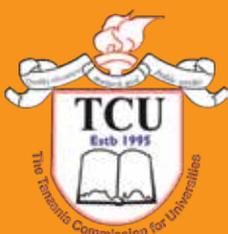


# Inter-University Council for East Africa



## A ROAD MAP TO QUALITY

### Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

**Volume 3: Guidelines for Self Assessment at Institutional Level**

DRAFT

**DAAD** Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst  
German Academic Exchange Service

**HRK** German Rectors' Conference



# **Inter-University Council for East Africa**

## **A Road map to Quality**

Hand book for Quality Assurance in Higher  
Education

**Volume 3: Guidelines for self assessment at  
institutional level**

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## FOREWORD

The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is a strategic institution of the East African Community (EAC) responsible for the development and coordination of higher education and research in the region. EAC considers higher education as critical for the attainment of socio-economic development and regional integration, and as such after having been recognized as the surviving institution of the former Community responsible for coordinating the networking of university institutions in the region, IUCEA has assumed a broader role as a building block for the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development and regional integration. In that regard, the mission of IUCEA now focuses on the promotion of strategic and sustainable development of higher education systems and research for supporting East Africa's socio-economic development and regional integration. IUCEA has set its vision to become a strategic institution of the East African Community responsible for promoting, developing and coordinating human resources development and research in the region.

Following its revitalization and subsequent ratification of the Protocol in 2002, IUCEA initiated a reform process aimed at re-positioning itself in order to address its expanded mandate within the Community. Such reforms became even more necessary after the enactment of the IUCEA Act in 2009, which effectively mainstreamed the institution into the EAC framework. The reforms prompted the need to establish an appropriate environment for harmonization of higher education systems so as to promote the EAC regional integration agenda as envisioned in the Common Market Protocol. Among the important steps towards harmonization of higher education in the region is the setting up of a regional quality assurance system for universities that was initiated in 2006. The project aimed at harmonizing regional quality assurance by establishing common East African quality assurance framework, establish regional quality assurance office at the IUCEA Secretariat, set regional higher education benchmark quality standards based on internationally recognized standards, prepare a use-friendly quality assurance handbook based on existing national benchmark standards and systems, and streamline national and institutional quality assurance systems according to the local perspectives. It is also aimed at promoting international competitiveness of universities in East Africa.

The initiative involves establishment of appropriate guidelines, procedures and standards, including benchmarks for academic programmes. It also focuses on capacity building through providing appropriate training on the implementation of the quality assurance system to staff in universities and national commissions and councils for higher education in the Partner States. The initiative is also linked to the establishment of a regional qualifications framework, whose development is already in progress. The regional qualifications framework will articulate harmonization of education and training systems, and qualifications thereby clearly indicating the programme learning outcomes, the different qualification levels, credit system and recognition of prior learning, among others. Hence, the framework will easily facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications across the region as envisioned in the EAC Common Market Protocol. All these interventions are aimed at transforming East Africa into a common higher education area, as the ultimate goal of the Community.

In developing the regional quality assurance system in higher education in East Africa, IUCEA in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Germany Rectors' Conference (HRK) within the framework of their joint Higher Education Management support programme referred to as "Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES)" started to work on this initiative through a consultative process involving Permanent Secretaries and other senior officials from Ministries responsible for Higher Education in the Partner States, national commissions and councils for higher education, namely the Commission for Higher Education (CHE)

of Kenya, National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) of Uganda, and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) in Tanzania, and universities. Later on the National Council for Higher education of Burundi and the Council for Higher education of Rwanda joined the initiative after the two countries were admitted as members of the EAC. The process involved a number of consultative meetings and workshops at country and regional level, aimed at building consensus and to map out a strategy on how to establish a regional quality assurance framework, including development of an operational tool in the form of a Quality Assurance Handbook. The consultative forums were also aimed at ensuring that all performance indicators and quality benchmarks were agreed upon and owned by all end-user institutions.

Preparation of the Quality Assurance Handbook titled “Roadmap to Quality” that started with the development of the first Draft in March 2007 was carried out in a consultative manner, involving an expert from the Netherlands who was commissioned by DAAD. The expert worked closely with a team conversant with the East African higher education systems, and staff from the national commissions and councils for higher education in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The third draft of the handbook that had been developed by July 2007 was a single volume but after using it in the pilot process it was decided to break it down into four volumes to make it user-friendlier. The four volumes of the handbook are as follows:

- Volume 1: Guidelines for self-assessment at program level
- Volume 2: Guidelines for external quality assurance
- Volume 3: Guidelines for self-assessment at institutional level
- Volume 4: Implementation of a quality assurance system

Volumes 1 and 2 have already been printed and are in use after having undergone refinement through pilot self-assessment and external quality assurance at program level that involved 45 university institutions in the region. Meanwhile, Volumes 3 and 4 have undergone rigorous editing and are now ready for use.

On behalf of the IUCEA Secretariat and on my behalf, I would like to express our full support and commitment to this initiative. We value this initiative as an effective approach in harmonizing the quality of higher education in East Africa. In particular, we wish to extend sincere appreciations to the EAC Partner States and the EAC Secretariat for supporting the establishment of the regional quality assurance system for East Africa, and to the IUCEA Executive Committee for putting in place appropriate institutional framework for operationalization of the system through the use of the quality assurance handbook. The IUCEA Secretariat is convinced that universities in East Africa have much to gain through this unique opportunity where stronger collaboration and networking based on varied experiences among institutions in the region and abroad will be realized.

In order to ensure that the handbook becomes a useful tool for the quality assurance development process to a wider community of universities in the region, about 100 universities staff members in the region, as well as some staff from the national commissions and councils for higher education in the five EAC Partner States (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) have received training on the use of the handbook. The training sessions were carried out in Germany and through several regional workshops in East Africa as a capacity building initiative that IUCEA has been undertaking in collaboration with DAAD, HRK and the national commissions and councils for higher education in the EAC Partner States. Through the capacity building initiative a team of local quality assurance experts has emerged and is now spearheading the process through the development of appropriate quality assurance training modules that are used in training sessions now taking place in the region. For the capacity building program, the selection of staff members to be trained was

based on the need to build up a critical mass of well-informed experts at the IUCEA Secretariat, national commissions and councils for higher education in all the five EAC Partner States, and in universities in the region.

I would like to express sincere appreciations to Drs. Ton Vroeijsstijn [former quality assurance expert of the Dutch Association of Universities, former steering group member of the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), former Secretary of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and international consultant in more than 30 countries], for his leadership and guidance during the development of the quality assurance handbook. Members of the team of East African Quality Assurance experts is highly appreciated for their expertise and editorial inputs in the development of this handbook. These are Prof. Mayunga H.H. Nkunya, the then Executive Secretary of Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) and first Chairperson of the IUCEA Standing Committee on Quality Assurance; Prof. Mike Kuria, Daystar University; Dr. Josephine Arasa, United States International University, and Dr. Halima Wakabi Akbar, Islamic University in Uganda.

In a special way, I wish to sincerely acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the former IUCEA Executive Secretary, Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha in steering the process to establish the regional quality assurance system for East Africa at its first years of inception (2006 – 2010), before his term of office ended. The dedication and commitment of IUCEA Staff in planning, administering and implementing activities towards the establishment of the quality assurance system is highly acknowledged. This spirit is what has significantly contributed to the development of this handbook. In this respect, I wish to extend my sincere appreciations to Dr. Cosam Chawanga Joseph (Quality Assurance Officer), Ms. Juru Marie Eglantine (Assistant Quality Assurance Officer), and Ms. Mildred Warugaba, (Secretary to the Office of Deputy Executive Secretary) for their invaluable contribution to this process.

In a particularly special way, we wish to extend our sincere appreciations to DAAD and HRK, which have been working together within their DIES programme, for extending support in a collaborative manner. Their support draws experience from DAAD's successfully implementation of a project to establish a quality assurance system in higher education in Central America from 2002-2007, and through the support rendered by the two institutions to similar processes in other regions of the world. IUCEA is aware that through the Central American initiative, hundreds of quality assurance officers, self-evaluation coordinators, as well as peers, have been trained, and that in that region a regional multi-stakeholder council was founded and two regional Accreditation Agencies are now in operation. These are success stories from which IUCEA had envisaged to draw experience.

Given the valuable quality assurance guiding principles and checklists contained in the handbook, IUCEA is hopeful of harnessing successful outputs dwelled on the implementation strategies outlined therein, that build on the existing capacities in universities and national commissions and councils for higher education in the Partner States. The varied nature and level of development of structures and capacities in universities is behind the approach of “harmonization of quality assurance systems” adapted for this initiative in East Africa.

Prof. Mayunga H.H. Nkunya,  
**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, IUCEA**

## STATEMENT FROM DAAD

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) as a joint organisation of higher education institutions in Germany promotes international academic relations, primarily through the exchange of students, academicians and researchers. The DAAD is the agency responsible for raising the international profile of the German higher education institutions and simultaneously serves as a “mediating organisation” in the foreign, European, development and higher education policies of the Federal Republic of Germany. Within this frame, the DAAD jointly with the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK), organises the Higher Education capacity development programme referred to as DIES (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies). As its key component, DIES supports the establishment of regional Quality Assurance systems in Higher Education in different parts of the world.

Based on this, IUCEA, DAAD and HRK have identified a number of activities to be carried out in order to fully establish the East African Quality Assurance System, such as (i) organising dialogue events with top leadership of East African Universities, Ministries and Regulatory Bodies on national and international Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education (ii) intensively training Quality Assurance Coordinators of the IUCEA Member Universities and officers of Regulatory Bodies (iii) conducting pilot self-evaluations and peer reviews for about 50 study programmes and (iv) developing subject specific regional benchmark standards. This initiative has been financially supported by funds from the German Ministry for Economic Co-operation on Development (BMZ). Many institutions in Germany and Europe have been providing technical expertise. Most prominently the Project Quality Management of HRK, the University of Oldenburg and institutions in the German State of Lower Saxony have been proactively supporting the learning events.

The starting point of all this has been the development of the “Road Map to Quality”, the East African Quality Assurance Handbook. A joint East African developed a draft version - European expert group coordinated by Prof. Mayunga H.H. Nkunya and Drs. Ton Vroeijenstijn and was approved by the Governing Board of the IUCEA. After this the handbook format and contents have been permanently adapted on the basis of suggestions made by practitioners and lessons learned during the implementation of pilot programme assessments.

The DAAD and HRK are proud that IUCEA and its member institutions in the five countries (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda) have been selecting us as their international partners. We are convinced that this handbook truly reflects the spirit of this joint initiative: highest international standards are combined with down to earth practical instruments – and this gained the formal endorsement by the relevant official bodies. We now wish all of you successful application and concrete improvements arising from assessments,



**Dr. Helmut Blumbach**

Director,  
DAAD Department of Programs, Southern Hemisphere

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## Introduction

This volume is part of the handbook “A Road map to Quality”. one of the outcomes of the workshop supporting a Regional Quality Assurance Initiative in East Africa, organised by the Inter-University Council for East, together with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in June 2006 in Nairobi Kenya. The discussions during the two days showed clearly the need for Higher Education Quality assurance in East Africa. Quality assurance may have different definitions but the basic idea is that Higher Education must convince all stakeholders that they are doing their utmost best to prepare young people to fit in their communities and to lead productive lives.

In the framework of the *Regional Quality Assurance Initiative*, IUCEA with the support of DAAD, organized a training course for the Quality Assurance Coordinators (QAC) from selected universities in East Africa in 2007/2008. In this respect, it was decided that a self-assessment exercise should be organized in selected universities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The self-assessment was followed by an external assessment exercise. Using the experiences of the first round, IUCEA and DAAD organize a second course for QAC in 2008/2009 for another group of selected universities which was similarly followed by self-assessment and external assessment.

The Handbook “A Road Map to Quality” is published in 5 volumes. Each of the volume aims at a specific topic and a specific target group.

