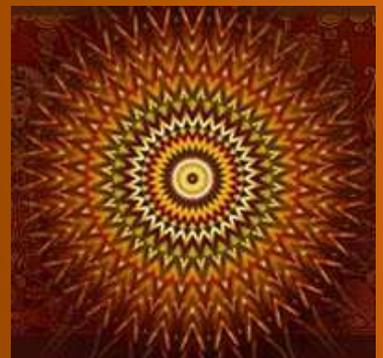
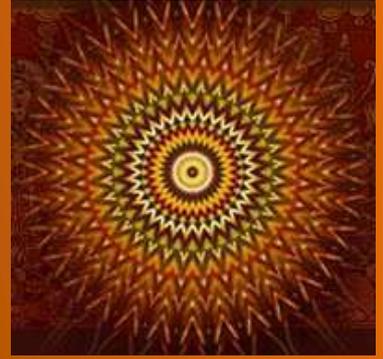




TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION

**REPORT OF THE SECOND CYCLE
QUALITY AUDIT OF THE
MAHATMA GANDHI INSTITUTE**



June 2014

TEC Audit Report Number 08

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Réduit

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Established in 1988 as a parastatal body under the former Ministry of Education, Culture & Human Resources, the Tertiary Education Commission has as objectives to allocate government funds, promote, plan, develop and coordinate tertiary education in Tertiary Education Institutions under its purview in order to achieve an accountable and responsive tertiary system of international standards. The Commission is also entrusted with the responsibility to promote and maintain high quality standards in post-secondary education through appropriate quality assurance and accreditation processes.

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OVERVIEW OF THE AUDIT

Background

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) is the regulatory body under the aegis of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology responsible *inter alia* for ensuring and monitoring quality in tertiary education institutions in Mauritius. This Report on the Second Cycle Quality Audit is published by TEC, as the second phase of institutional audits carried out in publicly-funded tertiary institutions.

Publicly-funded tertiary institutions are required to undergo institutional academic quality audits. These audits adopt the audit process as per the Quality Audit Handbook for Tertiary Education Institutions (2nd Edition). The audits relate to the existence and effectiveness of the quality processes that the organisation has in place to achieve its stated objectives, monitoring the performance of the institution in meeting its objectives and achieving the desired outcomes. The audit also addresses actions taken by the organisation to improve its overall effectiveness and the means for monitoring the extent to which the desired outcomes are attained.

The membership of the Audit Panel is provided in Appendix A, and Appendix B defines abbreviations and technical terms used in this Report.

Terms of Reference of the Auditors

- a) To make a commitment to act as a quality auditor for the institution identified as per the schedule worked out and participate in the pre-audit workshop and the audit.
- b) To act within the scope as approved by the TEC Board in the *Quality Audit Handbook (2010)*.
- c) To evaluate as part of its scope the progress made by the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in addressing the recommendations of the first cycle quality audit and two themes for quality audits i.e. 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Research and Culture'.
- (d) To be objective at all times, ensuring that they are non-judgemental in their approach; that they are aware of possible personal bias.
- e) To observe confidentiality.
- f) To give full support to the Chairperson.

- g) To work as a team, ensuring that members are working in harmony with a view to accomplishing a fact finding mission grounded on the Self-Evaluation Report.
- h) To identify good practice as well as unhealthy practice and make necessary recommendations.
- i) To ensure that there is agreement among the members on the conclusions of the panel.
- j) To co-operate fully in getting the audit report ready within two months of the audit by writing the specific observations made and checking with the Tertiary Education Commission's Secretariat to see that the report is a true reflection of the panel's findings.

The Audit Process

In 2008 TEC appointed an Audit Panel to undertake the First Cycle Quality Audit of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI). Within the scope of this Second Cycle Quality Audit, evidence of the implementation of the recommendations of the previous audit is sought and an audit that places emphasis on two selected themes, which reflect specific areas of academic risk at the institution, and how the management of these risks is undertaken.

The MGI in consultation with TEC selected two themes for the audit, 'Teaching and Learning' and 'Research and Culture', both of which are core activities at the MGI and crucial in enabling the Institute to attain its vision. The report of the First Cycle Quality Audit made major recommendations in the 2008 TEC Audit Report that the Audit Panel reviewed.

On 16 December 2013, the MGI submitted its Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The different schools, departments and centres contributed to the self-evaluation assessment by providing their SER at departmental level. All information was compiled to produce the SER of the MGI. The materials were sent to the Audit Panel on 02 May 2014 for consideration.

TEC staff involved in the audit exercise undertook a Preparatory Visit to the MGI on 12 June 2014. During that visit, the facilities to be provided for the conduct of the audit were discussed. The Panel held a Pre-Audit meeting on the 16 June 2014, during which the Audit Visit programme was finalised and the issues for examination by the Audit Panel were defined.

The Audit Visit at the MGI took place from 17 to 20 June 2014. The Audit Panel split into two groups on 19 June 2014 for interview sessions with the students.

