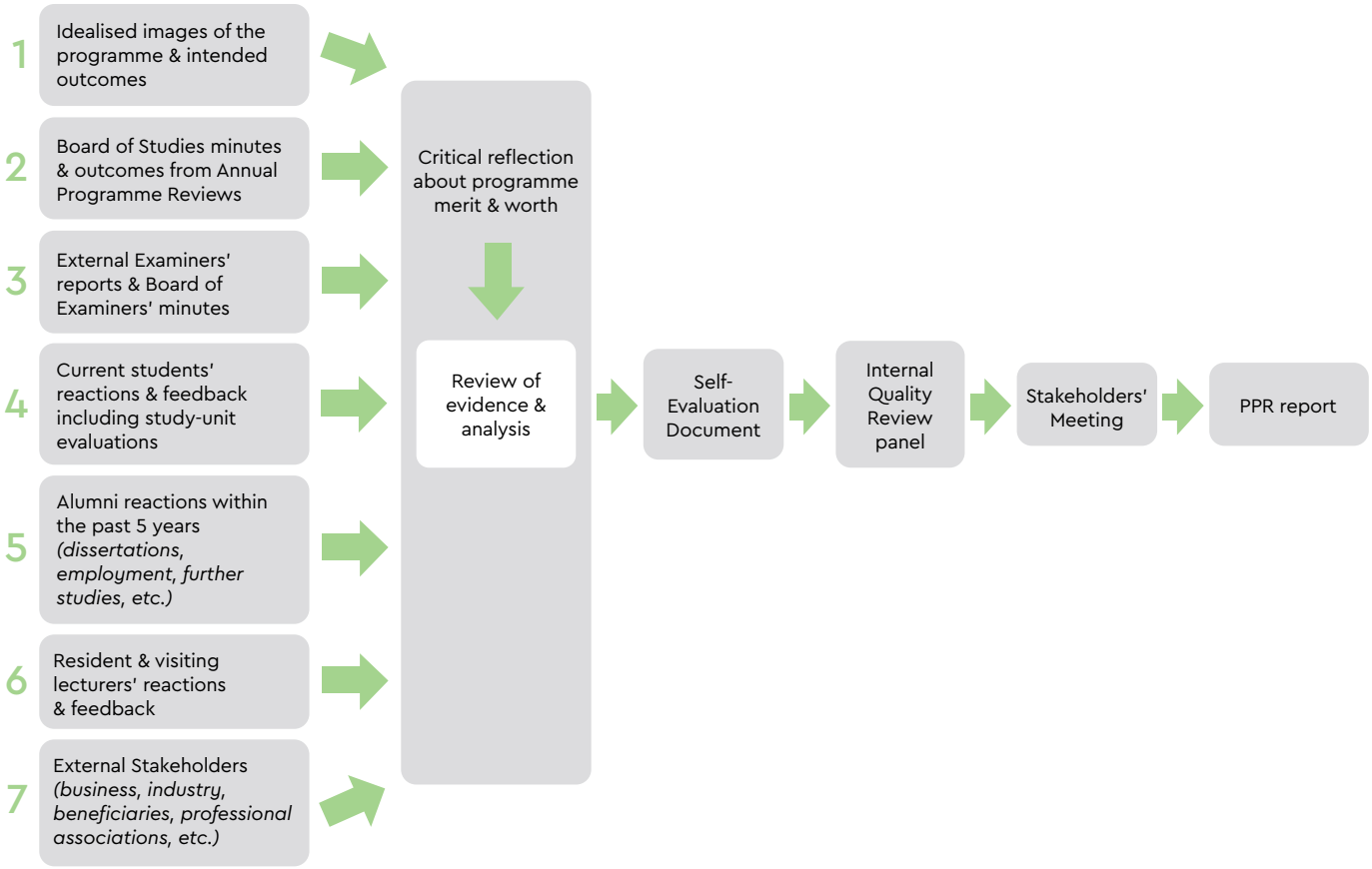
11. Evidence Data to be Collected for the PPR



1. Each programme has documented evidence of its focus, intended competency achievements, and learning outcomes. This documentation – often fragmented in the Stage One/Stage Two proposal forms which are submitted to the Programme Validation Committee (PVC) with respect to any new and substantially revised programmes of study, the prospectus documents, and other informational materials – present an idealised vision of what the programme intends to achieve. A synthesis of this documentation provides a starting point for any gap analyses and actions that may be undertaken during the determination of the merit and worth of the programme.

