement a consistent approach to develop its course outlines not only for those published on Moodle but also those issued to students that include, for example, the course name, code, and credits, intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning delivery, and key references. Such a template needs to demonstrate clear

relationships between course intended learning outcomes and programme intended learning outcomes (ESG Standard 1.2)

- develop an overarching assessment policy including extenuating circumstances, types of assessment (formative/summative), assessment designs in relation to ILOs, assessment submission, moderation, feedback, academic dishonesty, and appeal procedures. Such policy should be accessible by students and faculty to use as a reference point to understand and support the assessment process (ESG Standard 1.3)
- publicise the clear nature of assessments (formative vs summative), and adopt a consistent approach to preparing assessment briefs for all the courses on the Moodle and offline to include key information in the course outlines (for example, mapping individual assessments in relation to the course's learning outcomes, assessment components, weighting, assessment requirements and marking criteria, dishonest acts) (ESG Standard 1.3)
- provide a clear process guideline and relevant template to guide and train teaching staff to expand its internal moderation process to different assessments of all the courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (ESG Standard 1.3)
- extend its engagement with external expertise to ensure parity of expectations of students, assessment tasks, marking criteria and feedback across all the courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels (ESG Standard 1.3)
- consider the revision of the recognition policy by reconsidering its title to better reflect its content and avoid confusion (ESG Standard 1.4)
- consider potential options to explain the gained qualifications to students including the reached learning outcomes and the context, level, content, and status of the studies that were pursued (ESG Standard 1.4)
- consider a cross-year comparison in its services satisfaction surveys and other annual surveys so that UTM can monitor performance and issues over time (ESG Standard 1.7)
- formalise communication policy and procedure, to ensure information dissemination through multiple channels is consistent, up-to-date, accurate and meets the intended audience's needs (ESG Standard 1.8)
- develop a clear monitoring and evaluation procedure for the publication of information which should demonstrate the University's oversight of the publication, including mechanisms of cross-checking information to ensure information is consistent, up-to-date, accurate and meets intended audience needs (ESG Standard 1.8).

## Changes since the last IQR review visit

1. Since 2023 there has been significant and extensive development in the provision of campus resources. Further detail is set out in the section of this report entitled 'Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources' at paragraph 43.
2. Since the last review, and from the 1 April 2024, the *Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM)* has been renamed the Macao University of Tourism (UTM) following legislative approval. At the same time UTM also introduced a new management team and revised organisational framework, including renamed academic units: the School of Tourism Management (STM), School of Hospitality Management (SHM), School of Continuing Education (SCE), Independent academic units (teaching, research centres), and Internship departments. These updates align with UTM's expanded role, incorporating new programmes, increased student intake, faculty growth, and stronger industry-academia research.
3. UTM expanded its academic offerings by revamping existing programmes and introducing new ones. The Faculty of Creative Tourism and Intelligent Technologies

(FCTIT) revamped 8 programmes and introduced 10 new programmes. The Faculty of Innovative Hospitality Management (FIHM) revamped 9 programmes and introduced 2 new programmes.

4. The expanded and revamped programmes have driven significant enrolment growth. In 2024/2025, applications reached 3,857, an 81% increase year-on-year. New registrations totalled 924, up 54% ; total students on degree programmes is 2,292 (1,891 undergraduate, 401 postgraduate), comprising 965 local and 1,327 non-local students. In terms of number of faculty members there were 113 full-time and 88 adjunct staff, yielding a 1:14.4 teacher-student ratio.

## Findings from the mid-cycle review analysis

5. Regarding the recommendation to develop a consistent approach to include in all official documents the date of the official approval a standard cover page template, including the approval signatures of all members and the corresponding approval date was developed to ensure the inclusion of the date of official approval and the approver's signature in all official documents. The submitted evidence demonstrated the effective implementation of the standardised approach.
6. To address the recommendation to implement a consistent approach to course outlines a dedicated taskforce was established to develop the new template, which now includes essential course information such as the course name, code, credits, intended learning outcomes (CLOs), teaching and learning methods, key references, and assessment criteria. The revised template clearly maps CLOs to Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) , ensuring alignment with programme objectives. A comprehensive user guide was created to support staff in using the new format, which has been integrated into UTM's e-services platform and is consistently applied across all courses.
7. With respect to the recommendation to develop an overarching assessment policy, an Assessment Policy that addresses all key aspects of assessment has been produced. The assessment policy is available on the VLE and is presented to students at the beginning of each semester for all courses and programmes. The Assessment Policy largely meets the QAA's key recommendations, covering essential aspects of assessment practice. It clearly defines formative and summative assessment types while ensuring alignment with intended learning outcomes through its CLO/PLO framework. The policy demonstrates strong compliance in moderation processes, academic integrity measures, and feedback requirements. Its accessibility via Moodle and presentation to students each semester fulfils transparency expectations. Core elements like submission guidelines, plagiarism detection (Turnitin), and appeals procedures are all addressed, showing comprehensive coverage of QAA standards.
8. While the assessment policy demonstrates a robust framework, certain areas require refinement to align fully with the ESG standard and guidelines. Currently, the policy lacks formalised procedures for handling extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical extensions) and could benefit from clearer timelines and documentation requirements for appeals. However, discussions with senior management, academic staff, and students confirmed that such cases are rare in practice, as requests necessitate valid evidence and follow established informal protocols. Formalising these ad hoc procedures in the revised policy would enhance transparency for students and streamline implementation for staff.
9. Additionally, the policy would be strengthened by incorporating differentiated approaches for postgraduate programmes. Senior management and faculty