In all, the Audit Panel spoke with 171 people in 21 interview sessions during the Audit Visit, including:

- Director General;
- Council Members;
- Director (MGI);
- Bursar
- Registrar;
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academia) and Director Quality Assurance of the University of Mauritius (UoM);
- Representatives of the UoM on the MGI Board of Studies;
- Academic staff;
- Administrative staff;
- Academic and Non-Academic Staff Union;
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students; and
- MGI Alumni.

Open sessions were also available for any member of the MGI community to meet the Audit Panel. Some staff members took advantage of this opportunity.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the Audit Visit, which ended on 20 June 2014, and does not take account of any changes that may have occurred subsequently. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Audit Panel based on the SER provided by the MGI, supplementary information requested as well as information gained through interviews, discussions and observations during the Audit Visit. While every attempt has been made to reach a comprehensive understanding of the Institute's quality arrangement within the scope of the audit, the Report does not identify every aspect of quality assurance and its effectiveness or shortcomings. This report contains a summary of the audit findings along with the commendations and recommendations.

It is expected that the MGI will use these findings to strengthen its quality management systems with the objective of facilitating quality improvement in all areas of the Institute. The decision about the manner in which this is to be done is the prerogative of the MGI. It is expected that MGI will submit an improvement plan based on the TEC Audit Report.

TEC expresses its appreciation to the MGI for the cooperative manner in which it has participated in the audit process. TEC also thanks the MGI for providing additional information and access to key documents to the Audit Panel during the course of the Audit.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Audit Findings

The scope of the 2014 audit of the MGI is the two themes of ‘Teaching and Learning’ and ‘Research and Culture’, together with the follow-up of the recommendations of the 2008 TEC Audit Report.

The audit findings are contained in sections 2 to 8.

The Audit Panel did not consider that all the recommendations of the first cycle quality audit had been implemented in a full and/or in a timely manner. This matter is considered in greater detail below.

The Audit Panel was confident that MGI is fulfilling its mission to provide a sound academic and cultural base for the preservation and promotion of Indian cultural traditions and heritage. It is pursuing its mission in the context of a strong teaching base and a rigorous approach to assessment and moderation.

MGI faces challenges in terms of enrolments and finances. It is attempting to meet these challenges by diversifying its enrolment base and attempting to establish itself as a distance-education provider. The strategy, if it is to be successful, will have to be supported by improvements to its technology, curriculum design and staff training in distance delivery. The Teaching and Learning Framework should reflect its proposed new teaching directions.

In its attempt to raise its research profile MGI has created a situation which is in danger of becoming untenable. There is an urgent need to set research priorities for the institution as a whole, align research funding with priorities based on existing strengths and communicate its research directions to the academic staff.

Without a strong performance management and improvement system MGI will struggle to change its directions and improve its research outputs. The Panel considers it imperative that accountability measures are improved through the introduction of key performance indicators for staff at all levels, with university-wide targets cascaded down to School level and regular and systematic monitoring of performance.

Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1. That MGI be commended on its commitment to the achievement of its mission to support and disseminate Indian culture and heritage. 12
2. That MGI be commended on its robust business continuity processes and back-up systems. 17
3. That MGI be commended on its initiative in identifying a distance education strategy to reach new markets..... 17
4. That MGI be commended on its rigorous approach to external assessment and moderation.....22
5. That MGI be commended on its archive of unique artefacts of the Indian Diaspora and recognition of the need to preserve them while making them accessible to the public and researchers.25
6. That MGI be commended on its supportive and friendly environment that is valued by both staff and students.....27

Recommendations

1. That MGI ratify its Strategic Plan and ensure it includes strategic priorities, targets and institutional performance indicators. 12
2. That the Council continue to represent the needs of MGI to government with specific reference to changing the Act to include degree granting status and reflect its diploma and certificate granting status. 12
3. That the Council pursue formal Memoranda of Understanding with the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education that clearly outline the responsibilities of each party..... 13
4. That MGI strengthen its quality assurance system to include systematic collection and monitoring of data, feedback of results to the MGI community and the development of action plans for improvement. 14
5. That MGI establish a management information system to support its academic units and administrative staff in planning, decision-making and quality assurance processes. 14

6. That MGI document its policies and procedures in a quality manual and regularly monitor and report on their consistent application.....	15
7. That MGI review its committee structure, membership and terms of reference with a view to: (i) reducing the total number of committees; (ii)ensuring appropriate and adequate representation from academics and students, (iii) streamlining the flow of information across all levels of the institution.	16
8. That MGI develop a space utilisation plan and maintenance schedule.	16
9. That MGI develop a comprehensive Teaching and Learning Framework that documents: (i) approaches to teaching and learning (e.g. problem solving, critical thinking, student engagement, library resources including e-resources, independent learning skills); (ii) delivery models (e.g. blended, distance, technology-enhanced); (iii) assessment and moderation guidelines; (iv) staff development for Teaching and Learning.	18
10. That MGI support its strategic direction in distance delivery with: (i) a documented project plan; (ii) identification of an executive leader, (iii) adequate resourcing for IT infrastructure and instructional design; (iv) a change management plan; (v) a marketing plan.....	20
11. That MGI review its Research Plan and ensure it identifies research priorities, guidelines for the quality and quantity of research outputs, appropriate targets along with procedures for monitoring at the level of the institution.....	23
12. That MGI establish a set of principles and procedures for the identification of research supervisors including minimum qualifications, research profile and evidence of training in research supervision.	24
13. That the MGI as a matter of priority collect, monitor and use student feedback from degree students.....	26
14. That MGI continue to support and develop its students by: (i) including student representatives on the Academic Coordination Committee and the MGI Board of Studies, (ii) nominating a staff liaison officer to work with the Student Union.	27
15. That the MGI implement a robust, tailored performance management system for all tertiary staff including Key Performance Indicators and, where appropriate, targets.	30
16. That MGI develop a staff development and improvement plan that includes formal induction, mentoring, succession planning and leadership training for Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments.	30