Although each of the volume can be used independently, they all form an integral part of the handbook. The handbook contains the following volumes:

- **Volume 1:** *Guidelines for Self- assessment at program level* aims at the faculty/department to learn more about the quality of the programs at offer by means of an effective self-assessment.
- **Volume 2:** *Guidelines for external program assessment at program level* explains the procedures and processes for an external assessment at program level. The specific target group is the external expert team, but also the faculty/department to be assessed.
- **Volume 3:** *Guidelines for Self-assessment at institutional level* aims especially at the central management of an institution and offers an instrument to discover more about the quality of the institution.
- **Volume 4:** *The implementation of a Quality Assurance system* aims at all level of an institution, but is especially useful for the Quality Assurance Coordinators for the development and installation of an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system.
- **Volume 5:** *External Quality Assurance in East Africa* provide the reader with background information about the state-of-the-art in external quality assurance in East Africa and discuss the role of the regulatory bodies in the light of international developments.

**The handbook A Road Map to Quality aim to support the universities in East Africa in:**

- Implementing good practices for quality assurance.
- Applying the standards and criteria, as formulated by competent authorities.
- Developing an adequate IQA system that fits international developments.
- Discovering their own quality by offering self-assessment instruments for IQA, the teaching/ learning process, and for some institutional aspects.

The handbook or parts of it can be downloaded from the website of the IUCEA, i.e. [www.iucea.org](http://www.iucea.org). Hardcopies can be ordered from the IUCEA.

The current volume *Guidelines for Self Assessment at Institutional Level* offers the vice-chancellor and the Quality Assurance Coordinator a tool to organize a self-assessment for the institution as a whole. While faculties are invited to carry out a self-assessment of their programs, it is important that the central management also approach their functioning in a critical self assessments.

The volume is written with a broad and general approach. However, the tool has to be adapted to the specific situation of the university and to the specific situation of the institution for Higher Education.

The content is based on experiences and good practices all over the world. Universities should look at what is going on internationally, while developing quality assurance mechanism. At the same time, universities cannot neglect the developments in the region and in their country.

The most important documents taken into account are the documents prepared by the national councils or commissions for Higher Education:

- In Kenya this is the “*Handbook on Processes, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*” from the Commission for Higher Education (CHE);
- In Tanzania it is the document titled “*Quality Assurance and Accreditation System for Institutions and Programs of Higher Education*” from Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU);
- In Uganda, it is “*the Quality Assurance Framework for Uganda Universities*” from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

Another document that is integrated in the handbook is the so-called Entebbe matrix. The mentioned documents are on the CD attached to this volume.

It is important to have a shared idea about quality and to speak the same language. Section 1 provides the reader with some ideas about quality and quality assurance, while Section 2 contains the tool for a successful self-assessment at institutional level.

## SECTION 1: Quality in Higher Education

The word quality is already used several times without explaining what quality is. However, everybody who thinks about quality and quality assurance is faced with the question: “What is quality?” When talking about quality and quality assurance, it is important to speak the same language. We must understand each other and we must have a shared idea about quality. In this chapter, some general ideas about quality and quality assurance will be explained.

### 1.1 What is quality?

Many discussions on quality start with a quote from the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*:

*“Quality...you know what it is, yet you don’t know what it is. But that’s self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! There’s nothing to talk about. But if you can’t say what Quality is, how do we know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn’t exist at all. But for practical purposes it really does exist. What else are the grades based on? Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others in the trash pile? Obviously some things are better than others... but what’s the ‘betterness’? So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding any place to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What is it?”<sup>1</sup>*

In spite of these reflections by Pirsig, many books and articles have been written to try to discover the nature of quality. But quality is like love. Everybody talks about it and everybody knows what he/she is talking about. Everybody knows and feels when there is love. Everybody recognises it. But when we try to give a definition of it we are left standing empty-handed. The same counts for the concept quality. There is no general consensus on the concept of quality. An absolute definition of quality does not exist because just like beauty quality is in the eyes of the beholder.

While the general concept of quality is already a difficult concept in itself, quality in higher education is much more confusing, because it is not always clear what the “product” is and who the “client”. Is the “graduate” the “product” that we offer society and the labour market? Or is the graduate-to-be, the student, our “client” and the program that we offer the “product”? We only can say that a university has a multiple product system and a multi-client system.

Quality assurance in Higher Education is more complicated than quality assurance in industry because there are so many players in the field. Higher Education has many stakeholders and all stakeholders have their own ideas. We can distinguish the following stakeholders in Higher Education:

- The government or the state
- The employers
- The academic world
- The students

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*Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 1974.*

- The parents
- The Society at large

The concept “quality” is very complex. We cannot speak of *the Quality in Higher Education*, but we have to speak about *qualities*. On the one hand, we have to make a distinction between quality requirements set by the different stakeholders: by the student; academic world, labour market (employers) by society and governments. Each stakeholder will appreciate different aspects of quality. On the other hand, quality is not a simple one-dimensional notion. Quality is multi-dimensional. So there is quality of inputs, quality of process and quality of outputs. All these dimensions have to be taken into account when discussing quality and judging quality. The different views on quality and the multi-dimensional notion of quality mean that it is a waste of time to try to precisely define quality. Absolute, objective quality does not exist. However, if we take our quality seriously and if we seriously try to assure our quality, we have to agree on a workable concept of quality. Taking into account that each player has his or her own ideas about quality, we can agree that we should try to find a definition of quality that fits most of the ideas and that covers most of the expectations of the stakeholders.

With so many stakeholders and players in the field it is not easy to find a definition of quality because each stakeholder has its own ideas and expectations. We may therefore say that *Quality is a matter of negotiating between the academic institution and the stakeholders*. In this negotiation process, each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, his/her requirements. The university or faculty, as ultimate supplier, must try to reconcile all these different wishes and requirements. Sometimes the expectations will run parallel, but they can just as well end up in conflict. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the mission and goals of an institution and into the objectives of a faculty and of the educational program and as far as this concerns research, the research programs. The challenge is to achieve the goals and objectives. If this is the case, then we can say that the institution, the faculty has *quality* (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Quality as an object of negotiation between the relevant parties

As said, an absolute definition of quality does not exist. For the sake of a common understanding, the following description of quality has been adopted

*Quality is achieving our goals and aims in an efficient and effective way, assuming that the goals and aims reflect the requirements of all our stakeholders in an adequate way.*

However, talking about quality we have to take into account the following remarks:

- **Quality is not always the same as efficiency!**

The discussion on quality assessment is often connected with the concept of “efficiency” (saving money, making more rational use of public resources). In assessing quality, an important question will be: “Do we achieve the required level of quality at acceptable cost?” An efficiency-oriented approach as such is a good starting point, but the problem is that efficiency is not always defined as “at acceptable cost”, but often as “at minimal cost”, and this may threaten quality. It may be very efficient to have lectures for a thousand students, but it is not effective. It may be considered efficient to have a very structured degree program with student assessments every four weeks, forcing students to work and to keep up with the program. However, does this method lead to the creation of the “right”, independent, and critically thinking graduate? It may be considered efficient to use only multiple-choice questions for student assessment, but does it enhance verbal and written communication skills?

- **Quality is context bound**

When striving for quality, the main question is: “Do we offer the stakeholder what we promise to offer.” This means that a starting point for judging our quality will be our promises (i.e. goals) and that the verdict “quality or no quality” will be based on the promises. Therefore, we have to look at our quality in the given context. McDonald’s, for example, will strive for quality, and when we eat a fast food meal, we will probably get quality. However, this is not the same quality as we will get when we have dinner in a restaurant with one or two stars in the Guide Rouge of the best restaurants. So, we cannot assess the quality of McDonald’s with the same criteria as those used to assess a star restaurant. This also means that we may never assess a regional university, e.g. in East Africa with the same criteria that we apply to more sophisticated institutions like MIT, Berkley or the ETH Zurich. If a university claims excellence, other criteria count than when a university’s aspiration is to contribute to the development of the country and the region. We cannot assess the quality of the University of the Amazonas against the criteria applied to Berkley. Each level of quality has its price. The only common feature is that we may ask: “Will we get what we expect?” “Will the university do what it promises to do?”

However, although Quality is context bound, all universities also like to play a role on the international stage. This means that an institution has to meet at least the basic standards that are applied to higher education institutions. There is at least a bottom line for the threshold quality, although it is not clear what that bottom line is. This is something that the international community has to decide.

## 1.2 Criteria and standards

Having accepted a workable definition of quality, there is another hot topic: how do I assess the quality? How to measure quality? What are the criteria for measuring quality? What are the standards against which quality is assessed? If we look at what is said about quality, it becomes obvious that it is impossible to identify one set of criteria or standards for the quality of higher education. The parties concerned will have their own criteria and norms derived from their own objectives and/or demands. This means that a government will formulate other criteria than an employer will do. It is impossible to formulate general criteria for higher education in advance. They will differ from discipline to discipline. They will differ from stakeholder to stakeholder. The expectations of the labour market will play a totally different role when assessing the arts and

humanities as opposed electrical engineering for example. The criteria of the different partners may actually conflict. Government may put forward as one of the criteria: *“The program must be organised in such a way that students can finish it with a minimum dropout rate and within the given time”*; or *“the success rate in the first year should be 70%.”* But these criteria may clash with a student criterion, namely that *“the program should offer enough options and enough time for personal development”*. We have no absolute yardstick at our disposal to measure the quality of education. Standards and criteria are also a matter of bargaining and negotiating between the parties involved. An absolute value for the academic level or the quality of the graduates does not exist. What is accepted generally as quality is a matter of opinion.

### Looking for our quality, there are three basic questions:

- Are we doing the right things? (Checking our goals and aims)
- Are we doing the right things in the right way? (Are we in control of the process to achieve our goals and aims?)
- Do we achieve our goals? (Checking our outcomes).

For assessing our quality, we need a yardstick or benchmark. As said, an absolute yardstick, ready for use does not exist. This means we have to look for criteria and standards that can be used. In some cases, the criteria and standards are formulated by one of the stakeholders. Governments often have formulated criteria and standards in the framework of accreditation. In other cases, employers or the professions have formulated standards. When there are no pre-formulated requirements, it is up to the university to decide upon the standards, taking into account international developments (benchmarking).

In many cases, the externally formulated so called standards are often more criteria than standard. A *criterion* can be seen as a specific aspect, decisive for the quality. For example, the criterion can be: *“the university has a clearly formulated mission and vision”*. Or *“the computer facilities must be adequate”*. A *standard* gives the level that a criterion must meet. Sometimes, a government or an accrediting body can give a clear quantitative figure, e.g. the number of computers per student must be X. In most cases, the level of the criterion will be described as *must be adequate*, but what adequate is, is not formulated. In the case of self-assessment by a university, the university has to find out what adequate means. This can be done by a university carrying out a comparison between itself and others that are in the same situation (e.g. benchmarking). In the case of accreditation or external quality assessment, it is left to the group of experts to decide if something is adequate or not.

The quest for quality is not an easy one, especially since there is no absolute quality or objective quality. Nevertheless, we expect higher education to assure its quality, to demonstrate its quality and to have its quality assessed by outsiders. And this is happening all over the world. The National Council for Higher Education of Uganda, the Tanzanian Commission for Universities and the Commission for Higher Education of Kenya have formulated criteria and standards, for an institution, as well as for the core activities of the institution: Teaching/learning, research and community outreach. Comparing the documents from the three agencies, we see that those standards and criteria have a lot in common and looking around in the world we see that they are in line with what is going on in other countries. Everyone is looking at more or less the same aspects for assessing quality. In the United States, Europe, South America, Africa, Asia or Australia, the quality experts and universities are looking at more or less the same aspects, also called *criteria* and *standards*. Sometimes the wording of

the standards and criteria is different, but in most cases they cover the same topics. Looking at the information that all three regulatory bodies are requiring from the institutions when applying for accreditation, one may distil the criteria that are seen as important, as shown in Table 1. The table gives a comparison of the requirements in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

**Table 1: Criteria and standards in the three East African countries**

Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda
Mission and vision	Objectives, mission and vision	Objectives, mission and vision
Academic character	Academic orientation	Academic orientation
Governance	governance	governance
Academic programs	Curricula at offer	Quality teaching and learning
		Quality of research and publications
		Quality of output
Human resources	Academic staff	Academic freedom
Library resources	Facilities	facilities
Physical resources	Amount of land	
Financial resources	Finance and budgeting	Institutional financial management
Planning schedule	Strategic plan	Strategic plan
	Public information	
	Integrity	
<b>Program/curriculum</b>	<b>Program/curriculum</b>	<b>Program/curriculum</b>
Qualified staff	Qualified staff	Qualified staff
Size of the program	Duration of the program	Duration of the programs
Goals and aims		
Admission of students	Admission of students	Admission of students
Content of the program	Content of the program	Content of the program
Assessment process	Assessment process	Assessment process
Academic resources	Academic resources	Academic resources
Evaluation of teaching	Quality control system	Quality control system

### 1.3 The self-assessment for discovering our quality

If we agree upon a shared concept of quality and if we agree upon the criteria and standards to measure our quality, we can ask our selves what is the best way to discover our quality. An important tool in the field of quality assurance is a critical self-assessment, also called, self-evaluation or SWOT- analysis<sup>2</sup>. In the handbook (and thus also in this Volume) the words are used interchangeably.