acknowledged this gap and confirmed plans for a phased rollout, with postgraduate-specific guidance to be added in subsequent updates.

10. Addressing these gaps - through formalising existing practices and introducing tiered guidance for postgraduate levels - would further align the policy with the ESG standard while preserving its current strengths.
11. UTM has taken significant steps to enhance curriculum alignment through a systematic review of its Hotel Management Programme, led by a dedicated task force. The institution developed comprehensive guidelines and templates to standardise course descriptions, align assessments with learning outcomes, and integrate core competencies. Resources such as the Curriculum Framework Alignment Evaluation and Curriculum Alignment Framework Template were created to support implementation, alongside plans for faculty workshops and a permanent Quality Assurance Panel. These efforts demonstrate a strong commitment to outcome-based education, with clear models and cognitive progression frameworks that strengthen programme coherence.
12. The existing curriculum design framework offers a robust structure with a holistic approach and practical examples. However, several limitations hinder its effectiveness, including repetitive content, insufficient visual aids, and vague language in key sections. The framework also lacks guidance on technology integration and meaningful student involvement in the learning process. While assessment strategies are diverse, they omit critical discussions on balancing formative and summative approaches or ensuring equitable practices. Most notably, the framework falls short in addressing postgraduate needs, failing to tailor higher-order competencies such as research leadership and scholarly communication for master's and doctoral programmes.
13. However, the senior management and academic staff have confirmed that the current curriculum alignment exercise prioritises programmes with the highest student enrolment and institutional influence. The University intends to conduct this exercise annually, with plans to gradually extend it to all programmes, including postgraduate offerings. This phased rollout allows for the incorporation of lessons learned while managing the demands of broader institutional changes.
14. A review of newly introduced programmes reveals a significant focus on postgraduate education. Discussions with academic staff highlight challenges in teaching at this level, as well as a need for clearer understanding of master's and doctoral requirements. Addressing these gaps will enhance the framework's relevance across all academic levels while preserving its strong pedagogical foundation.
15. UTM adopted a structured, phased approach to address the QAA's recommendation on moderation processes, beginning with the formation of a task force to benchmark international standards and develop an implementation action plan. This included faculty training, a trial phase across 10 selected courses to test standardisation and moderation procedures, and the creation of supporting materials such as e-learning modules and FAQs. Insights from the trial phase, documented in a detailed report, highlighted the need for simplified procedures and better coordination with adjunct faculty. The refined approach, outlined in the action plan, now guides institution-wide implementation, ensuring internal moderation for at least one assessment per course across all programmes while maintaining alignment with international best practices.
16. The course standardisation and moderation policy at UTM demonstrates several strengths, including a systematic phased implementation with clear training and support for faculty, alignment with best practices through diverse cross-marking

methods, and a strong focus on transparency and accountability via e-services documentation. It effectively addresses inclusivity for adjunct faculty and provides structured rubric guidelines to ensure grading consistency.