17. That MGI strengthen its HR capacity to ensure timely filling of vacancies, leave approvals, approvals of schemes of service and support for the performance management system and staff induction.31

2. FOLLOW-UP TO FIRST CYCLE AUDIT

The Audit Panel received the recommendations from the 2008 TEC Audit Report of the First Cycle Audit and investigated the progress of their implementation. The First Cycle Audit Report made 22 recommendations (R). A number of these recommendations have been acted upon recently but some remain unresolved. Of particular concern are the following recommendations:

R7-The TEC recommends that MGI develops a comprehensive Teaching and Learning Framework.

Although the self-review makes mention of such a framework there was no document available that clearly defined MGI's approach to teaching and learning and in particular its various modes of delivery. The Second Cycle Audit has made further recommendations about the need for a robust Teaching and Learning Plan.

R8- The TEC recommends that MGI encourages the involvement of employers in the development and review of programmes.

Tentative steps have been made to involve employers but more needs to be done to ensure that graduates are able to find employment in areas other than teaching.

R10-The TEC recommends that MGI develops a comprehensive Research Plan with clearly defined policies and procedures.

The issue of research is discussed later in this report.

R12-The TEC recommends that MGI puts in place a formal induction programme for all new staff.

The current arrangements for staff induction are not comprehensive and are not likely to inform staff of the big picture items facing MGI. Currently induction appears to be limited to telling new staff about their teaching responsibilities. New staff induction should familiarise incoming staff with the Teaching and Learning Plan, expectations of research output and quality, quality assurance processes and priorities for the institution.

R13-The TEC recommends that MGI formalises its Staff Development Plan.

No staff development plan, as it is commonly understood in an institute of higher education, exists and this has resulted in staff confusion: some staff members believe they receive no development, some believe development opportunities are unfairly distributed. Staff members are the key resource for MGI and the means by which it will institute change. MGI is urged to act on this earlier recommendation.

R15-The TEC recommends the establishment of a MGI Student Union.

The Panel notes that this recommendation has been acted upon recently but there is a need to formalise the protocols by which the management of the institution interacts with and supports its Student Union. Student matters are discussed later in the report.

R20-The TEC recommends that MGI prioritises investment in adequate teaching resources to meet the needs of specialised academic programmes.

The nature of some of the programmes requires significant investment in teaching resources. MGI will need to decide whether to continue to run programmes that cannot be adequately resourced. Some of the teaching spaces are run down and in urgent need of maintenance. Inadequate physical resources are both a health and safety risk and a risk to reputation.

R22-The TEC recommends that MGI develops a comprehensive risk management framework and prioritize the management of academic risk.

Academic risk will increase with a move to distance education and this matter needs further consideration and documentation. The current risk management plan does not adequately address the issue of academic risk.

3. INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The MGI was established under an Act of Parliament, the MGI Act No. 64 of 1970 as a joint venture between the governments of Mauritius and India. The MGI is operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. The Institute was initially set up as a Centre of Studies of Indian Culture and Traditions and has since expanded from a secondary education provider to tertiary education provider affiliated to the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education. The MGI Act 1970 was consequently repealed by the MGI Act 1982 and further amended in 2002 to include the Rabindranath Tagore Institute (RTI) under the management of the Council. It is pointed out that the scope of this audit encompasses the tertiary education activities of the MGI only.

3.1 Institutional Profile

The new intake of students at the MGI has decreased from 237 in the academic year 2008/2009 to 201 in the academic year 2012/2013. The number of students at the MGI has increased from 519 in academic year 2008/2009 to 571 in academic year 2012/2013. It is operating five Schools, namely the School of Indian Studies, School of Performing Arts, School of Fine Arts, School of Mauritian and Area Studies and the School of Indological Studies.

3.2 Strategic Context

It is understood that the vision of the Institute is to be a leading educational and cultural institution in the field of Indian Culture and Arts and to become a degree awarding body. The MGI is keeping abreast with the impact of technology in education and is now focusing on ways to reach new markets through distance education.

3.3 Mission and Vision

MGI has a unique mission, articulated in its Act and highlighted in its draft strategic plan. Its mission, to support, maintain and disseminate Indian culture and heritage is well understood by the MGI community and passionately supported by the staff. It has a positive public profile in the arts and culture and makes a significant contribution to the cultural life of Mauritius.

Commendation 1

That MGI be commended on its commitment to the achievement of its mission to support and disseminate Indian culture and heritage.

