

The Inter-University Council for East Africa

A Road map to Quality

Hand book for Quality Assurance in
Higher Education

Volume 2: Guidelines for External Assessment at Program
Level

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FOREWORD

Higher Education is considered to play a unique role in the East African regional co-operation, this is because of the history of university education in the three pioneer universities of, Makerere in Uganda, Nairobi in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Following the collapse of the former East African Community in 1977, these universities continued to cooperate in a number of ways under the umbrella of the Inter-University Council for East Africa. Recognised as one of the surviving institutions of the EAC, the IUCEA has assumed a broader role as a building block for the sustainable regional integration.

Many more universities have now been established, and IUCEA has registered an upward trend in its membership to the current number of 76. The number is expected to increase significantly with the admission of Rwanda and Burundi as Partner States in the East African Community. Based on this growth, the effort to harmonize Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the region is paramount. This effort is being pursued in response to the realization of the importance of higher education to the economies of the East African countries on one hand and the ever evolving multiple stakeholder community on the other. It is, therefore, of great importance that the development of human resources through Quality Assurance in higher education in East Africa is harmonized.

Realising the importance of regionally harmonized Quality Assurance Systems, the IUCEA in collaboration with development partners particularly the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in the framework of their joint Higher Education Management support program referred to as "Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES)", started to work on this matter through a consensus process involving representatives of the higher education regulatory bodies in the region, namely; the Commission for Higher Education (CHE)-Kenya, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)- Uganda and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)-Tanzania. Consequently, a number of Quality Assurance meetings and workshops have taken place at country and regional levels in a bid to map out a strategy on how to come up with a Quality Assurance Handbook that would be a guide towards developing quality assurance systems and culture in universities in the East African Partner States. The aim is to ensure that all performance indicators and quality benchmarks are agreed upon and owned by all end-user institutions.

I would like to express my firm support for this project. It is gratifying that the inception stage is occurring during my term of tenure. For effective implementation of the Quality Assurance (QA) process, the IUCEA Governing Board has created steering structures and is working on preparing a conducive environment for putting this handbook into practice. The IUCEA Secretariat is convinced that member universities have much to gain through this unique opportunity with which stronger cooperation, based on varied experiences among institutions in the region and abroad will be realized.

As a key tool for the quality assurance development process, about 3/4 of the IUCEA member universities as well as some staff from the three regulatory agencies received training on the use of the handbook in Germany, and through several regional workshops in East Africa. followed by pilot QA on selected teaching programs. The selection of the number of personnel to be trained was based on a need to build up a critical mass of well-informed experts within IUCEA and member universities.

I would like to acknowledge the role played by Dr. Ton Vroeijenstijn who is a 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 in the development of this handbook. I also acknowledge the IUCEA Standing Committee on QA and the IUCEA staff for planning, administering and implementing activities which have contributed to the development of this handbook.

IUCEA also acknowledges the opportunity to benefit from DAAD's support out of recognition of its effective framework with DAAD and HRK, where they have as an example, successfully supported the creation of a Quality Assurance system in higher education in Central America from 2002-2007 and supports similar processes in other regions. IUCEA is aware that hundreds of QA officers and self-evaluation coordinators as well as peers have been trained, and that in that region, a regional multi-stakeholder council has been founded and two regional Accreditation Agencies are working.

Given the voluntary nature of the process and the strategy as presented in the framework for implementation of this process, IUCEA hopes for successful outputs from implementation methods that builds on the existing capacities. The varied nature and level of development of structures and capacities is behind the approach of "harmonization of Quality Assurance systems" adapted for this project in East Africa.



Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti–Chacha,

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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 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). Several institutions in Germany and Europe have been providing technical expertise in this respect. 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 these activities.

The starting point of all this has been the development of the East African Quality Assurance Handbook, the “Road Map to Quality”. The Handbook was developed by a joint East African - European expert group coordinated by Prof. Mayunga Nkunya and Dr. Ton Vroeijsenstijn and was approved by the Governing Board of the IUCEA. After this the handbook contents have been adapted on the basis of suggestions made by practioners 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) selected 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 that 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

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Introduction

This volume is part of the handbook “A Roadmap to Quality”, one of the outcomes of the workshops supporting a Regional Quality Assurance Initiative in East Africa, organised by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) together with German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in June 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. The discussions during the two days workshop 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 institutions must convince all stakeholders that they are doing paramount efforts 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 support of DAAD, organized a training course for 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 of training, IUCEA and DAAD organized a second course for QAC in 2008/2009 for another group of selected universities which was similarly followed by self and external assessment.

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

Although each of the volumes 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 by means of an effective self assessment.
- **Volume 2:** Guidelines for external assessment explains the procedures and processes for an external evaluation 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 levels 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 provides the reader with background information about the state-of-the-art in external quality assurance systems in East Africa and discusses the role of the regulatory bodies in the light of international developments.