17. While the moderation policy demonstrates progress, several challenges persist. These include limited adoption of cross-marking - often perceived as unnecessary for objective assessments - alongside faculty workload concerns and ambiguities in handling borderline grades and disputes. Additionally, the policy's reliance on internal benchmarking, with minimal external moderation beyond theses, presents a gap in quality assurance. To strengthen the framework, streamlining processes, clarifying dispute resolution mechanisms, and expanding external moderation practices would be beneficial.
18. The senior management acknowledge these challenges and the ongoing refinement of moderation practices across all programmes continues. Workload concerns are actively monitored, and the institution has introduced measures - such as a revised staff appraisal system and incentives through the UTM Development Foundation - to ensure faculty engagement remains balanced and sustainable.
19. UTM has taken a cautious approach to the QAA's recommendation on external moderation, prioritising internal quality assurance first. The institution implemented a comprehensive internal moderation system through a phased action plan (2022-2025), including benchmarking, faculty training, and pilot testing across courses. While acknowledging inconsistencies in external moderation through their thesis review, UTM chose to strengthen internal processes - developing standardized rubrics, implementing multiple cross-marking methods, and requiring moderation for all high-stakes assessments (40%+ weightings).
20. While the current limitation of external moderation to theses/dissertations, with broader implementation deferred until 2025, presents a notable gap in quality assurance, the university has established alternative mechanisms to maintain standards. The senior management and academic staff acknowledge the value of external benchmarking and have identified key quality assurance opportunities through TedQual certification by the United Nations Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and Macao government-led programme reviews. Additionally, the university's annual KPI reporting to the Macao government provides comparative benchmarking with other institutions, serving as an indirect quality measure. Looking ahead, the senior management has confirmed plans to expand external moderation from bachelor's projects to include master's dissertations and doctoral theses, thereby gradually increasing coverage across more modules while maintaining rigorous quality standards.
21. The internal recognition policy was reviewed and renamed its title to Credit Exemption Policy.
22. UTM has implemented several key measures to address the QAA recommendations regarding qualification transparency. A standardised course outline system has been developed and integrated across all degree programmes within the university's e-services platform. These outlines now explicitly include Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and demonstrate how each course maps to these overall objectives. This enhancement enables students to clearly understand the learning outcomes achieved, along with the context, level, content and status of their studies. Through the e-services platform, students can track their academic progress and see how individual courses contribute to their personal, academic and professional development, providing comprehensive visibility of their educational journey.

23. UTM has implemented measures to address QAA recommendations on monitoring performance trends through annual satisfaction surveys. The institution now conducts systematic cross-year comparisons of service satisfaction data, enabling clear tracking of improvements or declines across key areas. These surveys combine quantitative metrics (with all service factors consistently scoring above 4/5) with qualitative stakeholder feedback to provide comprehensive insights. When analysing year-on-year variations, UTM focuses on statistically significant trends while developing targeted improvement plans for areas showing even minor declines. The process is documented in detailed reports that not only analyse results but also outline actionable responses, ensuring continuous monitoring and enhancement of service quality over time.
24. UTM has formalised its communication policy through active implementation of Pedagogic Councils' Standard Operating Procedures. The Pedagogic Council Secretariat maintains regular contact with staff and students via multiple channels, collecting feedback through meetings, surveys, and the intranet. Monthly meetings involving deans, coordinators, faculty, and student representatives address teaching/learning issues, with outcomes disseminated via email and Student Portal updates. The Secretariat systematically compiles concerns before meetings and shares follow-up actions afterward, ensuring transparent two-way communication and timely responses to stakeholder needs. This structured approach guarantees consistent, accurate information flow while meeting audience requirements.
25. The university has established a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to oversee information publication, ensuring consistency, accuracy and relevance for target audiences. A standardised institutional procedure outlines clear steps for cross-checking content across platforms, with defined roles for verification and regular updates. This systematic approach maintains quality control while meeting ESG Standard 1.8 requirements through documented oversight mechanisms.
26. UTM has adopted a systematic, evidence-based approach to programme design and development, ensuring alignment with its educational philosophy and goals. This process includes feasibility studies, stakeholder consultations, benchmarking against international institutions, and multi-level internal approvals, resulting in the launch of new programmes and the enhancement of existing ones to meet market and student needs.
27. UTM has strengthened its internationalisation efforts by expanding student exchange programmes , establishing joint degree partnerships with reputable global institutions and increasing international internship opportunities. Moreover, UTM actively hosts and participates in international academic events, such as the Tourism Education Student Summit and global tourism conferences , providing students with valuable international exposure and opportunities for research collaboration.
28. To ensure learning outcomes are met, faculty members conduct regular check-ins with workplace supervisors via phone, site visits, or online interviews to monitor and evaluate students' progress during their internships..
29. The FIHM/FCTIT Pedagogic Councils conduct monthly meetings to facilitate prompt and effective responses to student feedback regarding learning, teaching, and assessment. All relevant information regarding the Pedagogic Council is readily available on the Student Portal intranet.
30. UTM has strengthened its commitment to staff development by implementing a structured, needs-based approach to faculty training. This includes conducting annual training needs analyses, developing a yearly training plan with internal or

external experts, and allowing faculty to suggest relevant online courses, all coordinated and approved through institutional governance channels.

31. UTM has enhanced its campus with modern, technology-driven solutions, notably through the launch of the MyUTM app, which streamlines academic and administrative services for students. Faculty members are also supported with training on advanced digital tools to improve teaching and research.
32. UTM has strengthened its curriculum review process by adopting a need-based approach, supported by task forces conducting feasibility studies and benchmarking with regional and international institutions..