3.4 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan has been in draft form for more than three years. Although it is recognised that changes to format had to be made, MGI urgently needs an approved Strategic Plan to guide its future activities, most especially in the areas of distance education and research. A strong strategic plan to which research and teaching plans are closely aligned reduces ambiguity and goes a long way in managing expectations of the staff. An effective strategic plan is not a wish list but a statement of where the institution intends to go, the strategies it will adopt to achieve its ends, the targets and indicators by which it can judge and report on its performance to Council.

Recommendation 1

That MGI ratify its Strategic Plan and ensure it includes strategic priorities, targets and institutional performance indicators.

3.5 Degree Awarding Status

It has been the aim of MGI for many years to attain degree granting status. To date it has been managing and teaching degree programmes but the awards are from the University of Mauritius. The quality of MGI's programmes and graduates are such that it has demonstrated that it is capable of offering awards in its own right. It is to be hoped that those in authority recognise this fact and make the appropriate changes to the Act by which the institution is governed. At this point in time the Act does not reflect the full range of educational activities of MGI and it is recommended that its current right to award certificates and diplomas is specifically mentioned in an amendment to the Act.

Recommendation 2

That the Council continue to represent the needs of MGI to government with specific reference to changing the Act to include degree granting status and reflect its diploma and certificate granting status.

3.6 Institutional Collaborations

MGI has existing partnerships with the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education which are effective and generally satisfactory. Notwithstanding this state of affairs, it is a fact that no formal and documented record of the partnerships exist. The lack of documentation presents a risk to all parties and the three institutions should take action to record in formal Memoranda of Understanding the expectations, rights and responsibilities of all parties.

Recommendation 3

That the Council pursue formal Memoranda of Understanding with the University of Mauritius and the Mauritius Institute of Education that clearly outline the responsibilities of each party.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Improvement

Access to robust and reliable data is essential to informed decision-making and self-evaluation. The data are the evidence of what is happening (or not happening) in the institution. The review panel was frustrated both by the lack of data and the inconsistencies in data presented in the 2014 self-evaluation. If the quality office at MGI is to perform its tasks effectively and be in a position to provide robust data to management and Council, it must have a systematic process to collect, aggregate, analyse and disseminate data.

Furthermore, by making institutional data more widely available to the staff of MGI, there will be greater transparency and more effective communication. Modern institutions collect, store and analyse large amounts of data to inform decisions about course demand, student progress, infrastructure needs, space utilisation, staff and student profiles and, of course, the allocation of resources.

Recommendation 4

That MGI strengthen its quality assurance system to include systematic collection and monitoring of data, feedback of results to the MGI community and the development of action plans for improvement.

4.2 Management Information System

Related to the issue of quality assurance is the need for a management information system to hold the data necessary for informed decision-making. The self-report provided by MGI demonstrates that management data are not collected and presented in a systematic and uniform manner. This makes comparisons between areas impossible and trends over time difficult to ascertain.

Recommendation 5

That MGI establish a management information system to support its academic units and administrative staff in planning, decision-making and quality assurance processes.

4.3 Quality Assurance Mechanism

Interviews with members of the MGI community revealed that members were unfamiliar with what should be key university policies and ignorant of where to find specific policies. It would be helpful to the institution if all the universities policies and procedures were documented and available in a single site.

Recommendation 6

That MGI document its policies and procedures in a quality manual and regularly monitor and report on their consistent application.

4.4 Institutional Committees

The tertiary division of MGI is comparatively small but managing a large number of programmes across multiple award levels. Given the proposed move into distance education it is likely that even more committees will be formed. MGI's efforts to assure quality and encourage collegiality, while they are to be applauded, have resulted in a large number of committees whose membership is much the same from committee to committee. It is timely to review the committee structure in order to see if some committees could be merged. It might be possible for some committees to deal with a wider range of responsibilities by having particular matters appearing as standard agenda items. The membership of some committees such as the research committee needs to be reviewed to ensure that the membership consists only of those with an investment in the work of the committee. If the Research Plan and its associated policies are strong and the total resource allocation set annually, it is not necessary to include a raft of non-academics on the Research and Publication Committee.

While engaging staff in the business of the Institute by having them serve on committees is important, it must be realised that such service is a drain on time and can adversely affect research output. Similarly MGI needs to involve student leaders on key committees but ensure that the committee load is not such that it affects the studies of any individual.

Recommendation 7

That MGI review its committee structure, membership and terms of reference with a view to: (i) reducing the total number of committees; (ii) ensuring appropriate and adequate representation from academics and students, (iii) streamlining the flow of information across all levels of the institution.

4.5 Infrastructure

The matters of physical space for various timetabled activities and student free time to study were frequently raised in the interviews with staff and students and were a source of frustration and irritation to both groups. The problem is not easily solved but there may be opportunities afforded by the new learning management system to increase contact between lecturers and students and between students without needing additional physical infrastructure. Not all material is suitable for uploading onto a learning management system but the online environment can be used in place of transmission teaching that uses valuable classroom space. Similarly e-resources and more digitisation of text resources (e.g. dissertations) can free up storage space. MGI might want to look at how it can make more effective use of its current space, much of which is not used for many weeks of the year. The first step is to look at how current space is being used and see if it can be used more effectively; that is, conduct a space audit.