The quality of a university is basically made at the level of its core activities: teaching/

<sup>2</sup> SWOT stands for analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

learning, research and/or the contribution to society and the community. Before we can analyse the quality of the university as a whole, we need to know the quality of the core activities. Yet, because university policy, university management, and university strategy have a big influence on the quality of the core activities, it is important to organise a self-assessment of the institution as a whole too.

A critical self-assessment is important because we are sometimes too eager to accept that everything is good: “The university is performing well. In all we have never had any complaint. Our students have always been content and employers have never complained about the graduates.”

This may be true, in general. In an educational organisation, which is a professional organisation, the players should always aim to produce quality. Introducing a quality assurance system does not mean that quality is not in good condition. The demand for self-evaluation is not inspired by lack of quality. What it means is that quality has to be examined in a structural manner, within a well-defined framework.

In many cases, a self-assessment serves as preparation for an external assessment by external experts. The self-assessment report (SAR) provides the external experts with basic information. However, a self-assessment has specific value for the university itself too. It provides an opportunity for discovering quality. Therefore the following key questions are important:

- Why do we do what we are doing? Do we indeed do the right things?
- Do we do the right things in the right way?
- Do we have a thorough command of the process to actually realise what we want?
- Do we really achieve what we want to?

An effective self-assessment is time-consuming. It requires some effort by staff and students. Often, it will require an investment of time that has to be taken away from other activities. However, the return and the profit of good self-assessment are high. The self-assessment will provide information not known to everyone: The information often exists, but only a small group knows it; the facts will have another dimension when they are connected to one another.

#### 1.4 Principles of effective self-assessment

Organising an effective self-assessment, one has to take into account some basic principles:

- Primarily, a self-assessment should never be felt as threatening. A self-assessment should not be used to assess an individual, should never be used for punishment or reward, should never be used to blame some one.
- A self-assessment aims at improvement and enhancement of the quality.
- It is necessary to create a broad basis for the self-assessment and to sensitize staff and students. The whole organisation has to prepare itself for it.
- Looking at quality is more than testing the performance. It also means organisational development and shaping the institution. The professional (the staff member) should be made responsible for the quality. Everybody has to be involved for real self-assessment.

- The management of the institution must support fully the self-assessment. Relevant information is needed for an effective policy and good management. The self-assessment serves to acquire structural insight in performance of the university;
- Carrying out a critical self-evaluation demands a good organisation. Primarily someone has to coordinate the self-assessment process. It would be good to charge someone specifically with the self-evaluation project.
- The coordinator has to meet some requirements:
  - In order to obtain the required information, it is important that the coordinator has good entry at all levels of the institution;
  - Therefore, It is very important that the coordinator has good contacts within the university, with the central management as well as with the faculties and the staff members;
  - The coordinator must have the authority to make appointments.
- It is desirable to install a working group in charge of the self-assessment. It is important that the group is structured in such a way that the involvement of all sections is assured. The working group is in charge of the self-assessment, gathering data, analysing material and drawing conclusions.
- It is assumed that self-assessment is an analysis supported by the whole institution. Therefore, it is important that everyone should be at least acquainted with the contents of the self-assessment report and should recognise it as a document from his or her own institution. The working group might organise a workshop or seminar to discuss the draft SAR.
- Not everyone has to agree with all the points in the self-assessment report. For, there may be disagreement as to what are seen as weaknesses and strengths and what is to be considered as the cause of the weaknesses. Should there be very big differences of opinion between certain groups or bodies, then the SAR should report on it.

### 1.5 The organisation of the self-assessment

It is the university that determines how the self-assessment is carried out. However, it is good to use of experiences gained elsewhere. On the basis of experience with self-assessment in other universities some suggestions may be made that can facilitate the process (the organisation of the process is given in Table 2):

- Self-assessment should never be the work of one single person.
- Make a group responsible for the self-assessment.
- This group should consist of some three to five people, chaired by the coordinator appointed by the central management. Students should be involved in the self-assessment.
- A clear timetable should be set up, assuming a total amount of time available of some five to six months between the moment of the formal announcement and the actual visit.
- The topics that have to be considered in the self-evaluation (see Section 2) should be distributed among the committee members and each member made responsible for collecting information, and for analysing and evaluating the situation.
- The draft results should be discussed on the largest scale possible. It is not necessary to have consensus concerning the report; it is, however, necessary for as many people as possible to be aware of its contents.

**Table 2: Organising a self-assessment**

Date	Activity
<b>Eight months before the planned end of the self-assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint the leader of the assessment process</li> <li>• Compose the assessment team, including students</li> </ul>
<b>The following 6 months</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dividing up the subjects to be dealt with</li> <li>• Each person responsible for collecting information and data, collects that information</li> <li>• Writing drafts of the subjects</li> </ul>
<b>Four months after the start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on the drafts in the group</li> <li>• Second draft</li> </ul>
<b>About 5 months after the start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the 2nd draft with all faculty staff and students during an open hearing</li> </ul>
<b>Six months after the start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edit the comments of the hearing for the final draft</li> </ul>
<b>Eight months after the start</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External assessment</li> </ul>

**The self-assessments must be finalised with a self-assessment report (SAR). There are several conditions to be set for an SAR:**

- The self-assessment report (SAR) contains a clear description of the state-of-the-art and a critical analysis of the current situation to see if one is satisfied with it or not. Furthermore it states clearly what actions will be taken to solve the problems.
- The manner in which self-assessments are carried out can vary; also the levels of who is to be involved in the discussion of the report will differ from one institution to the next. Nevertheless, responsibility for the self-assessment lies with the Board.
- The Self assessment report (SAR) should be discussed and accepted by the university community before it is used by external reviewers;
- Because the self-assessment is often the input for an external assessment, it is important for the SAR to follow the specific format as given in the handbook. This means that all topics has to be discussed and not only a selection.
- The SAR is the starting point for the discussions between the external experts and the institution. This implies that everyone who will be involved in the discussion needs to be aware of the contents of the self-evaluation.
- The quantitative data requires special attention. The manner in which data are presented is important for the right interpretation of the data. There is a clear need for standardisation of data such as student numbers, appointment of teaching staff, staff/student ratios, success rates, etc.

### **1.6 Standards and criteria to be applied**

In the self-assessment, an important question is against what standards we will assess the quality?. A university has to formulate its own standards and criteria, but it is essential to take into account the criteria formulated by outsiders, such as the Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in Kenya, the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) in Tanzania or the National

Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Uganda. Furthermore, one should use internationally accepted standards. The following are aspects for the assessment of the quality of our institution:

- Requirements set by the stakeholders
- Philosophy, Mission, vision, of the institution
- Policy plan
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Funding and Financial Management
- Educational activities
- Research
- Community outreach
- Benchmarking
- Quality assurance
- Achievements/outcomes
- Satisfaction of the stakeholders

**In Section 2** for each quality aspect, criteria are formulated, taking into account the standards and criteria as formulated by the **national regulatory agencies of the three countries**. These criteria and standards from the three countries are included in the list of criteria. This was only possible as far as the three countries have formulated the standards in more or less the same way. However, there are some specific, more detailed requirements, set by the national regulatory bodies that only apply to the universities in that specific country. It is therefore left to the university to include those specific requirements in their self-assessment.

### 1.7 An analysis Model for the Self-Assessment of the Institution

In order to map the quality in a self-assessment, we need a clear model to prevent looking at some aspects and ignoring others. Figure 2 shows a model for the analysis of quality of the institution. For the critical self-assessment, this analysis model will be used.

In section 2, under the heading of the aspects such as. *Mission, Vision, Goals and Aims, Quality Assurance, Facilities and Infrastructure*<sup>3</sup> the criteria to be met are given.

Concerning criteria, we have to keep in mind that there are no absolute and objective criteria and standards. The criteria for assessing the quality given in the handbook are based on:

- The common denominator of the criteria as formulated by:
  - the Commission for Higher Education of Kenya
  - the Tanzanian Commission for Universities
  - the National Council for Higher Education of Uganda.
  
- The criteria as formulated in the Entebbe Matrix

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<sup>3</sup> The numbers refer to the numbers of the segment in the model

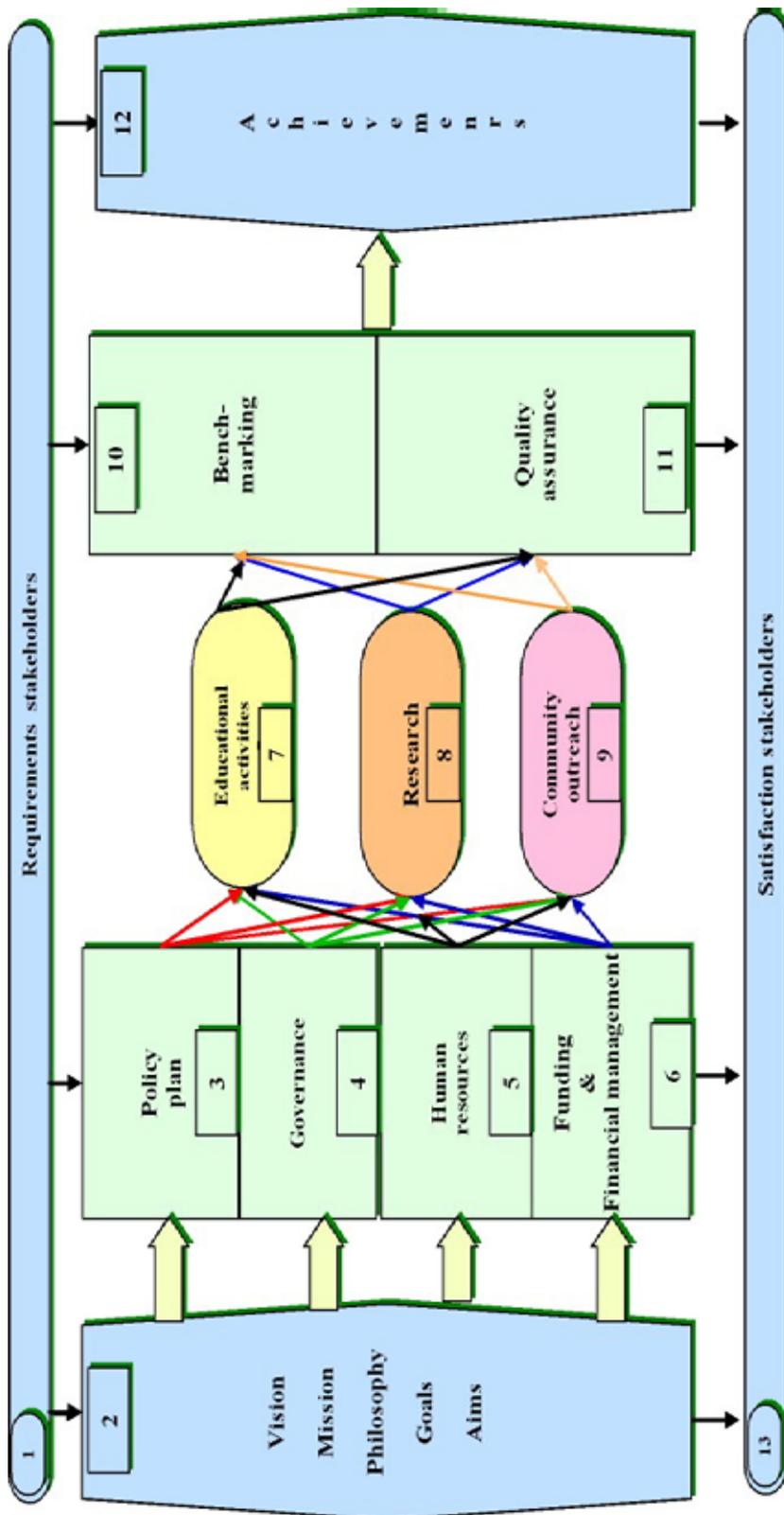
- The criteria as formulated by external quality assessment agencies, e.g. European, American, Asian, Australian and South African accrediting bodies, among others. After studying many sets of standards and criteria, a common denominator has been formulated. To verify compliance of its own criteria, a university can use the regional criteria benchmark.

