

TNE Quality Benchmarking – Report

University of Greenwich

partnership with

**October University
for
Modern Sciences and Arts**

October 2021



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Introduction

About Ecctis

Ecctis is one of the world's leading providers of services in the recognition and evaluation of qualifications.

Managing on behalf of the UK Government the national qualification recognition function since 1997¹, Ecctis has established itself as an internationally trusted and respected voice with regard to qualifications standards and international education systems.

Our vision is to support the growth of quality international education by facilitating the recognition and portability of qualifications of demonstrated quality and standards, and to raise global standards in education by supporting education providers through objective, independent and expert assessment of their provision.

To achieve our vision we offer a range of global solutions to improve the recognition of international qualifications and enhance institutional capacity to offer education provision of good quality and standards. These include the Transnational Education Quality Benchmark (TNE QB).

About the TNE Quality Benchmark

TNE QB is an international peer-review process through which awarding institutions, regardless of their country of origin, can offer external and independent reassurance that their Transnational Education (TNE) operations meet international standards of good practice.

Reassurance is provided through a rigorous and independent peer-review assessment of TNE operations against TNE benchmarks which draw on existing international reference points. These include the principles stipulated in the UNESCO/Council of Europe [Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education](#) and the UNESCO/OECD [Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education](#), which inform international qualification recognition practice.

In the spirit of the UNESCO [Global Recognition Convention](#), TNE QB serves the purpose of providing that independent and reliable foundation upon which international trust can be built and from which recognition is possible, contributing to support the global portability of TNE qualifications of demonstrated quality and standards, and the growth of quality and relevant TNE provision.

TNE QB also helps TNE awarding institutions and operations to stand out in an increasingly competitive and complex international landscape through an independent and trusted demonstration of the quality and standards of their TNE provision.

¹ UK ENIC is the UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills. Formerly UK NARIC, following the UK's departure from the European Union, the NARIC national agency function is now known as UK ENIC.

Specifically, TNE QB contributes to improve international understanding of and trust in TNE qualifications, by offering a rigorous and independent demonstration that reviewed TNE operations have the capacity to offer TNE provision that:

- is of comparable standards to those of similar provision offered by the TNE awarding body at its home country;
- provides a learning experience that enables students to achieve the expected learning outcomes;
- is responsive to the education, training and skills needs of the location of delivery.

TNE QB is supported by an independent Advisory Board comprising international experts in the management, regulation, quality assurance and recognition of TNE. The Advisory Board provides strategic input into the development and review of the TNE QB process, as well as offering an additional layer of independent peer scrutiny to the decision to confer the TNE QB Quality Mark. All review reports are checked by the Advisory Board to ensure their findings and recommendation to confer the TNE QB Quality Mark is based on sound evidence and is aligned with the TNE QB international standards.

TNE QB is also supported by continuous engagement with international governments, regulators, qualifications recognition bodies and other sector bodies, aimed at contributing to the development of a shared understanding about the quality assurance and recognition of TNE qualifications, and at offering a platform capable of catalysing cross-border cooperation across the quality assurance and qualification recognition communities.

Context of this review

The TNE QB review of the partnership between the University of Greenwich (UoG) in the United Kingdom and October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (MSA) in Egypt was carried out between Autumn 2020 and Summer 2021 upon request of the UoG.

The review was carried out by an independent team of international experts (the review Panel) appointed by Ecctis, and approved by UoG and MSA after due consideration of any conflict of interest.

The review Panel consisted of:

- Dr. Stephen Doughty: Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (International Partnerships), De Montfort University and Director & Higher Education Consultant, Eseldi Ltd.
- Prof. Somaya Hosny: Former Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Suez Canal University, and Board Member of the National Authority of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE).
- Matthew Kitching: Deputy Chief Executive Officer at Bucks Students' Union and PhD Student at Lancaster University.

The review was supported in the role of Review Manager by Dr. Fabrizio Trifiró, Head of Quality Benchmark Services at Ecctis, and the TNE QB scheme manager.

Following a detailed analysis of the Self Evaluation Document and accompanying evidence submitted by the UoG, the review Panel met with a range of key stakeholders at the UoG and MSA, including senior management, academic and administrative staff, and students.

The review visit meetings took place remotely via videoconference on 28 July 2021, and served the purpose of pursuing lines of inquiry identified during the desk-based analysis and triangulating evidence in support of the assessment of the partnership's alignment with the TNE QB international standards.

After the review visit, the review Panel drafted a first version of the report, which was shared with UoG and MSA for a factual accuracy check, before being submitted to the TNE QB Advisory Board for a final recommendation on the award of the TNE QB Quality Mark.