Regular and proper maintenance will mean that spaces are available for use. Inspection of classrooms and teaching spaces in some areas revealed that maintenance is overdue and in one instance the space was not usable in its current state of disrepair. There needs to be a one-stop facility where maintenance needs and faults can be recorded and a check needs to be done, to ensure that the problem has been rectified.

Recommendation 8

That MGI develop a space utilisation plan and maintenance schedule.

4.6 Back-Up Systems

MGI has a developed business continuity process and effective back-up systems for its data. The Panel was convinced that MGI could successfully withstand interruptions or crashes to its systems and be in a position to recover data.

Commendation 2

That MGI be commended on its robust business continuity processes and back-up systems.

4.7 Distance Education

In a number of disciplines enrolment numbers are static or declining and this situation may worsen as the market for teachers of Indian languages and performing arts becomes saturated. MGI has demonstrated initiative and forethought in identifying distance education as a means of opening up new markets. MGI has expertise in Indian languages and philosophy which are likely to prove attractive to markets in Asia and Australasia and more broadly.

The establishment of a successful distance education programme is expensive and time consuming but, if it is to be successful, then the effort must be made. Distance education is an increasingly crowded market, even more so with the introduction of MOOCs and the panel has tried to give some guidance in other sections of this report.

Commendation 3

That MGI be commended on its initiative in identifying a distance education strategy to reach new markets

5. THEME: TEACHING AND LEARNING

5.1 Teaching and Learning Framework

A recommendation of the previous audit was that a teaching and learning framework be developed. It would have been feasible within a year or two to develop a robust framework for MGI but no document was forthcoming on request and all that remained were some fragmented discussions and principles in each School's submission in the self-evaluation report. A framework as a quality assurance measure would ensure consistency across the institution. It would at least include principles and procedures for curriculum development, teaching and student engagement appropriate to each discipline, assessment and the evaluation of teaching. Reference was frequently made in interviews to MGI abiding by the regulations of UoM but the unique nature of the Institute also needs to be captured in a broad framework at a level above specific regulations.

Recommendation 9

That MGI develop a comprehensive Teaching and Learning Framework that documents: (i) approaches to teaching and learning (e.g. problem solving, critical thinking, student engagement, library resources including e-resources, independent learning skills); (ii) delivery models (e.g. blended, distance, technology-enhanced); (iii) assessment and moderation guidelines; (iv) staff development for Teaching and Learning.

5.2 Curriculum Development

The Panel noted from the self-evaluation report that the MGI approves qualifications up to the level of the diploma through the Academic Coordination Committee but that degree programmes are approved by the Senate of the University of Mauritius through the Dean of the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities. It was suggested in interviews that MGI needs to apply the regulations of UoM more rigorously in curriculum development to ensure approval of its submissions by the university. Quality assurance mechanisms and practices need to be more visible throughout the process. UoM itself believes that it would be important to include a quality assurance person from MGI on its committees where MGI programmes are discussed to improve communication and rigour.

Lecturers, students and external examiners raised a further curriculum issue: the employability of graduates. While it remains important for MGI to meet its stated mission, student goals usually prioritise employment. It appears that most MGI graduates enter the teaching profession but that even there the market is reaching saturation.

There was some evidence of consulting stakeholders such as employers in the development of curricula in the School of Fine Arts but the practice is *ad hoc*.

5.3 Curriculum Delivery

The teaching mode is contact and some modules are delivered fully by the MGI. Although the self-evaluation report states that a blended approach is followed, it appears that the learning management system(LMS), Moodle, is a new addition to MGI's delivery mode although access to Google is ubiquitous (but there was no indication of its integration into teaching and learning). Fine Arts students seem to use the Internet for their courses. Urdu also seems to integrate technology. New smartboards have been installed and training has been received from the Mauritius Institute of Education. The LMS is being supported technically by the IT Administrator and one technician but there is no-one with expertise either in the use of educational technology or in instructional design for online learning who can train lecturers to use Moodle effectively. Educational technology is not about the technology but about the teaching and learning affordances and how to plan, monitor and evaluate the design and delivery. The new strategic plan indicates that IT use will be expanded and this strategy will have to be resourced well, particularly with a move into online distance education.

The capacity to develop programmes for online delivery is particularly important given the institution's vision to offer fully online programmes to encourage international registrations in their primary areas of expertise. The languages in particular are spoken by millions of people internationally but marketing is clearly going to be an issue. The Indian Diaspora expertise and artefacts might also attract international students. The fact that MGI is working with the Open University and the Commonwealth of Learning is a sound basis for realising their vision but they would need to hire in appropriate instructional design expertise to ensure the success of their online distance courses and the appropriate blend of face-to-face and online for their contact students. The distance education initiative seems to be well known in the institution. The recent programme to send 24 staff members to India for training in the

technology is also a good change management strategy and the panel understood that there would be additional training from the Open University of Mauritius. The partnership with Mauritius Telecom to facilitate their distance education provision is also a positive step. However, the distance education model to be adopted was not made clear except that it would include audio recordings. A risk to be noted and mitigated is poor connectivity when one is planning fully online courses particularly but also if a contact course relies partially on online engagement.