2. It is the practice of this University to have a Board of Studies (BoS) for each and every programme. This BoS oversees the day-to-day management of the programme including distribution of study-units, delivery of instruction, results, etc. At the end of each academic year the BoS will carry out an Annual Programme Review (APR), to formalise evaluation of and feedback about the programme for the past year. This material, together with the minutes, discussions, and recommendations of the BoS could be used by the PPR Committee as a brief historical background of the programme highlighting achievements and/or issues and concerns.

3. A summary of the issues arising from External Examiners' reports and Boards of Examiners' meetings provides information about accomplishments, problem identification and assessment from both an internal and external perspective. Any action identified as a result of such reports and comments should also be outlined here.

4. Students are a major stakeholder of any academic programme. Their reactions, taken judiciously within context, can offer a number of useful pointers, indicating both strengths and areas for development. A summary of the issues raised through the student feedback exercises (both at study-unit level and prgramme level), together with issues raised by student representatives on the BoS and the FICS Board, represent further evidence of programme operation. The PPR Committee should consider whether the feedback was satisfactory, what strengths and areas for development were identified, whether any issues for concern were raised, and what action has been or should be taken as a result of feedback. Focus groups with current students can enrich knowledge about programme implementation. Furthermore, when possible, representative examples of student feedback could strengthen the documentation of student reactions.

   Student beneficiaries of our programmes are often a heterogeneous group. Some attend a programme of study-units as their main area of study while others take a subset of the study-units as their main ordinary area, their subsidiary area or even as optional units. When collecting information from students, it is advisable to keep these motivational differences in mind.

   An overall summary of the applicants' profile and numbers at entry point provides evidence of the target audience of the programme. Details such as age, gender, full-time/part-time status and students declaring a disability can point to gaps that require remedy when determining worth. Other indicators of student behaviour in the programme include a summary of progression and attrition rates, based upon the percentage of those enrolled who are subsequently successful at each stage of the programme.

5. Alumni of the programme contribute a long-term perspective of the merit and worth of a programme. What kind of employment do graduates of the programme enter upon leaving the programme? What career paths have they taken and how long does it take alumni to get promotions? Do the knowledge and skills acquired during the degree match the jobs they obtain? Do any students proceed to create their own enterprise? What proportion of students proceed to read for further studies and what proportion is unemployed over time? How does this compare with unemployment rates for graduates of other programmes? Is there any evidence of a mismatch in what is being taught to students and the demands and needs of the labour market and, if yes, what action is planned to address such a discrepancy?

   Honours undergraduate programmes normally require a dissertation in partial fulfilment of the degree requirements. The dissertations themselves can be evidence of rigour, academic stature and quality. A brief overview of the topics covered and their respective reports can provide ample evidence of student work in a particular programme. This is even more the case for taught postgraduate programmes which also include a dissertation. One might consult the dissertations with their respective reports (especially those of the external examiners) as further evidence of the type and quality of work generated by the programme.

6. Academics, whether resident or visiting, can also provide their perception and experience of the programme. They can speak of their own involvement with students, the support they receive from the University and the FICS involved. They can address the quality of interaction among faculty and students.

7. External stakeholders such as professional associations (where relevant), beneficiaries and

employers offer another set of perspectives and reactions to the programme. Although one should not expect employers to make a clear distinction between education and training, they contribute pivotal information about the programme. Similar caveats need to be present when collecting information from beneficiaries. The experience and perceptions of these groups could be collected through reports or focus groups as appropriate.

The data collection exercise provides a collage of perceptions, attitudes and experiences of the programme's stakeholders. It is the PPR Committee's responsibility to capture the richness of nuances and reactions presented together with the motivations expressed by the different stakeholders. The main goal is to analyse the incoming information, interpret it and use it in meaningful ways to address any identified gaps by proposing actions to be taken to steer continuous enhancement.

It is highly probable that, in collecting such diverse information, the PPR Committee encounters conflicting information about the programme arising from the different interests involved. The PPR Committee, while being loyal to the diversity of voices, should exercise its judgement in the presentation of the overall academic picture of the programme.