The report and the award of the TNE QB Quality Mark to the UoG's partnership with MSA was signed off by TNE QB Advisory Board on 18 October 2021.

Ecctis and the review Panel would like to thank UoG and MSA and all the participants in the meetings for their constructive engagement with the review process, and for sharing clarificatory information promptly when requested.

Ecctis and the review Panel would also like to thank the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) for their support throughout the review process, including in the capacity of observers. Ecctis and NAQAAE have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to inform cooperation in the context of this review and other reviews of TNE in Egypt.

TNE Quality Benchmarking

Quality Mark recommendation

Award	x
Award with conditions	
Do not award	

The Panel recommend that the TNE Quality Benchmark be awarded for the University of Greenwich's partnership with October University for Modern Sciences and Arts.

The Panel identified the following **Recommendations**:

- UoG ensure MSA student handbooks comply with the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) and that all students are provided with clear and comprehensive information about the formal MSA complaints policy, including timeframes for handling complaints, the appeals process and how this interconnects with the UoG complaints policy (para. 58).
- UoG strengthen monitoring arrangements to ensure that information provided to students is accessible, comprehensive and in line with UoG's expectations (para. 60).

The Panel identified the following **Suggestions for Improvement**:

- Consider the possible benefits of a consistent approach towards student representative training (para. 38).
- Consider formalising a general policy for industrial placements to be embedded across the partnership (para. 49).
- Explicitly include the management of complaints in the Memorandum of Agreement to ensure that all stakeholders are clear about their responsibilities (para. 58).
- Ensure, through approval and monitoring processes, that student handbooks provide consistent information about support for students with disabilities (para. 59).
- Periodically revisit the "trusted partner" mechanism for checking advertising and recruitment materials to ensure that it remains appropriate for UoG's needs (para. 61).

The Panel identified the following potential areas of **Good Practice**:

- The depth and strength of the partnership, as exemplified in the establishment of a UoG Representative post within MSA (para. 3).
- The approach to supporting cross-border research collaboration and multi-directional mobility of students and staff (para. 4).
- The strategy and implementation of providing MSA teaching staff with the opportunity to complete a UoG PGCert in Higher Education (para. 21).
- The role, function and effectiveness of teaching assistants (para. 29).
- The response of UoG and MSA to the COVID-19 pandemic (para. 32).

- The commitment of MSA to engage students with industry throughout their studies and the provision of good examples of industrial placements within different programmes (para. 49.)

Overview of the TNE operation

1. The UoG and MSA have a significant and long-lasting partnership that began in 2002 and has grown and developed since that time. Currently the partnership encompasses 5 Faculties, over 7600 students and is UoG's largest single overseas TNE partnership with plans to expand further.
2. Students graduate with a dual award, namely a UK UoG degree alongside an Egyptian degree from MSA which is accredited by the Supreme Council for Universities in Egypt. The model of provision for the UK degree is one of programme validation whereby UoG validates the MSA programme. Students who spoke to the Panel commented that this opportunity to obtain two degrees with exposure to UK higher education was a strong motivation for undertaking their programme of study.
3. UoG is to be commended on the depth and strength of the partnership, as exemplified in the establishment of a UoG Representative post within MSA. This was considered by the Panel to be **good practice**. It was evident to the Panel that the presence of the current UoG Representative was a significant contributing factor to ensuring quality and standards of both academic provision and student experience. In addition, this role provided a notable benefit to UoG during the COVID-19 pandemic by having a full-time representative within MSA at a time when UoG (and many other international institutions) were prevented from visiting TNE partner institutions. The Panel considered this to be a significant strength of the partnership between UoG and MSA and heard positively from all stakeholders who they spoke to about the partnership approach to managing issues brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (see Indicator 9).
4. The Panel heard staff at both MSA and UoG state emphatically that the depth and strength of the partnership resulted in the relationship being truly bi-directional. Examples were provided of multi-directional mobility of students and staff, as well as collaborative research projects. The Panel commends UoG and MSA on this approach to supporting cross-border research collaboration which it considers as **good practice**. Given MSA's significant network of industrial links within Egypt, UoG is encouraged to continue to explore the potential for further research and industrial collaboration within the country.
5. The Panel noted MSA's approach to delivering quality education and understood that this also stemmed from the strength of the UoG partnership, in particular the strategic intent and resourcing to embed the PGCert training within MSA staff. The Panel commends the commitment to providing wider exposure and potential country-wide impact through enabling this provision to be offered more widely to higher education institutions and academic staff within Egypt (see Indicator 7).

