



香港學術及職業資歷評審局
Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of
Academic & Vocational Qualifications

ACCREDITATION REPORT

**TECHNOLOGICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF HONG KONG,
VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL**

**PROGRAMME AREA ACCREDITATION IN
BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

MAY 2025

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HKCAAVQ Panel Membership

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.1 Based on the Service Agreement (No.: AA1039), the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), in the capacity of the Accreditation Authority as provided for under the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications Ordinance (AAVQO) (Cap. 592), was commissioned by Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi), Vocational Training Council (VTC) to conduct a Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) exercise with the following Terms of Reference:

- (a) To conduct an accreditation test as provided for in the AAVQO to determine whether THEi (“the Operator”) can be granted the Programme Area Accreditation status for the Programme Area (with specifications under paragraph 1.2) for a specified validity period; and
- (b) To issue to the Operator an accreditation report setting out the results of the determination in relation to (a) by HKCAAVQ.

1.2 Specifications of the Programme Area undergoing PAA

| Area of Study and Training | Sub-area | Programme Area | QF Level |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Architecture and Town Planning | Architecture, Construction and Town Planning | Built Environment | 5 |

2. HKCAAVQ’S DETERMINATION

2.1 HKCAAVQ has determined that Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi / the Operator / the Institute), VTC can be granted the PAA status for the programme area (PA) of Built Environment (BE) at QF Level 5 under the Area of Study and Training “Architecture and Town Planning” with a validity period of 5 years.

2.2 Having been granted the PAA status, the Operator is considered as meeting the HKCAAVQ accreditation standards of Programme Area Domains of the PAA. The Operator has robust internal processes to ensure the development and operation of learning programmes

under the approved programme areas are aligned and managed in accordance with its institutional development plan, and that its learning programmes meet the stated objectives and QF standards.

2.3 Validity Period

2.3.1 The validity period will commence on the date specified below. The Operator may apply to HKCAAVQ to vary the commencement date of the validity period. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

2.4 The determinations on the PAA status are specified as follows:

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of Operator 營辦者名稱 | Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong, Vocational Training Council 職業訓練局 - 香港高等教育科技學院 |
| Address of Operator 營辦者地址 | (1) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (Chai Wan Campus) 133 Shing Tai Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong (2) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (Tsing Yi Campus) 20A Tsing Yi Road, Tsing Yi Island, New Territories, Hong Kong |
| Name of Award Granting Body 資歷頒授者名稱 | Vocational Training Council 職業訓練局 |
| Area of Study and Training 學習及培訓範疇 | Architecture and Town Planning |
| Sub-area 子範疇 | Architecture, Construction and Town Planning |
| Programme Area and Scope of Programme Area 學科範圍 | <u>Built Environment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study and training in the principles and practices of the planning, design, construction, and management of the Built Environment, which comprises the following scopes: landscape architecture, urban design, building design, built environment |

| | |
|--|---|
| | technology, construction project management, real estate development and asset management, quantity surveying, and building surveying. |
| QF Level 資歷架構級別 | Level 5 |
| Start Date of Validity Period 有效期的開始日期 | 1 September 2025 |
| End Date of Validity Period 有效期的終止日期 | 31 August 2030 |
| Address of Teaching / Training Venue(s) 授課地址 | (1) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (Chai Wan Campus) 133 Shing Tai Road, Chai Wan, Hong Kong (2) Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (Tsing Yi Campus) 20A Tsing Yi Road, Tsing Yi Island, New Territories, Hong Kong |

2.5 Recommendations

HKCAAVQ offers the following recommendation for the continuous improvement of the Operator and the programme area.

- 2.5.1 The Operator should incorporate and communicate performance indicators related to the continuous development of learning and teaching skills and after-class learning support for students to prospective part-time teaching staff during recruitment and appraisal processes to enhance their understanding of these expected responsibilities. (Paragraph 4.4.8)
- 2.6 HKCAAVQ will subsequently satisfy itself on whether the Operator remains competent to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator by reference to, amongst other things, the Operator's fulfilment of any conditions and compliance with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report. For the avoidance of doubt, maintenance of accreditation status is subject to the fulfilment of any condition and compliance with any restriction stipulated in this Accreditation Report. During the validity period, HKCAAVQ may

request the Operator to provide evidence, such as admission related information, to demonstrate that the Operator and the Programme Area continue to comply with the determinations and meet the relevant accreditation standards.