In general, one may say that the formulated criteria can be seen as the minimum criteria.

An explanation and interpretation of the criteria is given where necessary.

The self-assessment aims at finding evidence that the institution is meeting the set criteria. Therefore, one has to look at the criteria and try to find indications of meeting the criteria:

- Give a description of the state-of-the-art of the aspect
- Make a critical analysis of the state-of-the-art. (Is one satisfied with it or not?)
- Describes the strengths and weaknesses concerning the mentioned aspect
- What evidence is there that you are meeting the criteria?
- If there are problems or if you are not satisfied, what actions are planned to overcome the shortcomings?



To help you to find evidence, under the heading “looking for evidence” a set of questions are formulated that can be used in finding the needed indications. This is not a conclusive list. Be aware that the questions are not to be seen as a questionnaire that need to be completed. **They are only hints.**

*If it is the first time the institution is involved in a structured self-assessment, there will be a lot of blank spots. It will not always be possible to fill all segments. So a number of aspects will be left unanswered this time, but will force the institution to take action. Do not worry about it. This is something for the improvement in the future.*

**The basic rules to apply in the self assessments are:**

*All aspects (segments of the model) need to be discussed. It is not possible to make a selection.*

- *For each aspect the following steps are to be taken:*
  - *description*
  - *analysis*
  - *formulation strengths and weaknesses*
  - *evidence for meeting the criteria*
  - *action plan for improvement*
  
- *When it is the first time, do not worry too much about white spots. Include them in the action plan*

## Section 2: The self assessment

### 2.1 The quality aspects to be assessed

#### i) Requirements of stakeholders

The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of all stakeholders.

#### Explanation

Higher Education has many stakeholders and each stakeholder has its own ideas about quality: the government or the state, the employers, the academic world, the students and parents, and society at large. Each stakeholder will appreciate different aspects of quality. Because each stakeholder has its own ideas and expectations, we may say that *Quality is a matter of negotiating between the stakeholders*. In this negotiation process, each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, his/her requirements. The university, as an ultimate supplier, must try to reconcile all these different wishes and requirements. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the expected goals and objectives/outcomes of the institution. This regards the three core activities: teaching/learning, research and community outreach.

#### Looking for evidence

- Does the university have a clear idea about the requirements set by the government?
- Does the university know clearly the requirements of academia?
- Does the university know the needs and requirements of the labour market?
- Does the university analyse the needs and requirements of the students/parents?
- Does the university analyse the needs and requirements of the society?
- How does the university balance the requirements of the different stakeholders?

#### ii) Mission, vision, aims and objectives

- The university has a clearly formulated mission statement.
- The mission statement is publicly known.
- The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context
- The university has a clear vision on its role in society.

#### Explanation

Quality assessment and the self-analysis have to start by looking at the formulated mission and vision, the formulated goals and aims, and the formulated expected outcomes ( i.e. the standards set by the institution itself or an outside body, like an accreditation agency) 4.

#### Looking for evidence

- What is the university's vision on the academic training it provides?
- What is the university's vision on its research activities?

4 Objective: An objective is:

- a specific statement about what students are expected to learn or to be able to do as a result of studying a programme: more specifically this is a learning objective;
- a measurable operationalisation of a policy, strategy or mission: this is an implementation objective.

Aim: An aim is an overall specification of the intention or purpose of a programme of study or institutional mission or policy

- *What is the university's vision on its role in the society?*
- *Is the vision and mission known to the university community and do staff and students share the vision and mission?*
- *Has the vision ( i.e. the long-term aims) been translated into a clearly formulated mission statement (i.e. targets to be met in the short-term)?*
- *Has the mission statement been translated into achievable and operationalised aims and objectives?*
- *What is the specific profile of this university compared with other universities in the country in question? In the region?*

### iii) **The policy plan**

*The university has a clear policy plan and strategic plan formulated in line with its mission statement.*

#### **Explanation**

The mission and vision must be translated into a clear policy and strategic plan. The mission statement must be operationalized in achievable policy goals

#### **Looking for evidence**

- *Does the university has a clear policy in line with its mission and vision?*
- *Has the policy been adequately translated into a strategic plan?*
- *Who was involved in formulating the policy and strategic plan?*
- *Are policy and strategic plan well known to all academic staff and students? Is there a general agreement on this?*
- *Does the strategic plan reflect:*
  - *The types of programs being offered?*
  - *The choice of research fields?*
  - *The priorities set?*
  - *The main activities of the university?*

### iv) **Governance**

- *The governance structure of the university is clear and adequate*
- *The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly fixed.*

#### **Looking for evidence**

- *What kind of management structure does the university have: centralised and top down or decentralised and bottom up?*
- *Has the role and functions of the central management, faculty management and staff been clearly described?*
- *Does the academic staff participate in the decision-making process on teaching, research and community outreach?*
- *Do students participate in the decision-making process in relation to their education?*
- *Has the management structure of the university been endorsed by the academic community?*
- *Is the internal organisation structure fit for purpose?*
- *What management committees are in place? Are they working adequately?*

## v) Human resources (HR)

- The university takes care of high-quality faculty staff and support staff by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis and by means of an adequate staff appraisal system
- The university provides for:
  - a system of staff development to enhance the knowledge and skills of faculty and supporting staff in conducting activities that have a direct influence on the quality of teaching-learning. This should include the formulation of a concrete personnel development plan;
  - evaluation of the effectiveness of the provided training
  - compilation of records of education, experience, training, and other essential qualifications required of lecturers and supporting staff.
- The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, faculty members and other personnel to be conscientious in their thoughts and speech.
- The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, faculty members and other personnel

### Looking for evidence

- How does the university select and appoint its academic staff?
- Is an adequate staff appraisal system in place for use in evaluating performance and promotion?
- How is staff performance evaluated?
- What opportunities are given for staff/HR development and training?
- How does the university evaluate the efficiency of its staff/HR development activities?
- How does the university stimulate the ethics of its students, academics and other staff?

## vi) Funding and financial management

- The university has adequate funding to achieve its goals and aims.
- The university has an adequate financial management system

### Looking for evidence

- How is the university funded? (What percentage of the budget is public funding, student contributions, external funding?)
- Are the sources of the financial resources and the conditions attached to the funding stated transparently? Do this restrict the university's decision-making autonomy in teaching and research?
- Are the goals and aims realistic and achievable with the provided funding?

## vii) Educational activities

Teaching/learning is one of the core activities of a university. To determine the quality of the teaching/learning process and the quality of curricula, faculties/departments have to evaluate their programs individually. The outcomes must be used to get a general overview of the quality of the educational provisions. For self-analysis at program level and the criteria on teaching/learning, see Volume 1 of this Handbook.

The outcomes of the self-assessment at program level will be used for assessing the quality of the core activity teaching and learning. At the institutional level an analysis needs to be

made from the following aspects:

- The programs
- Student assessment
- Quality of the staff
- Students admission
- Facilities and infrastructure

#### (a) *The programs*

*The programs at offer in the university:*

- *are meeting the expectations of the stakeholders*
- *have clearly formulated expected learning outcomes*
- *are coherent*
- *are up-to-date*

#### **Explanation**

Within one or more faculties, the university must offer a broad range and variety of academic programs. The programs should be in line with the expectations of the stakeholders and should be in line with the mission and vision of the university. The objectives and the expected learning outcomes<sup>5</sup> must make this link clear.

#### **Looking for evidence**

- *Does the university has a clear educational policy, expressing evidently the principles of choosing the programs and settling its profile?*
- *Does the policy expresses clearly rules for curriculum design and curriculum revision, inclusive the involvement of all stakeholders? Are the academic programs are in line with the mission statement of the university and principles of employability?*
- *Are the programs are appropriate to offer an academic degree?*
- *Are the programmes at offer based on an overarching didactic concept that has been adequately communicated and realised amongst the teaching staff?*
- *Do the academic degrees correspond to international standards?*

#### (b) *Student assessment*

- *The university has well functioning student assessment systems through all programs at offer and clear rules to assure the quality of the assessments.*
- *The university has a clear policy to ensure that the examinations are objective, equivalent and trustworthy*
- *The university takes care of the consistency of the examinations; consistency between the programs and consistency in time*
- *The university has a policy to promote a variety of assessments methods*
- *The university takes care that examination committees function adequately and performs the statutory tasks*

**5 Learning outcome:** A learning outcome is the specification of what a student should learn as the result of a period of specified and supported study (INQAAHE,; Harvey, L., 2004–6, *Analytic Quality Glossary, Quality Research International*)

**Objective:** An objective is a specific statement about what students are expected to learn or to be able to do as a result of studying a programme: more specifically this is a learning objective. (INQAAHE,; Harvey, L., 2004–6, *Analytic Quality Glossary, Quality Research International*)

## Explanation

Student assessment is an important element in higher education. The outcomes of the assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge that exists on testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the efficiency of teaching and learner support. It is the responsibility of the faculty/department to assure the quality of the student assessment. The central management must have a good policy and good control mechanism to check the decentralized activities.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other program objectives;
- be fit for purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- have clear and published grading/marking criteria;
- take into account all of the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures;
- inform students clearly about the assessment strategy being used for their program, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied in the assessment of their performance.

## Looking for evidence

- *To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover the objectives of the courses and of the program as a whole?*
- *Do the assessments have clear and published grading/marking criteria? Are the pass/fail criteria clear?*
- *Are a variety of assessment methods used? What are they?*
- *Are the assessment/examination regulations clear?*
- *Are the procedures clear? Are they well known? Well followed?*
- *Are any safeguards in place to ensure objectivity?*
- *Are the students satisfied with the procedures? What about complaints from students?*
- *Do clear rules exist for re-assessments and are students satisfied with these?*

A special form of student assessment is the final project (essay, thesis or assignment). This requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and their ability to manipulate the knowledge in a new situation.

- *Do clear regulations exist for the final project/final essay?*
- *Are the assessment criteria for the final project clear?*

- *Is the level of the final project/final essay satisfactory?*

### (c) Quality of Staff

- *The staff is competent and qualified*
- *Recruitment and promotion of academic staff are based on merit system, which includes teaching, research and services*
- *Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and aptitude.*
- *Time management and incentive system are directed to support quality of teaching and learning.*
- *There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment.*
- *Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented.*
- *There is a well-planned staff appraisal system based on fair and objective measures in the spirit of enhancement which are carried out regularly*

#### Explanation

The quality of the academic staff is the key to the quality of the university. There will be no quality without qualified and competent staff. Looking at the criteria, we have to look at:

- The size of the staff and their qualifications
- The staff/HR management.

#### Looking for evidence

- *Is the academic staff competent and qualified for their job?*
- *Are there any problems with the human resources? Age profile? Vacancies difficult to fill?*
- *What difficulties are there in attracting qualified staff?*
- *What policy is pursued with regard to the employment of staff, both in teaching and research?*
- *How are teachers prepared for the teaching task?*
- *What about teaching load? The staff/student ratio? The staff/graduate ratio?*
- *Is staff recruitment based on experience in teaching and research?*
- *Is there a system of staff appraisal?*
- *What role do teaching qualifications and teaching activities play in the career of the staff members?*
- *What does the university think of its HR policy so far?*
- *What future developments are there?*

### (d) Students admission

- *The university has clearly formulated admission criteria for undergraduate and graduate programs*
- *If there is selection, the procedure and criteria are clear, adequate and transparent*

#### Explanation

It is important to attract the right students and to select the students that can finish the academic training.

#### Looking for evidence

- *How do you analyse the development of the student intake? Reasons to worry? Causes of*

problems? Prospects for the future?

- What are the admission procedures? Are students selected? If so, how are they selected?
- What are the requirements?
- What policy is pursued with regard to the intake of students? Does the university aim to increase the intake or to stabilise it? Why?
- What measures are taken to effect the quality and size of the intake? What effect do these measures have?

### (e) Facilities and infrastructure

- The physical resources for the educational activities including equipment, materials and information technology are sufficient
- Equipment is up-to-date, readily available and effectively deployed
- University computer centres provide a highly accessible and reliable computer network infrastructure that enables the campus community to fully exploit information technology for teaching, research and development, services and administration.