Management of the TNE operation

Awarding institutions should have robust processes in place for the establishment and management of TNE operations, sufficient to provide reassurance that its TNE provision meets expected standards and quality.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

6. UoG fully meets the Indicators in relation to the establishment and management of TNE operations, including ensuring that TNE partnerships align with the institutional strategy and appropriately takes into account the rationale and risks in establishing a partnership. There was evidence of a robust process for monitoring the MSA partnership and for identifying and responding to issues should they occur, which are then managed through adequate governance arrangements at UoG.

Indicator 1: The reviewed TNE operation is consistent with clearly outlined institutional strategies and objectives.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

7. The TNE partnership between UoG and MSA aligns with UoG's overall institutional strategy and its International Partnerships Strategy. The Panel recognised that around 40% of UoG students are engaged in TNE and that Egypt (with MSA in particular) is a significant partner for UoG's TNE activity. As such it is clear that the MSA partnership contributes positively towards achieving the goals of UoG's International Partnerships Strategy (e.g. in enhancing student enrolment and mobility). The Panel noted that the new UoG TNE strategy places a focus on student mobility and that UoG were working positively with MSA to ensure that mobility occurred in both directions.
8. The Panel heard that UoG's Teaching & Learning Strategy is currently under review, the previous strategy being dated from 2012-17. Senior management at UoG assured the Panel that staff at MSA were kept informed of the strategic direction and expectation of UoG teaching and learning initiatives and this was confirmed by MSA and UoG staff who the Panel spoke to.

Indicator 2: Governance arrangements are in place to ensure that any form of TNE is ultimately overseen by the higher decisional authority of the awarding institution, clearly setting out the locus of responsibility and accountability at different levels of the awarding institution.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	

<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

9. UoG appears to have effective governance arrangements. The Partnership Working Group effectively reports through to the Academic Council via both the Programme Approval Committee and the Partnership Strategy Group. Faculties effectively oversee TNE activities through the Faculty Directors of Partnerships and Internationalisation and the Faculty Directors of Learning and Teaching. The UoG Link Tutors manage the detailed oversight of the partnerships at the programme level and the Panel noted the pivotal role that they play in the management of the partnership. The Panel recognised that UoG's Pro Vice-Chancellor International provided strategic leadership and had effective oversight of the UoG-MSA partnership.

Indicator 3: Written and legally binding agreements or contracts set out the rights and obligations of all partners involved in a TNE operation, making clear their respective roles in the different aspects of the TNE operation.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

10. UoG has a valid and up-to-date Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with MSA. The MoA documentation provides detailed roles and responsibilities for each partner in delivering the TNE programmes. In addition, UoG and MSA have in place a Financial Memorandum which details the financial arrangements in place to run alongside the MoA. However, UoG should ensure that there is clarity around responsibilities in certain areas of operationalisation of the MoA (see Indicator 18).

Indicator 4: Appropriate processes for initial and periodic due-diligence and risk assessment for TNE operations are in place, including choice and management of partners, and covering all relevant aspects, such as academic, legal, and financial.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

11. The Panel were provided with documentation outlining the process that UoG undertakes in relation to due diligence with new partners, although it was noted that this process was put in place after the UoG-MSA partnership was established. Nonetheless the Panel were comfortable that a robust mechanism was in place both before and after the partnership was established and that appropriate consideration was provided towards the rationale for establishing the partnership. Due diligence, risk, legal and financial matters are considered within this process. It was noted that appropriate committees are consulted during the process (e.g. Partnerships Working Group and Programme Approval Committee) before final sign-off is provided by the Academic Council at UoG. Academic programmes are subsequently approved for delivery through an appropriate

mechanism which includes a programme approval event.

12. UoG has a mechanism for periodic review of the partnership and programmes operating via the partnership. The processes are now aligned and are carried out in five-yearly intervals, taking the form of a re-approval process. The Panel were content that this process (Critical Appraisal and Partnership Review Report) would adequately monitor both the institutional-level aspects (viability, etc) and the programme-level elements (including input from external examiners and other stakeholders).
13. In addition, UoG requires its partners to complete an Annual Institutional Report (AIR) which permit issues to be raised and managed in a timely fashion. The Panel understood that no significant issues had been raised through these reports.

Standards of the programme of study

Awarding institutions should ensure that their TNE provision is of comparable standards to those of the same or comparable provision delivered in their home country (or across its delivery model for distance learning).

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

14. UoG fully meets the Indicators in relation to the standards of the programme of study at its TNE partner. Academic programmes are designed, delivered, monitored and reviewed through processes equivalent to UK-delivered programmes. Student outcomes are effectively monitored and UoG provides exceptional support to MSA staff to deliver the programmes at an equivalent standard as expected in the UK.