Recommendation 10

That MGI support its strategic direction in distance delivery with: (i) a documented project plan; (ii) identification of an executive leader, (iii) adequate resourcing for IT infrastructure and instructional design; (iv) a change management plan; (v) a marketing plan.

The students theoretically already have access to full text online databases (EBSCO and Emerald) but in talking to the students it appeared that they had never accessed these resources and did not have logins to the system. For online distance education the integration of these databases would be essential. Even for contact students, lecturers could create a resource within each module on Moodle from the databases in collaboration with the library staff. The library might have to investigate other e-resources as well.

Current teaching methods seem appropriate to the different areas of specialisation such as music, dance, art, languages, philosophy and Mauritian studies. However, issues of space seem to affect some disciplines with dance needing more space and music students complaining of being able to hear students in the next room practising. Fine Arts' enrolments are restricted by availability of space. There seems to be only one large lecture theatre and at times cultural activities take precedence over tertiary study and lectures for larger classes are postponed and sometimes missed altogether, impacting on the class's ability to complete the syllabus. The condition of some teaching venues in terms of lighting and ventilation was also mentioned: it was not clear if the necessary upgrades had not occurred owing to financial constraints or to the lack of a maintenance schedule. Student learning spaces are lacking except for a small area in the library. Learning spaces no longer have to be physical and it appears that Wi-Fi is high on the list of what students would like to see added to the campus.

Many students seemed to have their own devices. The institution is considering tablets but should also weigh up the relative benefits for study purposes of tablets and laptops as well as students' use of mobile phones as communication and learning devices. If students bring their own devices to campus, a policy on security needs to be in place: MGI does appear to host student devices in an environment separate from its business environment. Lecturers' office space also appears to be an issue with several people sharing offices, which impacts on ability to see students or work uninterrupted on teaching or research projects.

Other issues that arose in connection with teaching and learning from lecturers, students and external examiners were the need for:

- better career orientation before the start of and early in programmes;
- more exposure to professional performance;
- more oral practice for language students;
- more opportunities to learn oral presentation skills (given that many graduates become teachers);
- use of modern methodological approaches;
- upgrading of curriculum in some cases (e.g. modern literature in one case; link to other island societies in another; more application in a third);
- upgrading of subject matter expertise of lecturers.

5.5 Monitoring and Assessment

MGI uses external assessors for its final year modules and for each year in a commencing course. By and large the external assessors' reports are positive and provide evidence that MGI is maintaining appropriate standards. There was evidence that some suggestions and recommendations in the reports had not been acted upon and in the future this should be an issue for the quality assurance office.

Assessment seems appropriate to the different disciplines and examiners' reports are positive about the quality of the papers, the schemes of marking and marking standards and consistency. There was a comment by an external examiner about undergraduate research projects being unusual but at the exit level of the Honours this is typical internationally nowadays in preparation for study at Master's level. There was no evidence presented, however, of Honours or even Master's research projects to enable the panel to judge the

quality of the research methodology or product. Mention by students of lecturers encouraging them to publish in popular media created the impression of a lack of scientific rigour in the research, which is possibly false. What needs to be in place for quality assurance purposes is a feedback loop for discussing external examiner's reports and implementing suggestions. One examiner did note that he had observed that his recommendations from the previous year had been implemented. It appears that examiners' reports are sent to the quality assurance unit which then contacts the lecturer to ascertain what is and is not implementable. Again, for quality assurance purposes, this practice has to be consistent across the institution. It does appear that an Examinations Committee comprising the Director and Heads of School, among others, also regularly studies the pass rates internally, considers the reports of external examiners, advises on awards, confirms student performance and arranges conferment of qualifications for certificates and diplomas. Degree examination results are also observed at UoM. Security around assessment seems adequate: lecturers may not use their own computers to set papers but have to hand them in for typing or use the examination centre's computers; examinations are invigilated; students identities are checked and no mobile phones are allowed. One security issue might be the way in which scripts are physically taken to UoM to have marks entered on their system as there is no connectivity between the two institutions; however, it seems that MGI lecturers may now just upload an Excel spreadsheet. There are marking schemes for every paper. MGI follows the UoM regulations on cheating as well as their appeals process. The panel was informed that there was a delay of up to two months between the writing of the examination and the release of the results, which seems exceptionally long – the process might have to be re-engineered for efficiency.

Commendation 4

That MGI be commended on its rigorous approach to external assessment and moderation.

6. RESEARCH AND CULTURE

6.1 Research Plan

Matters to do with research, support for research and the reporting of research inputs and outcomes are spread over multiple documents and the information is not always entirely consistent. The research strengths and research priorities of MGI are not clearly articulated in any current document. The lack of clear direction for research effort is resulting in activity which in many cases lacks impact and does not contribute to the profile of MGI. It also creates expectations among staff that any and all research should be funded by MGI. As the institution moves towards creating a stronger research profile, it will need to think carefully about research priorities and strategies to support those priorities if it is not to waste funds and dissipate its energies. An effective research plan would guide members of the academic community as to where they should be putting their research effort, the types of publications to which they should be submitting their papers, the level of support that can be expected for various types of research activity and the institution's expectations with regards to their research output. Those expectations will not be identical across the institution but will reflect the academic's experience, seniority and the nature of their discipline. The Institute needs to formalise its position on the status of creative outputs as research. Internationally many higher education institutions have developed policies on creative production as a research output. Such policies usually require creative works to be curated and/or reviewed and displayed/performed for public audiences.