#### Explanation

Facilities and resources should be in line with the formulated goals and aims and with the designed program. Facilities are also connected to the teaching/learning strategy. For example, if the philosophy is to teach in small working groups, small rooms must be available. Computer-aided instruction can only be realised with enough computers for the students. The main learning resources consist of books, brochures, magazines, journals, posters, information sheets, internet and intranet, CD-ROMs, maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery and others.

#### Looking for evidence

Teaching rooms

- Are enough lecture halls, seminar rooms, laboratories, reading rooms, and computer rooms available? Do these meet the relevant requirements?
- Is the library sufficiently equipped for education?
- Is the library within easy reach (location, opening hours)?
- Are laboratory facilities and support staff sufficient?
- Do the laboratories meet the relevant requirements?

Didactic aids and tools

- Are sufficient audio-visual aids available?
- Are there enough computers? Appropriate and enough computer programs (computer-aided education, maths programs, design programs, etc)?
- To what extent do the facilities/infrastructure promote or hinder delivery of the program?
- Is the total budget for aids and tools sufficient?

### viii) Research

The second core activity of a university is research. To learn more about the quality of

research, we have to look at two levels, namely at institutional level and research program/ research unit level. At institutional level we have to analyse:

- The university's research policy
- The university's intellectual property rights policy
- The code of conduct for research
- The code of ethics for research

At the level of the research program or research unit, we are interested in the quality of the research and its impact. This means that some information can be collected at institutional level. Other information can only be collected at the level of the research unit itself.

### *University research policy*

*The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding about research profile and research activities*

### **Explanation**

The University Research Policy sets the direction of research within the university. It specifies objectives of research within the university, research strategies, the code of conduct for research, and the responsibility of the Research Management Unit. In general, the University Research Policy covers the following aspects:

- A mission statement concerning research
- The governance of research
- The relation between academic policies, academic freedom, and research
- Objectivity in research policy
- Research approval process
- Research ethics and integrity in research
- How to cope with sponsored projects and sponsored research services; conflicts of interest, conflict of commitment, and research misconduct
- Policy on consultancy
- Policy on undergraduate and graduate research
- Research supervision and research risk compliance
- Policy on environmental health and safety
- Research Development Fund Policy
- Policy on the protection of human subjects in research
- Policy on the use of animals in research
- Research quality and research assessment

### **Looking for evidence**

*Check how the university's research policy covers the above-mentioned topics. Are you satisfied with the situation as it is?*

## The university Intellectual Property Rights policy

*The university has a clear policy, for the protection of creative efforts and especially for the protection of economic investment in creative efforts (Intellectual Property Right Policy).*

### Explanation

Intellectual property is a broad term for the various rights, which the law provides to protect creative effort, and especially to protect economic investment in creative effort. It includes copyrights, patents, designs, trade marks, circuit layouts, and confidential information. The University Intellectual Property Rights Policy has the following objectives:

- To establish a framework for the encouragement of research, innovation, invention, creative work and technology transfer.
- To set out policies in relation to Intellectual Property Rights arising from research, innovation, invention and creative output, and the management, commercialisation and exploitation of such rights.

Research conducted by or on behalf of, or supported by the university, must comply with the intellectual property rights policy established by the university. In general, the university's Intellectual Property Rights Policy covers the following:

- Policy on copyright ownership
- Administrative procedure for implementing the copyright policy
- Policy and guidelines on the reproduction of copyrighted materials for teaching and research
- Policy and guidelines on rights to the results of extramural projects or programs
- Policy to permit use of the university's name
- Policy on patents

### Looking for evidence

- *Has the university formulated a policy to protect intellectual property rights?*
- *Does it function adequately or are there any problems?*
- *How does the university cope with the problems?*

## Code of conduct for research/code of ethics for research

*The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics.*

### Explanation

A university must be committed to the highest standards of accountability and integrity in its research practices. Research and development activities should therefore be guided by a code of conduct for research which prescribes standards of work performance and ethical conduct of researchers.

Research Ethics Committees have to be set up to consider applications to conduct research. The objectives of the Research Ethics Committees are to maintain ethical standards of practice

in research, to protect subjects of research/experiments and research workers from harm or exploitation, to preserve the subject's rights, and to provide reassurance to the public that this is being done. Among other things, the Research Ethics Committees deal with the following:

- Research involving human subjects
- Research involving animal experimentation
- Administration of biohazards
- Research misconduct
- Conflicts of interest
- Secret and classified research
- Management of research data and records

### Looking for evidence

- *Has the university formulated a code of conduct and a code of ethics?*
- *Does the university have a Research Ethics Committee*
- *If no such committee is in place, how does the university cope with ethical questions?*

### ix) Community outreach

<i>The university has clear guidelines for consultancy and community outreach</i>
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### Explanation

A university is not only responsible for training academics and doing research. It is also responsible for serving society. This will differ from country to country. Consultancy involves a broad range of activities. In general, the term consultancy covers the provision of professional advice or services to an external party for a fee or other non-monetary consideration. Among other things, guidelines on providing consultancy cover the following:

- Policy objectives
- Policy on key policy principles, compliance, accountability framework, legal and financial protection, conflicts of interest
- Procedures for the contribution to society and the community
- Procedures for university/academic consultancy
- Procedures for private consultancy

### Looking for evidence

- *What role does the university play in the local, national and international community?*
- *What are the key activities, which of these lie outside normal teaching or research? How do they relate to the university mission?*
- *What are the non-profit activities of the university?*
- *Is there a clear policy on consultancy and the contribution to society and the community?*
- *How is the income from consultancy regulated?*

## x) Benchmarking

*The university uses the instrument of benchmarking for analysing the quality of its core activities and its management.*

### Explanation

The UNESCO definition of benchmark is: A standard, a reference point, or a criterion against which the quality of something can be measured, judged, and evaluated, and against which outcomes of a specified activity can be measured. The term, benchmark, means a measure of best practice performance. The existence of a benchmark is one necessary step in the overall process of benchmarking<sup>6</sup>.

Benchmarking is a process that enables comparison of inputs, processes or outputs between institutions (or parts of institutions) or within a single institution over time. It is important for a university to compare its functioning with equivalent institutions in the country, the region and internationally.

### Looking for evidence

- *Is the university using the instrument of benchmarking? How is it using the instrument?*
- *Does the executive management use the collected information?*
- *What is done with the benchmarking?*

## xi) Quality assurance

### Criterion

*A university has an efficient internal quality assurance system.*

### Explanation

A robust and well functioning system of internal quality assurance is necessary to deliver quality and to provide “consumer” protection.

### Looking for evidence

*To find evidence that the IQA system is working well, one has to evaluate the IQA system in the framework of the institutional self assessment. For the self-assessment of the IQA system, see Volume 4 of the handbook.*

## xii) Achievements

*A university has the means and opportunity to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes.*

### Looking for evidence

- *Are the achieved outcomes ( our graduates; the research output; services to society) in line with the formulated goals and aims?*

<sup>6</sup> Vlăsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., and Pârlea, D., 2004, Quality Assurance and Accreditation: Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions (Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES) Papers on Higher Education, ISBN 92-9069-178-6.

- How does the university check that it achieves what it wants to achieve?
- If the achievement is not satisfactory, what remedial action does the university take?

### xiii) Stakeholder satisfaction

#### Criterion

A university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from the stakeholders.

#### Explanation

After analysing the mission of the university, the management structure, policy and strategic planning, human resource management and the core activities, the university has to analyse the satisfaction of all stakeholders. What do they think about the performance? How do we know that?

#### Looking for evidence

- Is regular student evaluation carried out? How is it done? Is it adequate?
- What is done with the results of student evaluations?
- Does the university have an insight into the opinion and feedback of graduates when they are employed?
- Are the complaints or positive feedback received from alumni used to adapt the programs?
- Are there any structured contacts with employers and the labour market for obtaining feedback?
- How do the employers appreciate graduates?
- Are there any specific complaints?
- Are specific strengths appreciated by employers?
- Does the university have any tools to obtain feedback from society?

## 2.2 The Self-assessment report (SAR)

After finishing the self-assessment, one will write down the outcomes of the assessment in a Self Assessment Report (SAR). The SAR is an important document. On one hand it contains the basic information for an external expert team that will come for an institutional audit or institutional accreditation. On the hand it is the basic document for the university's formulation of an action plan or quality plan for the coming years.

The content of the SAR follows the lines of the aspects discussed during the self-assessment process.

For each aspect to be treated one should:

- Clearly describe the state-of-the art. An outsider must understand the situation.
- Analyse the situation. What is your opinion about it? Satisfied or not? If not, why not?
- Do you meet the formulated criteria? What evidence can you provide?
- What are the weakness concerning this aspect? What are the strengths?

### Some remarks about writing the SAR

The SAR is not a questionnaire that has to be completed. This means that the questions under the heading “looking for evidence” should not be answered by “Yes”, “no”, or “I do not know”. The leading questions do not need to be treated separately. You can write a coherent text, covering the hints. Do not repeat the text of these Guidelines in the SAR. The heading of the aspect is sufficient.

### Content of the self-assessment report

Table 3 defines the content of the self-assessment report. Be sure to discuss the report within the faculty and ensure that everybody is able to recognize himself/herself in this picture.

**Table 3: Content of a self-assessment report at institutional level**

<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How was the self-assessment carried out?</li><li>• Short description of the university and the faculties/department</li><li>• The specific profile of the university</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 1: Requirements of stakeholders</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Mission, Vision, Goals and Aims</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 The policy plan</li><li>2.2 Governance<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.2. Human Resources management</li></ul></li><li>2.3 Funding and financial management</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 3: The management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 The policy plan</li><li>2.2 Governance<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.2. Human Resources management</li></ul></li><li>2.3 Funding and financial management</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 3 The core activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.1 The educational activities</li><li>3.2 Research</li><li>3.3. Community outreach</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 4: Quality assurance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>4.1 Internal Quality Assurance system</li><li>4.2 Benchmarking</li></ul>
<b>Chapter 5: Achievements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>5.1 Achieved outcomes (graduates)/graduate profile</li><li>5.2. Research out put</li><li>5.3. Community outreach</li></ul>

**Chapter 6: Stakeholder satisfaction**

6.1. Opinion - Students

6.2. Opinion - Alumni (graduates)

6.3. Opinion - Labour market

6..4 Opinion - Society

**Chapter 7 Strengths-weaknesses analysis**

7.1 Summary of strengths

7.2 Summary of weaknesses

7.3 Quality plan for the coming years

**Strengths/weaknesses analysis**

The self-assessment is followed by a strengths-weaknesses analysis. At the same time, this serves as a check to see how far the institution is in compliance with the given criteria. This is best done with Table 4 and the checklist (see the appendix I). There are 13 specific aspects for assessment, and 52 sub-criteria in total. The checklist in the appendix I shows all the criteria and sub-criteria.

The quality of the different aspects of the program will be assessed on a scale of 1-7. The marks have the following meaning:

1 = absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made

2 = inadequate, improvements necessary

3 = inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate

4 = adequate as expected

5 = better than adequate

6 = example of good practice

7 = excellent

**Table 4: Aspects for institutional assessment**

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Requirements of stakeholders							
2	Mission, vision, goals and aims							
3	Policy plan							
4	Governance							
5	Human resource							
6	Funding and Financial management							
7	Educational activities							
8	Research							
9	Community outreach							
10	Benchmarking							

11	Internal Quality Assurance								
12	Achievements								
13	Satisfaction of stakeholders								

The overall assessment of the different aspects is based on the scores given to each sub-aspect in the category. But, of course not all sub-aspects have the same weight. This means that you can not calculate an average mathematically. You have to balance the various sub-aspects and to judge the weighting of each of them. Positive aspects may compensate for some negative ones. Marking each aspect leads to a verdict on each aspect of the model. Filling in the total score in Table 4 produces a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses.

Do not start to complete the checklist, before you have finished the text of the SAR. **First the text and then the marking, and not the other way round.** By doing so, the marks may help you to see if there is any discrepancy between the marks and the wording.

### Summary of strengths

Summarise the points that the university considers to be its strengths and mark the points that you are proud of.

### Summary of weaknesses

Indicate which points the department considers to be weak and in need for improvement. Also indicate what you are going to do about this.