Indicator 5: The admission of students for a TNE programme of study, the teaching and learning activities, and the assessment requirements should be equivalent to those of the same or comparable programmes delivered by the awarding institution at the home campus (or across its delivery model for online learning).

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

15. The UoG and MSA partnership is based on a validation model whereby MSA provide much of the in-country contact whilst UoG monitors and manages the academic performance and quality assurance of the teaching and learning. There was evidence provided that UoG monitors many aspects of the provision to ensure that UoG academic programmes delivered at MSA are validated against the equivalent or comparable standards as would be expected at UoG UK. Information relating to admission requirements of programmes recruiting at MSA is monitored by UoG, and includes

appropriate conversions to Egyptian qualifications and English Language proficiency.

16. UoG academic programmes delivered at MSA are validated against UK standards with external input in to programme design and development (see Indicator 6). Quality and standards of teaching and learning are maintained through regular contact with Link Tutors and visits by External Examiners. The Panel heard how these visits are used to ensure the quality of assessments are equivalent to those at UoG in the UK. The Panel were told that academic staff at MSA had access to the External Examiner reports and students indicated to the Panel that they were aware of the quality assurance systems underpinning their studies. In addition, the training of MSA staff through the PGCert assists in ensuring equivalency of teaching standards and approaches.

Indicator 6: TNE modules and programmes are developed, approved, monitored, and reviewed through processes that are as robust as those for modules and programmes provided by the awarding institution at the home campus (or across its delivery model for online learning).

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

17. UoG has an appropriate mechanism for developing and approving programmes and modules for TNE delivery with MSA. These processes, such as programme validation events, include an appropriate use of externality which includes the appointment of an external member (usually an External Examiner) who acts independently.
18. UoG has appropriate processes in place for programme monitoring and review, both formal and informal. The presence of the on-site UoG Representative contributes positively to this, as does the effective role of the external examiner system. Formal programme monitoring and review processes mirror those present at UoG for UoG-only programmes/modules. The Panel considered these monitoring and review processes to be appropriate to provide oversight of the TNE provision.
19. The Link Tutors engage effectively with staff and students during visits to ensure that any outstanding issues are dealt with. They would normally visit twice per year and are the principle contact between MSA and UoG. The Panel heard that the Link Tutor meets with MSA staff delivering the programme and discusses any development points, areas of good performance, and any External Examiner comments.

Indicator 7: Teaching staff must be competent, suitably qualified and experienced, and adequately supported to deliver the programme to equivalent standards to those applied to comparable programmes delivered by the awarding institution at the home campus (or across its delivery model for distance learning).

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

20. UoG has a process to check and confirm MSA teaching staff on their programmes prior to validation of the programme. Teaching staff whom the Panel consulted confirmed that the relevant academic standards were checked at this point. Any further MSA appointments to the teaching staff are confirmed by the relevant UoG school.
21. A particular **good practice** of the UoG-MSA partnership and a strong commendation is the strategy and implementation of providing MSA teaching staff (around 70 so far) with the opportunity to complete a UoG PGCert in Higher Education. The Panel found that this approach had the potential to significantly enhance the student learning experience and understood that this formalised approach to Faculty development was somewhat unique in Egypt. The Panel noted the positive experiences of staff who had undertaken the programme and were also impressed that many (around half) had gone on to obtain fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the UK. Whilst the Panel understood that there had been a hiatus in 2019/20, they were particularly impressed that UoG/MSA were franchising the programme out further and making it more broadly available in Egypt and the MENA region utilising MSA as a regional hub. This approach to ensuring quality through the training of academic staff in the region is a particular strength of the UoG and the MSA partnership (see also Indicator 10).
22. The Panel noted that MSA has a clear intention to develop a high level of English competency amongst its staff and this appeared to support the ensuring of quality and standards of the UoG award and in delivering the student experience.
23. In addition, MSA staff spoke positively to the Panel of the potential to exchange ideas and to develop themselves through the UoG Teaching and Learning Conference. UoG is encouraged to ensure that this route of staff development continues to be supported and developed, along with the PGCert offering and in line with the UoG International Partnerships Strategy of working with UoG's partners in "supporting academic staff with enhanced development."

Indicator 8: The performance and outcomes of students on TNE provision is regularly monitored and benchmarked with the performance and outcomes of students of the same or comparable programmes delivered by the awarding institution at the home campus (or across its delivery model for distance learning).