The research KPIs per individual lecturer should be negotiated annually to provide an amount of time appropriate to achieving quality research outputs. The current division of workload into 12 hours for teaching and 6 hours for research is not likely to create conditions conducive to increasing research output.

Recommendation 11

That MGI review its Research Plan and ensure it identifies research priorities, guidelines for the quality and quantity of research outputs, appropriate targets along with procedures for monitoring at the level of the institution.

6.2 Research Supervision

As a quality assurance measure and a means of mitigating risk, tertiary institutions internationally are, as a matter of policy, formally articulating their principles and procedures around the requirements for staff to be appointed as research supervisors. The principles usually include the minimum level of qualification that can be held by a supervisor, the required research profile (numbers of publications and recency of research activity), research supervision training undertaken and successful prior supervisions. Implicit in such measures is the need for the institution to ensure that training in how to supervise research students successfully is provided.

Recommendation 12

That MGI establish a set of principles and procedures for the identification of research supervisors including minimum qualifications, research profile and evidence of training in research supervision.

6.3 Research students

As MGI moves steadily into the postgraduate field it will need to improve the management of, and services to, postgraduate students. It will need to develop facilities and training for postgraduate students: for example, proposal writing; the use of full text databases in the library; the use of the LMS; writing papers and making conference presentations.

6.4 Preservation of Documents

The archive of immigration documentation is unique and highly valuable. MGI is performing a very significant service to the nation in preserving these documents and making them available to the public and to researchers. It will be necessary in the very near future to digitise these materials to protect the hard copies and make the contents more widely accessible. It is suggested that MGI seek funding from an external source, such as the Carnegie Foundation. In the opinion of the Panel, MGI would be well advised to hire an experienced grant writer to prepare any submission for funding.

Commendation 5

That MGI be commended on its archive of unique artefacts of the Indian Diaspora and recognition of the need to preserve them while making them accessible to the public and researchers.

7. STUDENTS

7.1 Student Feedback

On the whole, classes are extremely small, worryingly so for an institution looking at sustainability. However, small classes do mean personal attention to students' academic development and students in interviews and feedback forms expressed their appreciation for how approachable lecturers are and the help that they receive from them. Feedback is collected on the MGI campus. However, it seems that for degree students feedback is done through an online system at UoM. Lecturers did not realise that they could access the system using a password and recent access shows that students have not bothered to use the system in the past five years. The feedback that was available on paper had some complaints but many positives. Positives were interesting classes; class participation, discussion and group work; practical classes. Negatives were lack of prompt feedback on assessment; lack of musical instruments and maintenance of instrument; syllabuses too bulky; pace of lectures too fast; need for audio-visual materials; need for clarity about outcomes/ objectives; need for more practical sessions; need for more performance opportunities; better use of technology in classrooms (e.g. power point); more feedback on performance; more relevant and interesting content; more notes. The problem is that the feedback extended from 2010 to 2013 and remained fairly consistent so the existence of a quality system for the closing of the feedback loop is in doubt. Part-time students have additional social problems related to transport after hours and their working lives.

Recommendation 13

That the MGI as a matter of priority collect, monitor and use student feedback from degree students.

7.2 Student Union

The Audit Panel was gratified to see that MGI had implemented the recommendation from the last audit to establish a student union, although it was not established until 2013. The student leaders are strong, passionate about MGI and anxious to work in the best interests of the Institute. Although they believe themselves to be supported by senior management, they

are currently frustrated in their attempts to communicate with management. They feel they are shrugged off, ignored or stymied by gate-keepers. In order to open up communication with the student union and ensure that the student voice is heard and listened to, the Audit Panel would recommend that one member of the senior staff assume the duties of a liaison officer with the Student Union. Now that the student union is there and organising activities at MGI, thought needs to be given to the funding of activities and to assisting the members to plan, budget and organise activities both for student leadership development and continuity.

Student representatives can provide valuable feedback and insight into student concerns and it is recommended that the student union be given a voice on the key committees of the MGI.

Tertiary experience is not only about curricular activities but also about social integration and development. Students did mention that they were encouraged to participate in activities such as drama and debating. Student spaces to gather, socialise and eat are lacking. It appears that degree students pay a fee to UoM for student extra-curricular activities but that they do not participate much on that campus.

Recommendation 14

That MGI continue to support and develop its students by: (i) including student representatives on the Academic Coordination Committee and the MGI Board of Studies, (ii) nominating a staff liaison officer to work with the Student Union.

A major strength of MGI is its friendly and supportive environment. Students in interview commented positively on the helpfulness of the staff, their willingness to share their knowledge and their support for students as individuals. Similarly staff expressed their satisfaction with their working environment and the respect in which they held their colleagues.

Commendation 6

That MGI be commended on its supportive and friendly environment that is valued by both staff and students.