3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong (THEi / the Operator / the Institute) was established in 2011 as a member institution of the Vocational Training Council (VTC). THEi mainly operates local self-financed bachelor degree programmes and was granted Institutional Review status at QF Level 5 by HKCAAVQ in September 2012. The Institute is currently operating a total of 31 HKCAAVQ-accredited programmes, including one Master's degree programme, 22 Bachelor's degree programmes, six Professional Diploma programmes and two Professional Certificate programmes.
- 3.2 The Institute is seeking PAA status for the programme area (PA) of Built Environment (BE) at QF Level 5 based on the track record of its operation of four QF Level 5 programmes, namely, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Landscape Architecture (BALA), Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Surveying (BScSur), Professional Diploma in Landscape Architecture (PDLA), Professional Diploma in Building Information Modelling (PDBIM), and a QF Level 4 programme, namely, Professional Certificate in Turfgrass Science and Management (PCTSM).
- 3.3 The Institute commissioned HKCAAVQ to conduct this PAA exercise for the proposed PA of BE at QF Level 5 hosted by its two Departments, namely, Department of Design and Architecture (DDA) and Department of Construction, Environment and Engineering (DCEE). HKCAAVQ formed an expert Panel for this accreditation exercise (Panel Membership in the Appendix). A site visit took place on 26 – 28 February 2025. HKCAAVQ's *Manual for the Four-stage Quality Assurance Process under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (Version 1.2, November 2020)* was the guiding document for the Institute and the Panel in conducting this exercise.
- 3.4 The PAA accreditation test comprises two domain components: (i) the "Institutional Domain" and (ii) the "Programme Area Domain." Given that the Institute underwent a full-scale Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) exercise at QF Level 5 in October 2024—without any conditions or restrictions imposed—it has demonstrated its

competence in effective management and continuous improvement of institutional quality assurance. As a result, the Institute qualifies for a differentiated approach with customised accreditation for the PAA Institutional Domain, allowing this accreditation test to focus solely on the Programme Area Domain.

4. PANEL'S DELIBERATIONS

The following presents the Panel's deliberations on a range of issues pertinent to its major findings. For aspects of the accreditation standards where no observations are made they are considered to be appropriately addressed by the Operator.

Programme Area Domains

4.1 Programme Area Development and Management

The Operator must substantiate the proposed programme area by its track record of operation of HKQF-recognised learning programmes in relevant discipline or industry areas, in alignment with organisational objectives and planned resources.

- 4.1.1 The Panel noted that the Operator's strategic direction is to become a University of Applied Sciences and decided to pursue Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) for the Built Environment (BE) Programme Area, which spans a broad spectrum of studies, from large-scale master planning to small-scale implementation of building practices based on scientific principles. Responding to the Panel's comment on how the proposed programme area aligns with the context of future academic development of the Institute into a University of Applied Sciences, the Institute explained that this proposed programme area necessitates and demonstrates an integrated understanding of science and arts disciplines, encompassing ecology, behavioural psychology, building and environmental sciences, conservation, etc. The focus of the proposed programme area is developing practical solutions to real-world problems.
- 4.1.2 To substantiate the proposed PA of BE, the Operator provided evidence of the relevant track record of operating four programmes at QF Level 5: the three programmes BALA, BScSur and PDLA, which are currently hosted by DDA; and PDBIM which is currently hosted by DCEE. The Operator also presented the mappings of Programme Objectives (POs), Programme Learning Outcomes

(PLOs) and the respective Generic Level Descriptors for the programmes.

- 4.1.3 In addition to the above four programmes, the Operator proposed the development of five new programmes pitched at QF Level 5 in the next five years as shown in the table below, and continue the operation of one existing programme PCTSM at QF Level 4, all under the PA of BE.

| Programme Title | QF Level | Proposed AY for Launching |
|--|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Professional Diploma in Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA) Application in Surveying | 5 | AY2025/26 |
| Professional Diploma in Quantity Surveying | 5 | AY2026/27 |
| Professional Diploma in Advanced Technology in Community Design | 5 | AY2027/28 |
| Professional Diploma in Computational Urban Design | 5 | AY2028/29 |
| Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Smart Urban Technologies | 5 | AY2029/30 |