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

24. The Panel observed documentation that indicated that External Examiners are asked to explicitly comment on comparability between cohorts based in MSA and UoG (where possible). Assessment outcomes are reviewed prior to Progression and Award Boards (PABs) taking place.
25. Staff at MSA spoke about how they have access to External Examiner feedback and hence are aware should any differences arise, although the feedback to the Panel was that there was a robust and sound assessment moderation and review procedure in place and hence there had not been any significant issues raised.
26. Link Tutors, the UoG Representative and the International Partnership Manager also monitor student progress and performance. In addition, the Panel heard that UoG was actively reviewing ways in which to examine employability and employment rates using external partners which could include comparisons of employment outcomes between locations. The Panel concluded that this Indicator was hence appropriately met.

Quality of the student experience

Awarding institutions should ensure that students studying on their TNE provision receive sufficient support to enable them to achieve the expected standards.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

27. The Panel determined that MSA fully meets all the Indicators under this Standard. The Panel found UoG to have appropriate systems in place to ensure students are provided with suitable learning resources and student support. Effective training is in place for staff involved in the delivery and management of the partnership. A wide range of student feedback mechanisms are also in place across the partnership and whilst issues were identified in relation to information about some aspects of this standard such as disability support, complaints and appeals (see Indicator 18) the Panel found no evidence of these actively inhibiting the quality of disability support or students' ability to submit complaints and appeals. Students feel an equal sense of belonging with both universities. The Panel also concluded that suitable arrangements are in place to protect the student experience in the event of provider closure.

<i>Indicator 9: Learning resources and support services in place at the delivery location, or made available by the awarding institution remotely, should give all students the opportunity to achieve the expected learning outcomes.</i>
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<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

28. The UoG programme validation process serves as the initial mechanism by which the appropriateness of learning resources and support services is secured. This includes a site visit which inspects laboratory spaces, IT equipment and library materials. As noted elsewhere in the report, changes have been made to the approval process since the formation of the partnership, including to documentary requirements surrounding the rationale for new partnerships and due diligence. The Panel confirmed that these processes take account of learning resources and support services. The UoG Partnership Review and Critical Appraisal processes also ensure periodic monitoring of the MSA arrangements under this Indicator and identify areas requiring action or improvement.
29. Comprehensive student support arrangements are in place throughout MSA. Students are all assigned an Academic Adviser and also benefit from support provided by teaching assistants. In particular, students recognised the pivotal role of teaching assistants who provide an effective conduit between professors and students in relaying student feedback and request and reinforcing communication from UoG and MSA. Teaching assistants also play a significant role in the delivery of practical and revision sessions. The Panel therefore regards the role, function and effectiveness of teaching assistants as **good practice**.
30. Students informed the Panel that staff are accessible and varied communication mechanisms are in place, including one-to-one consultations and messaging via telecommunications. Students were also aware that they could contact the UoG Representative, who is embedded on campus, and were aware of their Link Tutors. In addition to academic and pastoral support provided by academic advisers and teaching assistants, students are familiar with a wide range of additional support services including careers consultations and disability support. While the Self-Evaluation Document (SED) stated that MSA students could access the UoG Academic Skills Hub, in practice none of the students the Panel met were aware of the possibility.
31. MSA have also made significant investment in their IT infrastructure and library resources, including improvements to bandwidth and internet coverage across campus, the implementation of a new teaching platform that enables hybrid delivery and a new online examination platform, which had already been implemented prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students have access to the UoG and MSA libraries and reported high levels of satisfaction with both. They are also able to access other libraries including the Egyptian Knowledge Bank.
32. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a transition to online teaching and learning, staff and students reported that online learning resources were accessible and appropriate during this period. Students were provided with Wi-Fi dongles and, where necessary, laptops. Students reported ease of access to online library resources, including those available through UoG. Students also demonstrated satisfaction with the accessibility of staff during the pandemic and with the support they provided, which they considered had enabled the seamless provision of teaching and learning. The response of UoG and MSA to the COVID-19 pandemic is therefore regarded as **good practice**.

Indicator 10: Appropriate training, briefing and support are provided to those involved in managing, delivering, and assessing TNE provision to ensure they are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