## 2.3 The follow up after the self-assessment

The self-assessment report will lead to many follow-up activities:

- *If connected with an external assessment, the expert team will visit the university and discuss with you the SAR. The assessment might lead to recommendations for improvement*
- *If not connected with any formal external assessment, the university may decide to invite some colleagues from other universities to carry out an inter-collegial assessment and ask for the formulation of recommendations*
- *In all cases, the outcomes of the self-assessment must be translated into a quality plan that shows what activities the university will undertake in the near future. The self-assessment will show us where we are now and will give us the direction to where we would like to be say in 5 years' time.*

Only with a clear follow up and a quality and action plan, will the investment in the self assessment and the SAR make sense.

## Appendix 1: Checklist on the Quality of an Institution

Requirements of stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the government.</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the labour market</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the students/parents</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of the academic world</li> </ul>							
<b>Overall opinion</b>							
<b>The mission statement</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clearly formulated mission statement</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mission statement is publicly known</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear vision on its role in society.</li> </ul>							
<b>Overall opinion</b>							
<b>The policy plan</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear policy and strategic plan formulated in line with the mission statement.</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy has adequately been translated in a strategic plan</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The policy plan regulates clearly the programs at offer, the research and the community outreach</li> </ul>							
<b>Overall opinion</b>							
<b>Governance</b>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The governance structure of the university is clear and adequate</li> </ul>							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly defined.</li> </ul>							
<b>Overall opinion</b>							
<b>Human resources</b>							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university takes care of high-quality faculty staff and support staff by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis by means of an adequate staff appraisal system</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university develops the body of knowledge possessed by its academics and support staff to keep pace with changes in each academic discipline.</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university provides for a system of staff development</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, academics and other staff to be conscientious in thoughts and , speech.</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, academics and other personnel</li> </ul>									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>Funding</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has adequate funding to achieve the goals and aims.</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has an adequate financial management system</li> </ul>									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>Educational activities</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programs at offer meet the expectations of the stakeholders</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programs have clearly formulated learning outcomes</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The programs are coherent and up to date</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student assessment is adequate and efficient</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student assessment is objective and trustworthy</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student assessment is consistent in time and between the programs</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student assessment is done according a variety of methods</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The examination committees function adequately</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The staff is competent and qualified</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment and promotion of staff is based on merit system, including teaching, research and community outreach</li> </ul>									

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a well functioning appraisal system</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has clearly formulated admission criteria</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If there is a selection, the procedure and criteria are clear, adequate and transparent</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities and infrastructure are sufficient and adequate</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities and infrastructure are up-to date</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The computer facilities are adequate</li> </ul>									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>Research</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding about research profile and research activities</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear policy, for the protection of creative efforts and especially for the protection of economic investment in creative efforts (Intellectual Property Right Policy).</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics.</li> </ul>									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>The contribution to society and the community</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has clear guidelines on consultancy and community outreach</li> </ul>									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>Benchmarking</b>									
The university uses the instrument of benchmarking for analysing the quality of its core activities and its management.									
<b>Overall opinion</b>									
<b>Quality Assurance</b>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear policy and procedures for QA</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has an adequate monitoring system</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a periodic review of the core activities (education, research and community services)</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear quality assurance system of the student assessment</li> </ul>									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The university has a clear quality assurance of the quality of the staff</li> </ul>									

• Idem and adequate quality assurance of the facilities								
• The university carries out self assessments on a regular basis								
• The university has a well functioning management Information systems								
• The university has a quality assurance handbook								
<b>Overall opinion</b>								
<b>Achievements</b>								
• The university has the means and opportunities to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes.								
<b>Overall opinion</b>								
<b>Satisfaction of Stakeholders</b>								
The university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from stakeholders								
<b>Overall opinion</b>								
<b>Overall verdict</b>								

## Appendix 2: List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CHE	Commission for Higher Education
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Consortium for Accreditation
ECTS	European Credit transfer System
EDIA	Evaluation, Development, Implementation, Audit/Assessment
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association of Quality Assurance
EQA	External Quality Assessment
EUA	European University Association
FTE	Full time equivalent
GATE	Global Alliance for Transnational Education
HR	Human resource
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRK	German Rectors' Conference
IAUP	International Association of University Presidents
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
IUCEA	Inter-University Council of East Africa
JQI	Joint Quality Initiative
UOIA	Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NACTE	National Council for Technical Education
NAO	Netherlands Accreditation Organisation. Nowadays NVAO
NVAO	Netherlands/Flemish Accreditation Organisation
PDCA	Plan-do-check-act
PI	Performance indicator
QA	Quality Assurance
QAD	Quality Assurance Division
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SAR	Self-assessment report
SWOT-analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis
TCU	Tanzanian Commission for Universities
TEEP	Transnational European Evaluation project

## Appendix 3: Glossary

***This is an international analytic glossary of issues related to quality in higher education***

*Each item is listed below with a core definition synthesized from various sources. For a full analytic review including context, associated issues, related terms and sources click on the underlined term in the alphabetical listing below.*

*Prepared for the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the EAIR Special Interest Group on Quality by Professor Lee Harvey, Centre for Research and Evaluation, Sheffield Hallam University, November 2004–December 2006.*

*This is a dynamic glossary and the author would welcome any e-mail suggestions for amendments or additions.*

*The information in this Glossary may be used and circulated without permission provided the source is acknowledged.*

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### A

**ACADEMIC INFRASTRUCTURE:** Academic infrastructure is the name given to the array of quality-related processes and practices in the United Kingdom.

**ACADEMIC RECOGNITION:** Academic recognition is a set of procedures and processes for the acknowledgement and acceptance (subject to conditions), between institutions and countries, of higher education qualifications.

**ACADEMIC YEAR:** The academic year is:

1. The duration of a specific program of study (which may not last a complete 12 months and is divided into terms, semesters or quarters).
2. The start and finish dates of the annual cycle of a university or national higher education system.

**ACCESS:** Access is the process of enabling entry to higher education. Access has two linked but distinct meanings.

1. The general concept that relates to making higher education accessible.
2. A shorthand for programs that provide preparation for entry to higher education, such as the UK Access to HE courses.

**ACCESS COURSES:** Access courses are preparatory programs for students to gain entry to higher education.

**ACCESS FUND:** Access fund is money specially earmarked to support non-traditional students in gaining access to higher education.

**ACCESSIBILITY:** See access

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** Accountability is the requirement, when undertaking an activity, to expressly address the concerns, requirements or perspectives of others.

**ACCREDITATION:** Accreditation is the establishment or of the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, program or module of study.

**ACCREDITATION BODY:** An accreditation body is an organisation delegated to make decisions,

on behalf of the higher education sector, about the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, or program.

**ACCREDITATION MILL :**

**ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (APEL):** APEL is the formal acknowledgement (based on professional assessment) of learning acquired from previous experience, usually from experience unrelated to an academic context.

**ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING (APL):** Formal acknowledgement (based on professional assessment), by way of granting credit, of students' previous learning: credit is given towards a program of study or towards professional body accreditation.

**ACCREDITATION DURATION:** Accreditation decisions are usually limited to a fixed and stated period of time, after which the institution or program is required to engage with a more or less rigorous re-accreditation process.

**ACCREDITATION PORTFOLIO:** An accreditation portfolio is the accumulated evidence germane to establishing accredited status.

**ACCREDITATION STATUS:** Accreditation status is the embodiment of the decision made by the accreditation body.

**ACCREDITATION SURVEY:** Accreditation survey is a term mainly applicable in the US context and refers to a process of checking compliance.

**ACCREDITORS:** Accreditors are agencies that provide recognition to institutions as part of an accreditation process (see also accreditation body).

**ACTION:** Action is a term used in the United States to imply a judgment or decision following an \*accreditation. (see also adverse action)

**ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:** Additional learning opportunities are elements of the program of study that augment the usual classroom teaching of the syllabus content.

**ADVERSE ACTION:** Adverse action is a term used in the US to refer to failure to achieve/retain accreditation.(see also action)

**AGENCY:** Agency is, in the context of quality in higher education, shorthand for any organisation that undertakes any kind of monitoring, evaluation or review of the quality of higher education.

**AIM:** An aim is an overall specification of the intention or purpose of a program of study or institutional mission or policy.

**ALUMNUS:** An alumnus (plural alumni) is a graduate of an institution.

**APPROVAL:** Approval is an overarching term to cover various forms of academic recognition of a program or institution.

**APPRAISAL OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Appraisal of student learning is the process of providing formative and summative feedback to students on the development of their learning

**ARTICULATION AGREEMENT:** See credit transfer

**ASSESSMENT:** A general term that embraces all methods used to judge the performance of an individual, group or organisation.

**ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING:** Assessment of student learning is the process of evaluating the extent to which participants in education have developed their knowledge, understanding and abilities.

**ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:** Assessment of teaching and learning is the process of evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the learning process, including teacher performance and pedagogic approach.

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE:** See foundation program

**ASSURANCE:** Assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.

**AUDIT:** Audit, in the context of quality in higher education, is a process for checking that

procedures are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes.

**AUDIT PANEL:** See review team

**AUDIT REPORT:** An audit report is a codification of the process, findings and outcomes of the audit process, usually prepared by the auditors and project team.

**AUSPICES:** Auspices is the provenance under which a quality monitoring agency operates.

**AUTHORISED VALIDATING AGENCY (AVA):** An AVA is an organisation or consortia licensed to certify, authorise or authenticate programs of study.

**AUTONOMY:** Autonomy is being able to undertake activities without seeking permission from a controlling body.

## B

**BACHELOR-MASTER'S:** Bachelor-master's is the shorthand for a two-cycle system of higher education that is being introduced across the European Higher Education Area as part of the Bologna process.

**BACHELOR DEGREE:** A bachelor degree is the first-level higher education award, usually requiring three or four years' study but more in some medical subjects.

**BENCHMARK:** A benchmark is a point of reference against which something may be measured.

**BENCHMARK STATEMENT:** A benchmark statement, in higher education, provides a reference point against which outcomes can be measured and refers to a particular specification of program characteristics and indicative standards.

**BENCHMARKING:** Benchmarking is a process that enables comparison of inputs, processes or outputs between institutions (or parts of institutions) or within a single institution over time.

**BEST PRACTICE:** Best practice refers to effective, ideal or paradigmatic practice within an organisation that others would benefit from adopting or adapting.

**BINARY SYSTEM:** A binary system is one that has higher education taught in two different types of institution, traditional (academic) universities alongside more vocationally-oriented institutions.

**BLENDED LEARNING:** Blended learning is a flexible approach that combines face-to-face teaching/learning with remote (usually internet-based) learning.

**BLOCK GRANT:** Block grant is a term used to refer to the core funding provided by a national government (via a funding council) to a higher education institution.

**BOLOGNA PROCESS:** The Bologna Process is an ongoing process of integration and harmonisation of higher education systems within Europe.

**BRUGES PROCESS:** The Bruges Process is the development of European co-operation on vocational education and training.

## C

**CERTIFICATION:** Certification is the process of formally acknowledging achievement or **COMPLIANCE:** it can be used to signify the achievement of an individual, such as a student, or of an institution.

**CLASSIFICATION:** Classification is the process of identifying types of institution based on their core functions or economic status.

**CODE OF PRACTICE:** A code of practice is a documented set of recommended or preferred processes, actions or organisational structures to be applied in a given setting.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** A community college, in the USA, is an intermediate college between

compulsory education and higher education, although it offers some programs that may be defined as higher education.

**COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION:** Community-based education (CBE) is learning that takes place in a setting external to the higher education institution.

**COMPARABILITY:** Comparability is the formal acceptance between two or more parties that two or more qualifications are equivalent.

**COMPETENCE:** Competence is the acquisition of knowledge skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform in an appropriate work setting (within or outside academia).

**COMPLIANCE:** Compliance is undertaking activities or establishing practices or policies in accordance with the requirements or expectations of an external authority.

**CONSISTENCY (AS A DEFINITION OF QUALITY):** See perfection

**CONTINUING EDUCATION:** Continuing education is:

1. a generic term for any program of study (award-bearing or not) beyond compulsory education.
2. post-compulsory education of a short-term nature that does not lead directly to a major higher education qualification.

**CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD):** Continuing professional development (CPD) refers to study (that may accumulate to whole programs with awards) designed to upgrade knowledge and skills of practitioners in the professions.