- 4.1.4 Responding to the Panel's concern on the prospective demand for the programmes in the proposed PA, the Operator acknowledged uncertainties in the construction industry due to the recent economic downturn. However, the Operator anticipated that the HKSAR Government remains committed to large-scale development projects, such as the Northern Metropolis as well as the industry is expected to pivot towards revitalisation, improvement, and enhancement of built-up areas. The Operator considered that this shift would sustain the demand for landscape architects and surveyors.
- 4.1.5 At the site visit meetings, both the internal and external stakeholders expressed optimism about a market demand rebound in three to five years, which introduces potential learning demands of the programmes under the proposed PA as this aligns with the anticipated graduation timelines of prospective students from the programmes.
- 4.1.6 The Operator provided the roles and responsibilities and qualification requirements of key management personnel of Operator, and the profiles of programme management such as the Department Heads

and Programme Leaders under the proposed PA for the Panel's review. The Panel considered that the Operator has established appropriate leadership arrangements with appropriate expertise and experience in place to provide directions, and to oversee the effective implementation and development of the proposed PA.

- 4.1.7 In response to the Panel's comments on the evidence of synergy of staff from two departments within the proposed PA, the Operator highlighted past examples of teaching and research synergies, such as the establishment and operation of the Centre for Sustainable Design and Environment, co-teaching topics of introductory landscape history, and collaborative design projects, such as the ongoing initiative with the Kai Tak Sports Park.
- 4.1.8 Additionally, the Operator is planning to establish a new THEi-Industry Applied Research Centre (TiARC) on Sustainable Development to be co-hosted by DDA and DCEE; as well as the New Energy and Smart Architecture Laboratory to be jointly hosted by DDA, DCEE and BENYUAN Design Research Centre of Shenzhen University.
- 4.1.9 During the site visit meetings, the Operator affirmed that the two departments will co-develop the proposed new programme Bachelor of Science in Smart Urban Technologies. This will involve co-teaching and co-supervision of final year projects.
- 4.1.10 Responding to the Panel's observation on the plan to develop programmes in Putonghua, the Operator acknowledged that programmes with Chinese (Putonghua) as medium of instruction (MOI) were being introduced in other disciplines. However, there is no immediate plan to develop programmes under the proposed PA with MOI in Chinese (Putonghua). The Operator confirmed that all current and planned programmes stated in the five-year programme development plan will be delivered in English.
- 4.1.11 Regarding the development of new programme(s) under the proposed PA, HKCAAVQ informed the Operator that while an Operator with PAA status may develop and operate learning programmes within the approved scope of the PA at the specified QF level or below within the validity period without undertaking HKCAAVQ's Learning Programme (Re-)Accreditation, such programme(s) and the medium of instruction(s) should have been specified in the programme development plan with details when the Operator underwent the PAA process. Prior approval from HKCAAVQ should be sought before implementing the corresponding

substantial change(s) to an approved PA, including changes to the programme development plan.

4.1.12 During the site visit meetings, the Panel was of the view that the existing and proposed new programmes under the proposed PA did not entirely substantiate the initially proposed scope statement, in terms of the consistent body of knowledge and the alignment with the professional classification of the PA of BE. Responding to the Panel's suggestion on enhancing the scope statement, the Operator revised the scope statement during the site visit for the Panel's review.

4.1.13 The Panel considered that the revised scope statement for the PA of BE, as outlined below, is commensurate with the existing and proposed new programmes under the PA:

The study and training in the principles and practices of the planning, design, construction, and management of the Built Environment, which comprises the following scopes: landscape architecture, urban design, building design, built environment technology, construction project management, real estate development and asset management, quantity surveying, and building surveying.

4.1.14 In consideration of the above and the vision and mission of the Operator, the Panel was of the view that the Operator had a track record of operation in the PA of BE at QF Level 5, which aligns with its organisational objectives and planned resources.

4.2 Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The Operator must have developed and implemented effective policies for the development of learner-centred strategies for achievement of learning outcomes through alignment of educational/training objectives, learning experiences, assessment, and learning support.

4.2.1 The Panel noted that all learning programmes of the Operator are developed based on the outcome-based learning and teaching approach. The various academic, teaching, learning, assessment policies, and procedures are outlined in the respective *Academic Policies and Regulations for Master's Degree/Bachelor's Degree/Non-degree programme*, as well as in the *Student Handbook*, which is distributed to all students at the beginning of each academic year.