33. Together, UoG and MSA have a wide range of training, briefing and support arrangements in place to ensure that those involved in managing, delivering, and assessing the provision are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. These include UoG delivering an online Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCert) and the opportunity for staff to join the HEA in the UK. Currently, 70 MSA academics have enrolled on and/or completed the qualification. UoG informed the Panel that they are working with MSA with the objective to establish the latter as a recognised regional hub for the delivery of the PGCert. The Panel considered this a positive commitment to improving quality within the region and has the potential to be a future feature of good practice when established.
34. The UoG Representative also plays a critical role in delivering and signposting training. Whereas previously Link Tutors and other UoG staff would travel to Egypt to deliver training, the UoG Representative has taken a more prominent role in its delivery, partly accelerated by the pandemic and the ensuing difficulties with international travel (see Introduction). Nevertheless, UoG staff continue to deliver training for MSA colleagues online and academic staff reported receiving training to assist with the effective implementation of teaching, learning and assessment strategies.
35. MSA have their own training function and provide a wide range of continuing professional development through their Corporate Business Services Division. MSA staff can also access a wide range of CPD opportunities directly from UoG, including online academic conferences and sessions on topics such as adjusting to blended learning environments and mentoring. In addition to training provided by UoG and MSA, the latter also access training from suitable external organisations such as NAQAAE.

Indicator 11: Feedback is regularly sought from TNE students on all aspects of their study experience, and demonstrably responded to and taken into account; students are also given clear opportunities to raise complaints and appeals.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

36. A range of effective student feedback measures are in place across the partnership, which enable students to inform the universities about their study experience. These

include surveys, programme review boards, as well as student representation at faculty level.

37. Board of Study meetings are held termly at MSA, providing student representatives with the opportunity to meet with the Dean, teaching team and MSA services representatives to voice their concerns and opinions. These meetings are formally recorded and attended by the UoG Representative, enabling them to escalate concerns to UoG if necessary.
38. Every programme elects a student representative; however, the Panel found that training, induction and support arrangements for representatives varies between programmes. Some programmes have obligatory training as determined by the MSA Supreme Council or UoG; whereas, all representatives receive orientation for their role at programme level, the precise contents of which may also vary. Given students were uncertain about UoG and MSA arrangements for the preparation of student representatives, the Panel **suggests** that the institutions review the possible benefits of a consistent approach towards student representative training.
39. UoG Link Tutors, along with External Examiners, meet students during biannual visits (held online during the pandemic). Based on that interaction, Programme Assessment Boards provide a further opportunity for external examiners to feedback any student concerns around any particular programme, module or practice.
40. UoG operates an annual institutional survey, the Greenwich Student Survey (GSS), for all students ineligible for the UK National Student Survey. This survey is open to students at MSA and is viewed as strategically important given that students are receiving a dual degree, although response rates are relatively low. MSA are working to overcome the low level of participation by sending survey links to students through their email system, and by posting it on their online learning platforms. Students also complete anonymous module assessment questionnaires, responses from which are discussed in the Faculty Council and typically included in module monitoring reports. MSA staff reported to the Panel that they did not believe thematic concerns exist among the student body but that periodic problems arise with IT and library provision that are resolved expeditiously, a view confirmed by students. Students provided further examples of action taken in response to their feedback, such as improved communication about online examinations following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
41. Notwithstanding concerns surrounding the provision of accurate and comprehensive information, which are discussed in more detail under Indicator 18, where students decide to submit a formal complaint or appeal to the institution, both staff and students recounted a similar process to the Panel; whereby, initially they take the issue up with their programme leader or student representative, if no suitable resolution is found at this point they would progress the issue to the UoG Representative or Dean. Beyond this, complaints would then be escalated to the UoG Link Tutor. The Panel was confident that MSA and UoG are open to student complaints and would endeavour to handle them in a fair and timely manner. In relation to academic appeals, there is a grade appeal link on students' university online accounts and students were aware that they have a week

from receiving the grade to appeal. Students also provided the team with examples of instances where they had successfully challenged assessment grades.

Indicator 12: Awarding institutions have a duty of care towards their TNE students, and ensure that those students who wish to complete a programme can do so in the event of closure or teach out.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

42. UoG partner approval processes incorporate due diligence and scrutiny of partners' financial position. These processes, together with ongoing monitoring arrangements help UoG to minimise the risk of partner institutions having to close (see Indicator 4). Where partner institutions are required to close, the Memorandum of Agreement and Financial Memorandum articulate termination and teach-out procedures.
43. UoG has a Student Protection Plan in place which it submits to the Office for Students in the UK. The Plan details risks to students in the event of the closure of a partner institution as moderate. UoG state that in most instances they will be teaching an equivalent programme which students can be transferred onto, including through the delivery of a distance learning pathway if necessary.
44. UoG have also identified that were MSA to become subject to closure the current student body is too large to enable a UK based teach-out. Instead UoG would support students to transfer to similar courses at other Egyptian institutions. These arrangements are detailed in the partnership Risk Assessment and Contingency Plan and were deemed as being appropriate by the Panel.