**CONTROL:** Control is the process of regulating or otherwise keeping a check on developments in higher education.

**CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION:** Co-operative education includes work experience as part of the learning experience.

**CO-OPERATIVE STUDY:** See sandwich; co-operative education

**CORRECTIVE ACTION:** Corrective action is process of rectifying problems.

**CORRESPONDENCE COURSE:** A correspondence course is a study unit undertaken by the student remotely from campus via written communication with teachers.

**COURSE:** See program

**CREDIT:** Recognition of a unit of learning, usually measured in hours of study or achievement of threshold standard or both.

**CREDIT ACCUMULATION:** Credit accumulation is the process of collecting credit for learning towards a qualification.

**CREDIT TRANSFER:** Credit transfer is the ability to transport credits (for learning) from one setting to another.

**CRITERIA:** Criteria are the specification of elements against which a judgment is made.

**CRITERIA-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT:** Criteria-referenced assessment is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students against a set of pre-specified criteria.

**CURRICULUM:** Curriculum is the embodiment of a program of learning and includes philosophy, content, approach and assessment.

## D

**DEGREE:** Degree is the core higher education award, which may be offered at various levels from foundation, through bachelors, masters to doctoral.

**DEGREE CYCLE:** See bachelor-master's

**DELEGATED ACCOUNTABILITY:** Delegated accountability refer to the process of allowing institutions and higher education systems to take control of ensuring quality providing they are accountable to principle stakeholders, not least government.

**DEPARTMENTAL AUDIT:** See internal sub-institutional audit

**DIPLOMA: DIPLOMA IS:**

1. a generic term for a formal document (certificate) that acknowledges that a named individual has achieved a stated higher education award.
2. an award for a specific level of qualification (diploma level) which in some countries is between a bachelor and a masters-level award.
3. a term for any award beyond bachelors level up to but excluding doctoral level awards, including continuing education certification.

**DIPLOMA MILL:** A diploma mill is an organisation or institution that issues certified qualifications for an appropriate payment, with little or no requirements for the individual to demonstrate full competence at the relevant degree level in the discipline area.

**DIPLOMA RECOGNITION:** See academic recognition

**DIPLOMA SUPPLEMENT:** A diploma supplement is a detailed transcript of student attainment that is appended to the certificate of attainment of the qualification.

**DISSERTATION:** A dissertation is an extended (usually written) project involving research by the student, which contributes significantly towards a final assessment for a (higher) degree.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION:** Distance education is higher education undertaken by students in a setting remote from the physical campus of the higher education institution.

**DISTRIBUTED EDUCATION:** Distributed education occurs when the teacher and student are situated in separate locations and learning occurs through the use of technologies (such as video and internet), which may be part of a wholly distance education program or supplementary to traditional instruction.

**DOCTORAL DEGREE:** The doctoral degree is the highest level of award in most higher education systems.

**DURATION OF ACCREDITATION:** see accreditation duration

## E

**EFFECTIVENESS:** Effectiveness is the extent to which an activity fulfils its intended purpose or function.

**EFFICIENCY:** Efficiency is the extent to which an activity achieves its goal whilst minimising resource usage.

**EMPLOYABILITY:** Employability is the acquisition of attributes (knowledge, skills, and abilities) that make graduates more likely to be successful in their chosen occupations (whether paid employment or not).

**EMPOWERMENT:** Empowerment is the development of knowledge, skills and abilities in the learner to enable them to control and develop their own learning.

**ENHANCEMENT:** Enhancement is a process of augmentation or improvement.

**EQUIVALENCY EXAMINATION:** See accreditation of prior learning

**EUROPEAN CREDIT TRANSFER SYSTEM (ECTS):** ECTS is a system for recognising credit for learning and facilitating the movement of the recognised credits between institutions and across national borders.

**EVALUATION:** Evaluation (of quality or standards) is the process of examining and passing a judgment on the appropriateness or level of quality or standards.

**EVALUATION OF INSTITUTIONS:** See external evaluation; external institutional audit

**EVALUATIONS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS:** See audit

**EX-ANTE ASSESSMENT:** Ex-ante assessment involves undertaking an evaluation of the conditions for the launch of a program or institution.

**EXCELLENCE:** Excellence means exhibiting characteristics that are very good and, implicitly,

not achievable by all.

**EXCEPTIONAL:** (as a definition of quality): see excellence

**EX-POST ASSESSMENT:** Ex-post assessment involves undertaking a review of an operational program or institution.

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION:** External evaluation is:

1. a generic term for most forms of quality review, enquiry or exploration.
2. a process that uses people external to the program or institution to evaluate quality or standards.

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION TEAM:** External evaluation team is the group of people, including persons external to the program or institution being reviewed, who undertake the quality evaluation.

**EXTERNAL EXAMINER:** An external examiner is a person from another institution or organisation who monitors the assessment process of an institution for fairness and academic standards.

**EXTERNAL EXPERT:** External expert is someone with appropriate knowledge who undertakes a quality or standards review (of any kind) as part of a team or alone and who is external to the program or institution being reviewed.

**EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** An external institutional audit is a process by which an external person or team check that procedures are in place across an institution to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes.

**EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (EQA-AGENCY):** See Agency

**EXTERNAL QUALITY EVALUATION:** See external evaluation

**EXTERNAL QUALITY MONITORING (EQM):** External quality monitoring (EQM) is an all-encompassing term that covers a variety of quality-related evaluations undertaken by bodies or individuals external to higher education institutions.

**EXTERNAL REVIEW INDICATOR:** An external review indicator is a measurable characteristic pertinent to an external quality evaluation.

**EXTERNAL SUB-INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** An external sub-institutional audit is a process by which an external person or team check that procedures are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes in part of an institution or relating to specific aspect of institutional provision or outcomes.

## F

**FACHHOCHSCHULE:** Fachhochschule is a non-university higher education institution, in Germany and Liechtenstein, focusing on vocational education.

**FACULTY:** Faculty is:

1. the organisational unit into which cognate disciplines are located in a higher education institution
2. a shorthand term for the academic (teaching and research) staff in a higher education institution.

**FACULTY AUDIT:** See internal sub-institutional audit

**FACULTY REVIEW:** Faculty review has two different meanings, the first based on faculty as a term for academic staff, the second based on faculty as an organisational unit:

1. Faculty review is a process of reviewing the inputs, process or outputs of a faculty as an organisational unit; its structure, mode of operation, mission, aims and objectives.
2. Faculty review, (meaning review of academic staff) evaluates the performance of researchers and teachers. (See also assesment of teaching and learning)

**FEES:** Fees are the financial contribution made by students to their higher education

**FITNESS OF PURPOSE:** Fitness of purpose evaluates whether the quality-related intentions of an organisation are adequate.

**FITNESS FOR PURPOSE:** Fitness for purpose equates quality with the fulfilment of a specification or stated outcomes.

**FOLLOW UP:** Follow up is shorthand for procedures to ensure that outcomes of review processes have been, or are being, addressed.

**FORMAL LEARNING:** Formal learning is planned learning that derives from activities within a structured learning setting.

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Formative assessment is evaluation of student learning that aids understanding and development of knowledge, skills and abilities without passing any final judgement (via recorded grade) on the level of learning.

**FOUNDATION DEGREE:** A foundation degree is an intermediary (sub-degree) qualification in the UK designed in conjunction with employers to meet skills shortages at the higher technician level.

**FOUNDATION PROGRAM:** A foundation program provides an introduction to degree-level study.

**FRAMEWORK FOR QUALIFICATIONS :** See qualifications framework

**FRANCHISE PROGRAMS:** Franchise programs are study units of one higher education institution adopted by and taught at another institution, although the students formally obtain their qualification from the originating institution.

**FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE):** Full-time equivalent is the proportion of a nominal full-time student in higher education that a non-full-time student is judged to constitute.

**FURTHER EDUCATION:** Further education is post-compulsory education at pre-degree level, which may include (the opportunity to take) qualifications also available at the level of compulsory schooling.

## G

**GRADING:** Grading is the process of scoring or ranking student academic work as part of assessing student learning.

**GRADUATE:** A graduate is someone who has successfully completed a higher education program at least at bachelor degree level.

**GUIDELINES:**

## H

**HIGHER DEGREE:** A higher degree is an award beyond the basic-level higher education qualification.

**HIGHER EDUCATION:** Higher education is usually viewed as education leading to at least a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

**HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION (HEI):** See institution

**HOGESCHOLE:** A non-university higher education institution, in the Netherlands and Belgium, focusing on vocational education.

## I

**IMPACT:** Impact in the context of quality in higher education refers to the consequences that the establishment of quality processes (both internal and external) has on the culture, policy, organisational framework, documentation, infrastructure, learning and teaching practices, assessment/grading of students, learning outcomes, student experience, student support, resources, learning and research environment, research outcomes and community involvement of an institution or department.

**IMPROVEMENT:** Improvement is the process of enhancing, upgrading or enriching the quality of provision or standard of outcomes.

**INFORMAL LEARNING:** Informal learning is:

1. learning that derives from activities external to a structured learning context.
2. unstructured learning within a structured learning environment.

**INSPECTION:** Inspection is the direct, independent observation and evaluation of activities and resources by a trained professional.

**INSTITUTION:** Institution is shorthand for institution of higher education, which is an educational institution that has students graduating at bachelor degree level or above.

**INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION:** Institutional accreditation provides a licence for a university or college to operate.

**INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** See external institutional audit; internal institutional audit.

**INSTITUTION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION:** See institution

**INSTITUTIONAL OUTCOMES:** See outcomes

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW:** See external institutional audit; review

**INTERDISCIPLINARY:** Interdisciplinary refers to research or study that integrates concepts from different disciplines resulting in a synthesised or co-ordinated coherent whole.

**INTERNAL AUDIT:** See internal institutional audit, internal sub-institutional audit

**INTERNAL EVALUATION:** Internal evaluation is a process of quality review undertaken within an institution for its own ends (with or without the involvement of external peers).

**INTERNAL INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** Internal institutional audit is a process that institutions undertake for themselves to check that they have procedures in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes across the institution.

**INTERNAL SUB-INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** Internal sub-institutional audit is a process that an institution has for checking that procedures are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes within a department, faculty or other operational unit or that specific issues are being complied with across the institution.

**INTERNAL QUALITY MONITORING:** Internal quality monitoring (IQM) is a generic term to refer to procedures within institutions to review, evaluate, assess, audit or otherwise check, examine or ensure the quality of the education provided and/or research undertaken.

**INTERNSHIP:** See sandwich

## J

**JOINT DEGREE:** A degree awarded by more than one higher education institution.

**JUNIOR COLLEGE:** See community college

## K

**KITEMARK:** Kitemark is a generic term, derived from a British symbol, for a process of approval of a product or service.

## L

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** see objective.

**LEARNING OUTCOME:** A learning outcome is the specification of what a student should learn as the result of a period of specified and supported study.

**LEAGUE TABLES:** League tables is a term used to refer to ranking of higher education institutions or programs of study.

**LEVEL:**

1. Level refers to the complexity and depth of learning.
2. Level refers to the formally designated location of a part of a study program within the whole.

**LEVEL DESCRIPTOR:** A level descriptor is a statement that provides an indication of appropriate depth and extent of learning at a specific stage in the program of study.

**LICENSING:** Licensing is the formal granting of permission to (a) operate a new institution (b) a new program of study (c) practice a profession.

**LIFELONG LEARNING:** Lifelong learning is all learning activity undertaken throughout life, whether formal or informal.

## M

**MANAGEMENT AUDIT:** Management audit, in higher education, is a process for checking that management structures and abilities are appropriate for assuring quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes.

**MASTER'S DEGREE:** Master's degree is an award higher than a bachelor's degree.

**MOBILITY:** Mobility is shorthand for students and academics studying and working in other institutions, whether in the same country or abroad.

**MODE:** Mode of study refers to whether the program is taken on a part-time or full-time basis, or through some form of work-linked learning and may include whether taken on-campus or through distance education.

**MODULE:** A module is a formal learning experience encapsulated into a unit of study, usually linked to other modules to create a program of study.

**MODULE SPECIFICATION:** Module specification is statement of the aims, objectives/learning outcomes, content, learning and teaching processes, mode of assessment of students and learning resources applicable to a unit of study.