- 4.2.2 The Panel reviewed the latest syllabi of the modules of all five existing programmes in the proposed PA. These syllabi provided information on module aims, module learning outcomes (MLOs), learning and teaching strategies, assessment strategies, and the mapping of the assessments against the MLOs.
- 4.2.3 The Panel noted that the learning and teaching strategies for programmes under the PA primarily include lectures, tutorials, laboratory and practical training. Depending on the nature and intended learning outcomes of different modules, students are also engaged in learning activities such as guest lectures, seminars, site and industry visits, and work-integrated learning (WIL). All bachelor's degree programmes of the Operator, including the existing and planned ones under BE, feature the mandatory WIL module(s). These WIL module(s) provide students opportunities to apply knowledge and skills in real-life settings through industry placements, hone their communication skills, and prepare them for the workforce upon graduation. The credit-bearing WIL has been implemented in BALA since AY2023/24 and will be implemented in BScSur from AY2025/26.
- 4.2.4 Responding to the Panel's comment on the mechanism to ensure consistency in the WIL assessment across participating employers, the Operator explained that each WIL module starts with the distribution of an information package to both employers and students. This package outlines WIL requirements and the assessment process. Employers are also briefed on and provided with an assessment rubric to standardise evaluations across all WIL partners. Additionally, academic supervisors will engage with employers to clarify and align assessments or views on student performance.
- 4.2.5 Responding to the Panel's comment on how to ensure the quality of module delivery across programmes under the proposed PA, the Operator expounded that they have implemented robust strategies that enhance learning, teaching, and assessment activities. Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) results are reviewed by programme teams to identify areas for improvement in curriculum design, teaching approaches, and assessment methods. These findings guide the development and documentation of targeted improvement actions, which are reported to both the Programme Board and the Academic Board, driving continuous alignment and enhancement of educational practices.

- 4.2.6 During site visit meetings, the Operator elaborated that they actively engage students in the enhancement of learning, teaching, and assessment activities through structured feedback mechanisms, including Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings and SFQs. The Operator highlighted that SSCC meetings enable Programme Team to gather deeper insights into students' expectations and concerns, facilitating strategic responses that address feedback while refining pedagogical approaches and assessment techniques. This process ensures that learning experiences align with intended outcomes and the Operator's commitment to continuous improvement.
- 4.2.7 The Operator added that building on feedback from SSCC meetings and SFQs, programme teams collaborate to discuss and implement enhancements to learning, teaching, and assessment practices. Programme Leaders monitor the impact of these initiatives, collecting feedback during subsequent SSCC meetings and SFQs to evaluate their effectiveness. The Operator expressed that this iterative cycle fosters a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that educational activities remain aligned with strategic goals while delivering meaningful and effective learning experiences.
- 4.2.8 In terms of assessment, the Panel observed that a variety of assessment strategies, including assignment, sketchbook, field trip report, written test, case study, presentation, project, computer-aided drawing, etc., are adopted for the programmes under the proposed PA.
- 4.2.9 The Operator emphasised that assessment requirements for a programme should incorporate both formative and summative elements to monitor learning and teaching progress effectively. This enables timely remedial action where necessary.
- 4.2.10 The Panel noted that all assessment materials for programmes under the PA are subject to moderation by an Assessment Moderator, who is also a member of the teaching team, in addition to moderation by External Examiners (EEs). The moderation process involves the review of questions, answers, guidelines, rubrics, and samples of student work graded at high, mid, and low levels for each assignment. Any discrepancies are resolved through discussion between the Assessment Moderator and the Module Convenor before finalising results.
- 4.2.11 The Panel was informed that regular reviews of feedback was gathered from multiple sources, such as SFQs and External

Examiner (EE) reports, to evaluate the effectiveness of its learning, teaching, and assessment activities. The Panel noted that SFQ results provide quantitative data on students' satisfaction, while EEs' comments offer qualitative feedback on academic standards and the alignment between assessments and learning objectives. The Panel observed that feedback obtained from the actual implementation of these strategies is overall positive, and considered that there was evidence that the Operator has established regular review of the effectiveness of the learning, teaching and assessment strategies using findings from actual implementation.