Alignment with local requirements

Awarding institutions should ensure that their TNE provision takes account of the expectations of the relevant authorities in the location of delivery.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

45. UoG, through its validation arrangement with MSA, complies with the local requirements set by Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) in Egypt, regarding local qualifications and provision of its TNE. In developing its programmes, MSA takes due account of the national, social and economic needs of Egypt. To ensure the local relevance of its programmes, MSA involves industry experts in programme design and has developed different agreements with local industries to secure internships or practical projects. TNE provision takes into consideration the national regulations regarding credit transfer.

Indicator 13: Local requirements for the delivery of TNE provision are well understood and complied with.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

46. UoG, through its validation arrangement with MSA complies with the requirements of the MoHESR in Egypt. This was discussed in the meeting between the Panel and the senior management who explained that they follow the National Academic Reference Standards (NARS) prepared by a NAQAAE committee that has wide representation, including the Supreme Council of Universities. Also, it is noteworthy that during this process, a wide range of other stakeholders were involved, and this fulfilled an important requirement to be endorsed by NAQAAE. Then the proper implementation is ensured by the external reviewers of the programmes and during NAQAAE accreditation visits.
47. The Panel was informed that, to ensure compliance with the local requirements, UoG is keen MSA submits for local accreditation and as stated by senior management, four faculties already obtained their accreditation from NAQAAE. The Panel heard that UoG and MSA seek to ensure that they comply equally with local regulatory, MSA and UoG requirements, and that this is monitored during programme validation. The Panel were informed that to-date there have been no issues in complying with local regulations during the UoG programme validation process. From examining the specifications of different programmes and from the meeting with senior management and teaching staff, the Panel concluded that there is a compliance with the local regulations.

Indicator 14: The education and industry needs of the receiving location are duly considered and inform the strategic development of TNE provision.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

48. As stated in the SED, before validating the MSA programmes by UoG, the MSA programmes are developed in consultation with the MoHESR in Egypt and according to the marketability to ensure their relevance to the national, social and economic needs of the country as well as the employability of graduates. This was confirmed in the meetings with senior management and teaching staff who indicated that employability is a key component in their programmes' development.
49. The Biotechnology programme was mentioned in the SED as an example of offering industrial placements to the students. Furthermore, practical education is directed to the needs of industry as evidenced by examining the ILOs of the Engineering, Architecture, and Pharmacy courses. In the meeting with the students, they mentioned to the Panel several examples of practical work which prepared them for industrial placement. The Panel observed good examples of industrial placements for different programmes. This,

in addition to the commitment of MSA to engage students with industry throughout their studies, led the Panel to regard this as a **good practice**. However, the Panel **suggests** that MSA and UoG consider formalising a general policy for industrial placements to be embedded across the partnership to ensure equal opportunities across programmes and departments, whilst recognising the specific differences of each disciplinary area.

Indicator 15: The local context is taken into consideration when delivering TNE provision to ensure that, where applicable, programmes of study are localised to maximise their relevance for students and the local industries.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

50. To ensure that the relevant and most localised needs of Egypt are met, MSA developed its programmes in accordance with the MoHESR Strategy relevant to the Egyptian Government Strategy. In the meetings with senior management and teaching staff, they indicated several pillars of the Higher Education Strategy which guided the development of their programmes such as education, research, community services, market needs and digitalisation. An example of responding to the local context was the reduction of the places allowed for the Pharmacy programme and increasing those for Computer Sciences as requested by the MoHESR. Furthermore, the projects produced by MSA students are also designed to be directed to the localised needs.
51. MSA has many relationships with local industries and services in the fields of its programmes. These relationships are reflected not only in opportunities for internship and work-based learning, but also in the design of programmes. In the meetings with senior management, they stated that MSA programmes engage with industry through agreements, field studies and conducting meetings with industry representatives. They added that the representatives from industry also attend formal faculty meetings and assist in programme development and developing action plans. Senior management stated that MSA works with the industry step by step, and they share the results of their work with UoG.
52. The Panel heard from management and teaching staff how for both UoG and MSA, employability is a key driving factor when developing and reviewing programmes. This was recognised by students who appreciated the exposure to industry and the employment-oriented nature of their programmes of study.

Indicator 16: Local qualifications frameworks, where these exist, are taken into account when delivering TNE provision, informing articulation and credits transfer arrangements with local qualifications.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

53. The Egyptian qualification framework is not yet formally approved. However, MSA legally conforms to the national regulations of the MoHESR regarding local qualifications and credit transfer.

Information to students and the public

Standard 5: Awarding bodies provide complete descriptions of programmes of study and qualifications to prospective students and relevant stakeholders.