7.3 Library and Language Resource Centre

The library is relatively small. Books not frequently used are stored systematically. Reference books are not allowed out except sometimes during examinations. Opening hours are extended during examinations. Students working on research projects access library resources. Students mainly complain about lack of books, study space, computerisation and audio-visual aids. The quality of the library might have to be upgraded for postgraduate students. Dissertations are not curated by the library but are stored in different ways in different schools. If they are degree dissertations they are presumably also curated in some way by UoM. The library is also open to the public at a small fee.

The Language Resource Centre in the School of Indian Studies seems to be developing a different character and serving the entire Institute. It collaborates with all Schools. It appears to host the Institute's computer laboratory. It seems to have some private funding and also works with TEC on distance education, open educational resources and e-learning. Its positioning within the institution might have to be reconsidered. Some initiatives discussed might have to be reviewed in terms of compliance to copyright.

8. STAFF RESOURCES

There was little evidence that recommendations from the previous audit for staff induction and development had been adequately addressed. Development would include both teaching methodology and opportunities for obtaining higher degrees. There seems to be little understanding of the actual provisions of the policy on leave for furthering one's studies abroad and some dissatisfaction with the provisions for local studies. Lecturers seem to learn about teaching from working with staff at the Mauritian Institute of Education and from reading books on the subject.

Staff development and satisfaction can also be enhanced by a sound performance management system with clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and space to negotiate a personal development plan. From the Director, to heads of Schools and Departments and lecturers there was vagueness in responses to questions on KPIs. MGI abides by TEC guidelines for face-to-face teaching hours. However, classes are small so time goes into preparation for multiple modules rather than marking. The teaching of multiple modules is not always a sound practice – external examiners recommend the updating of the knowledge of lecturers in some disciplinary areas. Academic staff members seem to have such a wide range of activities from teaching and assessment to research, responsibility for cultural activities and the production of school textbooks in their fields. Many also seem to be involved in teaching for the Post Graduate Certificate in Education in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Education. The focus on tertiary teaching and research might become dissipated unless there are clear KPIs.

The impact of online distance education on workload should be considered. The international norm is 25: 1 for the student: staff ratio, so large classes would have to be separated into sections. The lecturer has to be online regularly to create a social presence and be available to students across the globe at a time that more or less suits their time zone, particularly if any synchronous interaction is planned.

Mentoring is mentioned as a strategy but in effect it appears that heads of departments merely pass on the syllabus and tell new staff how to teach and assess rather than working with them on career goals and development. Mentoring expectations need to be consistent across the institution for quality assurance purposes.

MGI has the same issues as tertiary institutions internationally in terms of succession planning, ensuring that a new generation of academics with higher degrees are attracted to the profession. With the revolving headships on such a short term of two years there is an issue as well of preparing people to lead an academic department with such a short period to implement new knowledge about management and leadership.

There was conflicting information about the speed of filling staff vacancies with Human Resources claiming quick recruitment and appointment but the academic and union sectors stating that filling of vacancies was slow. It is not clear if the latter was the result of the freezing of posts because of financial constraints, as indicated by the Council, or if academic staff or staff unions were aware of this strategy. The way in which unions interact with management and report back to their members needs attention. A number of approval processes related to human resources seemed unnecessarily slow and could be reviewed for greater efficiency. Some policies need to be reviewed as well to ensure consistency. The fact that heads of departments did not sit on interview committees also caused tension.

There was some tension about academic versus administrative conditions of service but this in an international phenomenon. For both groups career-path planning is important as it impacts on motivation. Transparency in promotion processes is also essential.

Recommendation 15

That the MGI implement a robust, tailored performance management system for all tertiary staff including Key Performance Indicators and, where appropriate, targets.

Recommendation 16

That MGI develop a staff development and improvement plan that includes formal induction, mentoring, succession planning and leadership training for Heads of Schools and Heads of Departments.

Recommendation 17

That MGI strengthen its HR capacity to ensure timely filling of vacancies, leave approvals, approvals of schemes of service and support for the performance management system and staff induction.

9. APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Audit Panel

Prof. Robyn Quin, Adjunct Professor, Curtin University of Technology,
Australia(Chairperson)

Prof. Wendy Kilfoil, Director, Department for Education Innovation, University of Pretoria,
South Africa

Assoc. Prof. Nawaz Mohamudally, Associate Professor, University of Technology, Mauritius

Mr Vivek Gupta Ramnarain, Quality Assurance and Accreditation Officer, TEC, Mauritius

Note: Prof. Vunam Venkaiah, Vice Chancellor, Krishna University, India informed the Commission at the last minute that he would not be able to make it for the audit due to unforeseen circumstances.

Audit Secretary

Ms Kamini Peersia, Programme Officer, Tertiary Education Commission, Mauritius

Appendix B: Abbreviations and Definitions

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

ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IT	-	Information Technology
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
LMS	-	Learning Management System
MGI	-	Mahatma Gandhi Institute
MOOC	-	Massive Open Online Course
MoTESRT	-	Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology
R	-	Recommendation
TEC	-	Tertiary Education Commission
UoM	-	University of Mauritius