- 4.2.12 Responding to the Panel's comment regarding measures to support teaching staff in detecting unauthorised use of AI tools in students' work, the Operator elaborated that two Guideline on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence for Learning, Teaching and Research for staff and students respectively have been developed. Assignments are systematically evaluated using AI detection tools, with reports generated to assess the extent of AI usage. Lecturers review these reports, using similarity and AI scores as indicators of potential plagiarism or over-reliance on AI-generated content. These measures ensure compliance with institutional standards and promote academic integrity across all programmes under the PA.
- 4.2.13 The Operator informed the Panel that to uphold the principles outlined in the two guidelines, it actively promotes the integration of diverse and creative assessment methods that foster originality and reduce dependency on AI tools. These methods include Project-Based Learning, Collaborative Group Work, Case Studies, and Oral Presentations, which encourage critical thinking, teamwork, and authentic demonstration of knowledge. The Operator expressed that diversifying assessment strategies ensures that teaching, learning, and assessment activities support students' development of transferable skills while maintaining academic rigor and originality.
- 4.2.14 In light of the above, the Panel considered that the Operator has established policies for developing learner-centred strategies that align educational and training objectives, learning experiences, assessment methods, and learning support within the proposed PA.

4.3 **Staffing and Staff Development**

The Operator must have a suitably qualified and competent workforce which is capable to develop and deliver learning programmes in the proposed programme area, and can ensure

sustainable development of the proposed programme area.

4.3.1 On staffing, the Panel was provided with the following information:

- (a) The required qualifications for each academic staff rank within the Operator;
- (b) The Staff Handbook;
- (c) Profiles of staff teaching for the Industry/Professional Specific (IPS) and General Education (GE) modules under the proposed PA, including their academic and professional qualifications, teaching and industry work experience, teaching and research expertise, and current modules taught; and
- (d) Current and planned staffing arrangements for the existing and forthcoming programmes under the proposed PA.

4.3.2 The Panel noted that the teaching load (class contact hours) for academic staff is typically 3, 6, 9, and 15 hours per week for Professors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, and Lecturers respectively. The Operator elaborated that all teaching workloads are transparently shared with team members for feedback and discussion prior to the semester's commencement. This approach ensures equitable workload distribution and facilitates monitoring to ensure all academic staff work within an appropriate workload range established by the Operator. The overall staff-to-student ratio for the proposed PA is 1:20.

4.3.3 To ensure effective programme management and delivery, the following key roles are appointed within the programmes under the proposed PA:

- Programme Leaders are responsible for the day-to-day operation, management, quality assurance, continuous development and enhancement of the programme;
- Module Convenors are responsible for the day-to-day operation, quality assurance and improvement of the modules, and take a leading role in the learning and teaching activities and assessments; and
- Year Tutors assist the Programme Leader in the general administration of the programme, act as personal tutors for students they are responsible for.

- 4.3.4 The Panel noted that 35 out of 46 staff teaching IPS modules for programmes under the proposed PA are part-time, which represents on average over 50% of the overall IPS modules have been assigned to part-time teaching staff in AY2024/25. Responding to the Panel's comment on the comparatively high teaching load of part-time teaching staff relative to full-time teaching staff, the Operator provided the Guidelines on the proportion of full-time teaching staff and part-time teaching staff for a learning programme during the site visit.
- 4.3.5 The Panel was given to understand that in any exceptional circumstance when the Programme Leader would like to propose employing part-time teaching staff for more than 50% of the overall IPS modules for a programme, justifications should be provided for the approval of the Head of Department. The Panel noted from the guidelines that the Head of Department has to consider a few factors stipulated in the guidelines before granting the approval.
- 4.3.6 While the Panel considered the established approval arrangement within the department appropriate, it can be further enhanced by incorporating institutional inputs in the process as the approval may have implications beyond the department. The Panel offered the following advice:

Advice

The Operator should consider obtaining approval from an institutional-level committee, such as the Programme Board, in cases where part-time teaching staff constitute more than 50% of the overall IPS modules for a programme under the proposed programme area.

- 4.3.7 On staff development, the Panel was presented with a comprehensive list of staff development activities, publications, research and consultancy projects of staff teaching modules under the proposed PA from AY2019/20 to AY2024/25. The Panel observed that full-time teaching staff teaching IPS modules of the proposed PA had engaged in various staff development activities across educational, pedagogical and industry-specific areas. Pedagogical development activities included EdTech implementation, student engagement in classroom, online learning and project-based learning, and refinement of assessment strategies. Industry-specific staff development activities included attendance at conferences, workshops, and seminars, as well as participation in networking events and other industry-related activities. The Panel

noted that the Operator offers the above staff development programmes to part-time teaching staff as well.