<i>Fully Met</i>	
<i>Substantially Met</i>	x
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

54. UoG effectively manages information provided to prospective students and applicants to its TNE programmes prior to admissions. UoG should however strengthen approval and monitoring arrangements to ensure that information provided to students during the programme is accessible, comprehensive and in line with UoG expectations. This is particularly in relation to information provided to students within handbooks around support services, appeals and complaints.

Indicator 17: Information about the programmes of study and qualifications awarded are made clear to prospective students at recruitment stage, including in respect to the legal status of qualifications awarded and their local and international recognition for further studies and employment.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

55. Students whom the Panel spoke to were clear in expressing their reasons for choosing their respective programmes of study and stated that they felt the information provided to them before and during recruitment was accurate and appropriate. UoG staff indicated that UoG had a formal mechanism for checking MSA recruitment materials and this took the form of an annual audit. This was understood by the Panel to be primarily to check adherence to brand guidelines, etc. It was noted that because MSA is a “trusted partner” the audit/check is applied retrospectively.

Indicator 18: Information about available programmes of study, the learning experience, student support and services, and complaints and appeals, is made clear and accessible to students, ensuring that student expectations are transparently managed.

<i>Fully Met</i>	
<i>Substantially Met</i>	x
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

56. MSA provide a wide range of information about study programmes, the learning experience and student support and services. This includes programme specifications, MSA and UoG regulations and publicity material, which are made available through the MSA website and in hard copy.
57. MSA provide students with programme handbooks, and although students themselves were satisfied with their handbooks, the Panel found some deficiencies with their contents, as well as with UoG's implementation of their own monitoring processes. UoG staff informed the Panel that MSA are responsible for producing student handbooks but that these are shared with UoG for their feedback and to ensure they are in line with expectations, as well as being scrutinised during validation. The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) specifies that UoG are to provide a student handbook template; however, the Panel found significant variation in the format and contents of student handbooks.
58. Appendix G of the Critical Appraisal Report indicates that a handbook template is being produced for partners but the Panel were not clear that it has been completed and is in use. In addition, the MoA states that MSA are responsible for providing information on student complaints and academic appeals and that this should be included in the customised student handbook. However, the Panel found that limited information about complaints and appeals is contained in handbooks. A search of the MSA website also failed to find any reference to the MSA complaints policy. Whilst the Panel found that MSA are open to receiving student complaints, as detailed in Indicator 11, the Panel nevertheless **recommends** that UoG ensure MSA student handbooks comply with the MoA and that all students are provided with clear and comprehensive information about the formal MSA complaints policy, including timeframes for handing complaints, the appeals process and how this interconnects with the UoG complaints policy. Finally, the table of responsibilities in the MoA makes no reference to the management of complaints and hence the Panel **suggests** that the partnership may benefit by explicitly including this to ensure all stakeholders are clear about their responsibilities.
59. MSA identify students with disabilities during the application process and directs them to Faculty staff for further information prior to admitting them to the programme. MSA informed the Panel that assessment adjustments are detailed in the institution's rules and regulations. With respect to student-facing information, while one handbook viewed by the Panel detailed support arrangements available for students with disabilities the other handbook in the sample did not. The Panel **suggests** that through their approval and monitoring processes UoG ensures that student handbooks provide consistent information about support for students with disabilities.
60. Finally, the Panel **recommends** that, owing to the issues identified with student handbooks, UoG strengthen monitoring arrangements to ensure that information provided to students is accessible, comprehensive and in line with UoG expectations.

Indicator 19: Awarding institutions maintain effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to the TNE programmes of study leading to their awards.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

61. As outlined in Indicator 17, UoG have a mechanism for checking advertising and recruitment materials once per year, after publication of the materials, due to MSA being a “trusted partner”. The Panel found this approach adequate but **suggests** that UoG might want to periodically revisit this approach to ensure that it remains appropriate for their needs.

Indicator 20: Awarding institutions retain the ultimate authority and responsibility for awarding certificates and records of study, and provide clear and up to date information about the programme of study undertaken by TNE students upon graduation, through study transcripts or equivalent documents.

<i>Fully Met</i>	x
<i>Substantially Met</i>	
<i>Partially Met</i>	
<i>Not Met</i>	

62. UoG’s TNE programmes on offer at MSA are offered through a validation model with students receiving both a UoG degree award and a MSA award. The UoG award remains under the full authority of UoG.
63. Meetings occur regularly between UoG and MSA to reconcile student admissions and student record data. The PAB at UoG is the committee that ratifies student outcomes and decrees whether a UoG certificate is issued. Both institutions release a degree certificate, but MSA produces the full transcript.