## **Development of quality assurance and enhancement procedures**

33. The former Centre for Teaching and Learning Enhancement was restructured and renamed to the now Centre for Education Quality Management to better reflect its nature and role in ensuring quality assurance in education.
34. UTM has proactively developed an institutional AI policy following ChatGPT's emergence, providing clear guidelines on ethical AI use in coursework. The policy establishes faculty autonomy to set course-specific AI rules while mandating transparency through APA-style citations for AI-generated content. It explicitly links AI misuse to academic integrity violations, creating a foundational framework for responsible adoption.
35. This framework provides clear guidance on ethical AI usage in coursework while granting faculty autonomy to determine course-specific AI rules. The policy mandates transparency through APA-style citations for AI-generated content and explicitly classifies AI misuse as an academic integrity violation, creating a robust foundation for responsible implementation.
36. The policy demonstrates notable strengths through its balanced approach - neither prohibiting nor unconditionally permitting AI - while preserving academic freedom. However, areas for improvement include the development of enforcement mechanisms (e.g., AI detection tools), better integration of AI's pedagogical benefits, and addressing equity concerns for students with limited access to AI technologies. Additional gaps involve unclear terminology, lack of formal appeal procedures, and undefined penalty structures.
37. The senior management and academic staff acknowledge both the opportunities and challenges presented by AI in education. UTM has responded by offering regular faculty training workshops to explore effective AI integration in teaching and learning. Recommended enhancements include establishing clear thresholds for AI-generated content ( $\leq 20\%$ ), clarifying policies regarding multimodal AI applications, and providing institutional AI licenses to ensure equitable access while upholding academic standards.
38. UTM has introduced a specialised AI policy for theses/dissertations in 2024, building on its general AI framework to address research-specific challenges. The policy clearly prohibits AI for core academic work (arguments, primary research, analysis) while permitting limited use for language refinement with mandatory disclosure. It establishes violation procedures and maintains a strong focus on critical thinking, requiring American Psychological Association (APA) citations for AI-generated

content and exempting basic editing tools. This targeted approach demonstrates UTM's proactive stance on research integrity in the AI era.

39. While the policy excels in setting clear boundaries and transparency requirements, it lacks practical enforcement mechanisms (e.g., AI detection tools) and guidance for edge cases like AI-assisted literature reviews. The gaps include undefined terminology, no appeal process details, and unaddressed equity issues in tool access. Recommendations include adding permitted-use examples, supervisor training, institutional AI licenses, and a formal appeals framework. Structural improvements like decision flowcharts and template declarations would enhance usability, alongside biannual reviews to keep pace with AI advancements.
40. An Assessment Policy was introduced to create a consistent, valid, reliable, standardised, and Institute-wide assessment process and procedure for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting student work, performance, and achievement in each programme and course. Please refer to the comments and recommendations in paragraphs 7 -10.
41. Policy on Course Standardisation and Cross-Marking Procedure was implemented to ensure uniform academic standards. Critical review of the policy and related recommendations are explained in paragraphs 17 - 20.
42. A Curriculum Alignment Framework was developed to systematically ensure that Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) are aligned, with periodic monitoring and review. Please see comments and recommendations in paragraphs 11-13.

## **Findings from the observations of facilities and learning resources**

43. The 2022 IQR was conducted virtually due to pandemic restrictions. During this mid-cycle review the review team were able to visit the range of facilities that would, under usual circumstances, form part of the IQR visit.
44. UTM has two campuses, the original campus at Mong-Há and a new campus at Taipa. The Mong-Há Campus includes teaching facilities, office accommodation, at training hotel (Pousada de Mong-Há) and an Educational Restaurant. The training hotel and restaurant provide opportunities for students to learn in real-world situations. Additionally, the Mong-Há campus has sport and leisure facilities such as a gym, a multipurpose court for volleyball or badminton and outdoor courts for sports such as basketball and tennis. The Taipa campus consists of student residencies in the East Asia Hall and state of the art teaching facilities in the renovated Silver Jubilee Building. The teaching facilities include modern demonstration and fully working culinary kitchens covering a range of cuisines, simulated hotel rooms, simulated front desk and reception services as well as more standard teaching space. New modern office space will be available for faculty and other staff. A second Educational Hotel was being prepared for opening at the time of the mid-cycle review visit. Both campuses have up-to-date information technology and library facilities on both and full-range Wi-Fi is available.
45. The Student Residences offer upgraded accommodation, including varied room types, multi-functional spaces, conference rooms, a nursery, and a catering area. These enhancements aim to enrich the student learning environment and support staff operations.

46. In 2023, UTM began two major campus developments: renovating the Silver Jubilee Building and Educational Residence. At the time of the mid-cycle review visit, the renovations were at the point of completion with both projects planned to be operational for the 2025/2026 academic year, significantly expanding academic and practicum space.

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