4.3.8 The Operator also provided a five-year staff development plan for academic staff under the proposed PA, focusing on the following activities:

- Attending local and international conferences and forums
- Participating in collaborative projects, competitions and exhibitions with related industry communities and institutions
- Attending training/ seminar/ workshop programmes and participating in technical conferences and forums
- Taking part in pedagogical development training programmes

4.3.9 The Panel noted that annual performance appraisals are conducted for both full-time and part-time teaching staff. At the site visit meeting, the Panel recognised that the part-time staff members possess extensive teaching experience and actively participate in relevant continuous professional development activities aligned with their professional qualifications. Upon reviewing the appraisal form for part-time teaching staff, the Panel observed that the continuous development of learning and teaching skills for part-time staff is less apparent in the appraisal form. The Panel formed a view that the programme area could further benefit by having indicators for the continuous development of learning and teaching skills explicitly communicated to part-time teaching staff. This would promote a shared understanding of the importance of these indicators. Consequently, the Panel made a recommendation to support this enhancement (see paragraph 4.4.8).

4.3.10 Notwithstanding the recommendation outlined in paragraph 4.4.8, the Panel considered that the Operator possesses a suitably qualified and competent workforce capable of developing and delivering learning programmes within the PA and ensuring its sustainable development.

4.4 **Programme Area Resources and Services**

The Operator must have implemented a well-managed approach to its provision of learning, teaching and enabling resources which aligns with the current and planned development of the proposed programme area.

4.4.1 The Panel reviewed relevant information in the accreditation documents regarding general learning resources and student support services such as the library, IT services, counselling services, language support, and other learning enhancement initiatives.

- 4.4.2 During the site visit, representatives from key specialised learning resources, including the Landscape Architecture Studio, the Surveying Studio, the Soil and Chemical Laboratory, and the Plant Laboratory, shared how their units maintain the quality and relevance of services and explained the measures in place to ensure that these resources are accessible to students within the proposed PA.
- 4.4.3 In addition to information regarding specialised facilities and equipment, alongside their projected utilisation rates under BE for AY2025/26 to AY2029/30, the Panel was introduced to the latest facilities, equipment, and software supporting the programmes under the PA during a campus tour. The Operator also provided a list of planned acquisitions for new equipment and software to support programme development over the next two academic years.
- 4.4.4 To demonstrate that the programme teams under BE have actively organised extra-curricular learning activities for students to enrich their learning experience and exposure to the industry and professional practices, the Operator provided the Panel with lists of study, field or industry visits, projects, competitions, and guest lectures, seminars or talks about industry trend and development organised for students of the proposed PA from AY2019/20 to AY2024/25. At the site visit meeting with representatives of current students and graduates under the proposed PA, they shared with the Panel their positive learning experience with adequate support received from the programme teams and the Operator.
- 4.4.5 The Panel was given to understand that at the commencement of each academic year, the Student Development Office (SDO) works with the programme teams to organise orientation sessions for new students on the programme information and academic support services. Students are introduced to their programmes of study and briefed on the Institute's learning and teaching approaches. Additionally, SDO provides counselling to students who experienced difficulties in managing their study.
- 4.4.6 The Panel noted that students needing academic or career advice are offered individual consultations and additional tutorials by respective programme teams. Furthermore, students participating in practical and field events are provided with briefing sessions and assistance by the programme teams to ensure these activities are conducted effectively.

- 4.4.7 Responding to the Panel's comments on how to ensure that the part-time teaching staff members, who accounted for over 50% of the teaching (see paragraph 4.3.4), provide effective after-class learning support to the students, the Operator elaborated at the site visit meetings that students can readily reach part-time staff via email and the Operator's Moodle system. In addition, a full-time teaching staff member is designated as the Module Convenor for each module to provide an extra layer of accessibility and support, thereby reinforcing the network of assistance available to students.
- 4.4.8 At the meetings with teaching staff, the Panel learned that many part-time teaching staff actively share their social media contacts (e.g., WhatsApp) with students, enabling timely after-class support and guidance on a conventional basis. This practice reflects the commitment of part-time staff to ensuring students receive practical and accessible assistance beyond the classroom.