**MONITORING:** Monitoring has two meanings:

1. the specific process of keeping quality activities under review;
2. a generic term covering all forms of internal and external quality assurance and improvement processes including audit, assessment, accreditation and external examination.

**MUTUAL RECOGNITION:** Agreement between two organisations to recognise each other's processes or programs.

## N

**NEW COLLEGIALISM:**

**NON-FORMAL LEARNING:** See informal learning

**NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS:** Non-traditional students are those entrants to higher education who have population characteristics not normally associated with entrants to

higher education, that is, they come from social classes, ethnic groups or age groups that are underrepresented.

**NORM-REFERENCED ASSESSMENT:** Norm-referenced assessment is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students by judging (and ranking) them against the performance of their peers.

## O

**OBJECTIVE:** An objective is:

- (a) a specific statement about what students are expected to learn or to be able to do as a result of studying a program: more specifically this is a learning objective;
- (b) a measurable operationalisation of a policy, strategy or mission: this is an implementation objective.

**OFF-SHORE PROVISION:** Off-shore provision is the export of higher education programs from one country to another.

**ONE-LEVEL DEGREE STRUCTURE:** One-level degree structure is where a single program of study results in a final (masters-level) award.

**OUTCOMES:** Outcome is:

1. shorthand for the product or endeavours of a higher education institution (or sector), including student learning and skills development, research outputs and contributions to the wider society locally or internationally (institutional outcomes).
2. shorthand for learning outcome (discussed elsewhere).

**OUTCOMES-BASED APPROACH:** An outcomes-based approach to learning and teaching specifies in advance what the student should be able to do at the culmination of a program of study.

**OUTPUTS:** Outputs refers to the products of higher education institutions: including, graduates, research outcomes, community/business activities and the social critical function of academia.

**OVERSIGHT:** Oversight, in the quality context, refers to the process of keeping a quality process or initiative under observation, such that a person or organisation has a watching brief on developments.

## P

**PEER:** Peer, in the context of quality in higher education, is a person who understands the context in which a quality review is being undertaken and is able to contribute to the process.

**PEER REVIEW:** Peer review is the process of evaluating the provision, work process, or output of an individual or collective who operating in the same milieu as the reviewer(s).

**PERFECTION:**

**PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:** Performance indicators are data, usually quantitative in form, that provide a measure of some aspect of an individual's or organisation's performance against which changes in performance or the performance of others can be compared.

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT:** Performance audit is a check on the competence of someone to undertake a task.

**PERIODIC REVIEW:**

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (PDP):** Personal development planning is a structured and supported process to assist students in arranging their own personal educational and career progression.

**PH.D (DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY):** See Doctoral degree

**POLYTECHNIC:** A polytechnic is a non-university higher education institution usually focusing on vocational education.

**PORTABILITY:**

**POSTGRADUATE:** A postgraduate is someone who is undertaking study at post-first degree level.

**PRELIMINARY STUDY:** Preliminary study is an initial exploration of issues related to a proposed quality review.

**PREREQUISITE:** .

**PRIMARY DEGREE:** A primary degree is the first-level, higher education qualification (often synonymous with a bachelor's degree).

**PRIOR LEARNING:** Prior learning is previous learning from informal and formal learning situations.

**PROCESS:** Process, in the context of quality, is the set of activities, structures and guidelines that:

1. constitute the organisation's or individual's procedures for ensuring their own quality or standards.
2. constitute the mechanism for reviewing or monitoring the quality or standards of another entity.

**PROFESSION:** A profession is a group of people in a learned occupation, the members of which agree to abide by specified rules of conduct when practicing the occupation.

**PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATION:** See program accreditation; specialized accreditation

**PROFESSIONAL BODY:** A professional body is a group of people in a learned occupation who are entrusted with maintaining control or oversight of the legitimate practice of the occupation.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** See continuing professional development.

**PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM:** A professional program is shorthand for a co-ordinated set of study elements that lead to a recognised professional qualification.

**PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION:** Professional recognition is the formal acknowledgement of an individual's professional status and right to practice the profession in accordance with professional standards and subject to professional or regulatory controls.

**PROGRAM:** Program (or program in US/Australian English) is shorthand for a study curriculum undertaken by a student that has co-ordinated elements, which constitute a coherent named award.

**PROGRAM ACCREDITATION:** Programs accreditation establishes the academic standing of the program or the ability of the program to produce graduates with professional competence to practice.

**PROGRAM AIMS:** see aim

**PROGRAM EVALUATION:** Program evaluation is a process of reviewing the quality or standards of a coherent set of study modules.

**PROGRAM SPECIFICATION:** A program (program) specification documents the aims, objectives or learning outcomes, program content, learning and teaching methods, process and criteria for assessment, usually with indicative reading or other reference material as well as identifying the modules or subunits of the program, setting out core and optional elements, precursors and levels.

**PROGRESS FILE:** A progress file is an explicit record of achievement, an aid to reflecting on the achievement and a mechanism to enable future planning.

**PROJECT TEAM:** The project team is the group of people, within a quality monitoring agency, who organise and arrange the external quality process.

**PROVISION:** Provision is an all-encompassing term that refers to the learning opportunities, research and community activity offered/undertaken by an institution of higher education.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION:  
PURPOSE:**

**Q**

**QUALIFICATION:** Qualification is the award to which a formal program of study contributes.

**QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK:** .

**QUALITIES:** Qualities are the characteristics, attributes or properties of a person, collective, object, action, process or organisation.

**QUALITY:** Quality is

1. (n) the embodiment of the essential nature of a person, collective, object, action, process or organisation.
2. (adj) means high grade or high status (as in a quality performance).
3. a shorthand, in higher education, for quality evaluation processes.

**QUALITY ASSESSMENT:** See assessment

**QUALITY ASSURANCE:** See assurance

**QUALITY AUDIT:** See audit

**QUALITY CONTROL:** Quality control is a mechanism for ensuring that an output (product or service) conforms to a predetermined specification.

**QUALITY CULTURE:**

**QUALITY EVALUATION:** See evaluation

**QUALITY GUIDELINES:** See guidelines

**QUALITY MANAGEMENT:**

**QUALITY MONITORING:** See external quality monitoring

**QUALITY REVIEW:** See review

**QUALITY SYSTEM:**

**QUALITY STANDARD:**

**QUALITY VALIDATION:** See accreditation; validation

**R**

**RANKING:** Ranking is a term used to refer to the rating and ordering of higher education institutions or programs of study based on various criteria.

**RATIONALE:**

**RE-ACCREDITATION:** Re-accreditation is the re-establishment or re-statement (usually on a fixed periodic cycle) of the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution, program (i.e. composite of modules) or module of study or of the professional recognition of an individual.

**RECIPROCITY:** Reciprocity is the acceptance by one agency of the outcomes of a quality process conducted by another agency.

**RECOGNISED BODIES:**

**RECOGNITION:** Recognition is the formal acknowledgement of the status of an organisation, institution or program.

**RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING:** Recognition of prior learning is formal acknowledgement of previous learning, from informal as well as formal learning situations.

**REGIONAL ACCREDITATION:** Regional accreditation is recognition of an institution within a regional context: it is much the same as national accreditation but is not restricted to national boundaries.

**REGISTRATION:**

**REGULATORY BODY:** A regulatory body, in the context of higher education, is an external organisation that has been empowered by legislation to oversee and control the educational process and outputs germane to it.

**REPORT:** Report (n.) is the documented outcome or results of an evaluation process.

**RESEARCH ASSESSMENT EXERCISE (RAE):** The RAE is a process, in the UK and Hong Kong, that assesses the quality of research to enable the higher education funding bodies to distribute public funds on the basis of research quality ratings.

**REVIEW:**

1. Review is generic term for any process that explores the quality of higher education.
2. Review refers to explorations of quality that do not result in judgements or decisions.

**REVIEW TEAM:** The review team is the group of people undertaking a quality monitoring or evaluation process.

## S

**SANDWICH:** A sandwich program is one that has a significant period of work experience built into it such that the program is extended beyond the normal length of similar programs without the sandwich element.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT:** Self-assessment is the process of critically reviewing the quality of ones own performance and provision.

**SELF-EVALUATION:** See self-assessment

**SELF-STUDY:** See self-assessment

**SEMESTER:** A semester is a division of the academic year; usually two semesters in a year.

**SEMINAR:** A seminar is, ideally, a small-group teaching situation in which a subject is discussed, in depth, by the participants.

**SITE VISIT:** A site visit is when an external evaluation team goes to an institution to evaluate verbal, written and visual evidence.

Skill:

**SOPHISTER:** Sophister refers to undergraduates on their penultimate (junior) or final (senior) year of study.

**SPECIALIZED ACCREDITATION:** Specialized accreditation refers to any accreditation process that relates to specific discipline areas.

**STAFF:**

**STAKEHOLDER:** A stakeholder is a person (or group) that has an interest in the activities of an institution or organisation.

**STANDARDS:**

**STANDARDS MONITORING:**

**STUDENT EVALUATION:**

**STUDENT EXPERIENCE:**

**SUB-INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT:** See external sub-institutional audit; internal sub-institutional audit

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Summative assessment is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students at a point in time.

**SUBJECT ASSESSMENT:**

**SUBSTANTIAL EQUIVALENCY:** Substantial equivalency is a term used in the US to indicate that an overseas program is essentially the same as a US program of study.

## T

**TECHNIKON:** A technikon is a non-university higher education institution, in South Africa, focusing on vocational education.

**TERTIARY EDUCATION:** Tertiary education is formal, non-compulsory, education that follows secondary education.

**THEMATIC EVALUATION:** A thematic evaluation is a review of a particular aspect of quality or standards focusing on an experience, practice or resource that cuts across programs or institutions.

**THESIS:** Thesis is:

1. short hand for doctoral thesis, the outcome of a student research at doctoral level.
2. an argument proposing and developing a theory about a substantive or conceptual issue.
3. an intellectual proposition.

**THRESHOLD:**

**TOTAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE:** Total student experience refers to all aspects of the engagement of students with higher education.

**TRANSCRIPT:** A transcript is a printed or electronic record of student achievement while in higher education.

**TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:**

**TRANSFERABILITY:** See credit transfer

**TRANSPARENCY:**

**TRANSFORMATION:** Transformation is the process of changing from one qualitative state to another.

**TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION:** Transnational education is higher education provision that is available in more than one country.

**TUNING:** Tuning, in the context of quality in higher education, refers to the process in Europe of adjusting degree provision so that there are points of similarity across the European Higher Education Area.

**TWO-CYCLE SYSTEM:** See bachelor-master's

## U

**UNDERGRADUATE:** Undergraduate is a student who is undertaking a first-level degree program of study, normally a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

**UNIT:** Unit has two meanings in the context of quality in higher education, one as subject and one as object of quality review.

1. unit is the generic name for a quality monitoring department internal to an institution.
2. unit is any element that is the subject of quality review: institution, subject area, faculty, department or program of study.

**UNITARY SYSTEM:** Unitary system is one that has higher education located in a single type of institution.

**UNIVERSITY:** University is an institution of higher education that grants its own degrees including the award of Ph.D and normally undertakes leading-edge research, as well as having a social critical role.

## V

**VALIDATION:** Validation is a process of confirming that an existing program of study or a newly designed one can continue or commence operation.

**VALUE ADDED:** Value added is the enhancement that students achieve (to knowledge, skills

abilities and other attributes) as a result of their higher education experience.

**VALUE FOR MONEY:** Value for money is one definition of quality that judges the quality of provision, processes or outcomes against the monetary cost of making the provision, undertaking the process or achieving the outcomes.

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET):** Vocational education and training is any formal, post-compulsory education that develops knowledge, skills and attributes linked to particular forms of employment, although in some interpretations this would exclude professional education.

**VIRTUAL EDUCATION:**

## W

**WIDENING ACCESS:** See access

**WORK-BASED LEARNING:** Work-based learning refers to any formal higher education learning that is based wholly or predominantly in a work setting.

**WORK EXPERIENCE:** Work experience is the linking of a period of activity in a work setting (whether paid or voluntary) to the program of study, irrespective of whether the work experience is an integral part of the program of study.

**WORK-RELATED LEARNING:** Work-related learning refers to any formal higher education learning that includes a period of learning that takes place in a work setting or involves activities linked to a work setting.

## X

## Y

## Z

**Zero defects:** See perfection





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