While the Operator's current framework reliably meets students' needs and demonstrates a strong commitment to quality programme delivery, the Panel considered that the framework can be further improved by having an after-class support related performance indicator explicitly communicated to part-time teaching staff to ensure mutual understanding. Along with the Panel's observation outlined in paragraph 4.3.9, the Panel made the following recommendation regarding the recruitment and appraisal process for part-time teaching staff:

Recommendation

The Operator should incorporate and communicate performance indicators related to the continuous development of learning and teaching skills and after-class learning support for students to prospective part-time teaching staff during recruitment and appraisal processes to enhance their understanding of these expected responsibilities.

- 4.4.9 Notwithstanding the aforementioned recommendation, the Panel considered that the Operator has a well-managed approach to its provision of learning, teaching and enabling resources to support the proposed PA.

5. IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THIS ACCREDITATION REPORT

5.1 Variation and withdrawal of this Accreditation Report

- 5.1.1 This Accreditation Report is issued pursuant to section 5 of the AAVQO, and contains HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding the accreditation, including the validity period as well as any conditions and restrictions subject to which the determination is to have effect.
- 5.1.2 HKCAAVQ may subsequently decide to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report if it is satisfied that any of the grounds set out in section 5 (2) of the AAVQO apply. This includes where HKCAAVQ is satisfied that the Operator is no longer competent to achieve the relevant objectives and/or the Programme no longer meets the standard to achieve the relevant objectives as claimed by the Operator (whether by reference to the Operator's failure to fulfil any conditions and/or comply with any restrictions stipulated in this Accreditation Report or otherwise) or where at any time during the validity period there has/have been substantial change(s) introduced by the Operator after HKCAAVQ has issued the accreditation report(s) to the Operator and which has/have not been approved by HKCAAVQ. Please refer to the '*Guidance Notes on Substantial Change to Accreditation Status*' in seeking approval for proposed changes. These Guidance Notes can be downloaded from the HKCAAVQ website.
- 5.1.3 If HKCAAVQ decides to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, it will give the Operator notice of such variation or withdrawal pursuant to section 5(4) of the AAVQO.
- 5.1.4 The accreditation status of the programme area will lapse immediately upon the expiry of the validity period or upon the issuance of a notice of withdrawal of this Accreditation Report.

5.2 Appeals

- 5.2.1 If the Operator is aggrieved by the determination made in this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of this Accreditation Report.
- 5.2.2 If the Operator is aggrieved by a decision to vary or withdraw this Accreditation Report, then pursuant to Part 3 of the AAVQO the

Operator has a right of appeal to the Appeal Board. Any appeal must be lodged within 30 days of the receipt of the Notice of Withdrawal.

- 5.2.3 The Operator should be aware that a notice of variation or withdrawal of this Accreditation Report is not itself an accreditation report and the right to appeal against HKCAAVQ's substantive determination regarding accreditation arises only from this Accreditation Report.
- 5.2.4 Please refer to Cap. 592A (<https://www.elegislation.gov.hk>) for the appeal rules. Details of the appeal procedure are contained in section 13 of the AAVQO and can be accessed from the QF website at <https://www.hkqf.gov.hk>.

5.3 **Qualifications Register**

- 5.3.1 The PAA status as defined by the approved programme area(s) will enable the Operator to offer programmes up to the QF level specified for the approved programme area(s) without prior learning programme accreditation. The programmes offered by the Operator up to the QF level specified for the approved programme area(s) are eligible for entry into the Qualifications Register (QR). All other programmes offered by the named Operator falling outside the approved programme area(s) and which have not obtained accreditation status will not be considered as accredited programmes.
- 5.3.2 Upon completion of relevant procedures by Operators as determined by the QR Authority, Operators may enter the qualifications covered within the scope of the PAA status into the QR at <https://www.hkqr.gov.hk> for recognition under the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework (QF).
- 5.3.3 Only learners who commence the study of a qualification covered within the scope of the PAA status during the validity period and who have graduated with the qualification listed in the QR will be considered to have acquired a qualification recognised under the QF.

Ref: 72/57/02

21 May 2025

JoH/CQ/SkC/mcc/rel

**Technological and Higher Education Institute of Hong Kong
Vocational Training Council**

Programme Area Accreditation in Built Environment

26 – 28 February 2025

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