The Handbook “The Road Map to Quality” aims 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. Hard copies can be ordered from the IUCEA.

The current volume, Guidelines for External Program Assessment describes the process and procedures of the assessment of a program by an external expert team. Often, the external assessment will be organised by a body or agency outside the institution of higher education. If this is not the case, the University may organise an external assessment by itself. Also for such (inter) collegial assessment, the Guidelines can be used.

The content is based on experiences and good practices from all over the world. The expert committees must take into account how quality is assessed internationally, while assessing the quality in the East African context. In the mean time, the expert team cannot neglect the developments in the region and in the different countries.

The most important materials that have to be taken into account in the Handbook are the documents prepared by the regional 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.

Another document that is important is the so-called Entebbe Matrix. The mentioned documents are made available on CD attached to this publication. Because the approach to quality both

by the faculty/ department and the expert team must be equivalent, this publication is based on the same principles of Volume 1.

Before the expert team can start with the external assessment, the members of the team should have at least a shared idea about the concept quality and have a shared idea about the criteria to be applied. Therefore, Section 1 discusses the concept quality. Section 2, gives some guidelines for the process of external assessment.

SECTION 1: Quality in Higher Education

The word quality is often used 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?”

In spite of these reflections by Pirsig, many books and articles have been written to try to describe 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 define it we are left standing empty-handed. The same counts for the concept of 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 a difficult one in itself, quality in higher education is much more complex, because it is not always clear what the “product” is and who the “client” is. 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 can only 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 and needs. We can distinguish the following stakeholders in Higher Education:

- Government or the state
- Employers
- Academic world
- Students
- Parents
- Society at large

The concept “quality” is very complex. We can’t speak of the Quality in Higher Education, but we have to speak about qualities. On one hand, we have to make a distinction between quality requirements set by the different stakeholders: students, academic world, labour market (employers), 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 it. Absolute or 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 stakeholders have their own ideas and expectations. We may therefore say that Quality is a matter of negotiation 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 the ultimate supplier of service, 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, research programs. The challenge is to achieve the goals, objectives and learning outcomes. If this is the case, then we can say that the institution, the faculty or department has quality (see Figure 1).

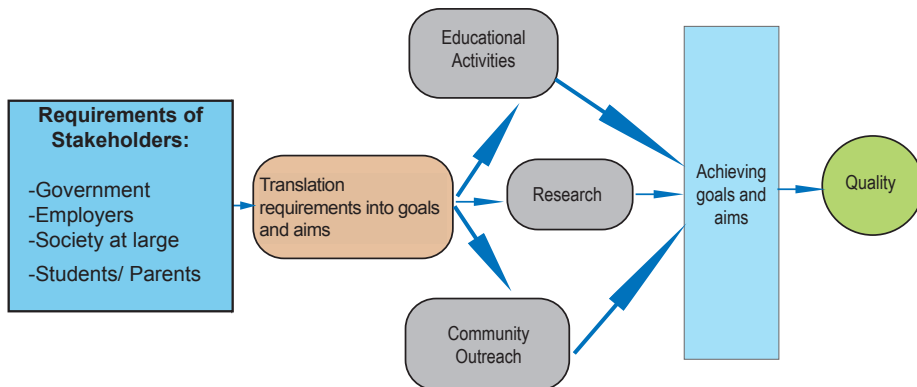


Figure 1: Stakeholders and Quality in Higher Education

As said earlier, an absolute definition of quality does not exist. For the sake of a common understanding, the following descriptions 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 stakeholders 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 as opposed to 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 important feature is: "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 globally. There is at least a bottom line for the threshold on 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 we assess the quality? How do we measure the 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 to 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. 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 profession 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 Tanzania 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 are also 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 aspects. 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, respectively.

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 on offer | Quality of 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 | |
| Program/curriculum | Program/curriculum | Programme/curriculum |
| 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 |

SECTION 2: The External Assessment

Before an external expert team starts the site visit to the university, the faculty/department responsible for the program concerned should have carried out a self-assessment of the program(s) to be assessed.

A self-assessment is an important instrument in the hands of a university when it comes to seeing what quality it offers. A good self-assessment, done very carefully, critically and analytically offers the faculty/department a good view on the state-of-the-art and on the quality itself. However, a self-assessment is not enough. We all have blind spots and take things for granted. Therefore, an outsider's view of the performance is needed. The outsider can hold up a mirror to us and can find it much easier to spot our weaknesses and strengths. An external assessment by an expert team is an additional instrument, to learn more about the quality.

An external assessment is important because it gives authority to the findings of the self-assessments. If we state that our faculty is performing badly, everybody will believe us. If we say that we are performing excellently, nobody will believe us, because the outside world will say: “that is their own assessment, how can we trust it?”

External assessment also delivers confidence to stakeholders; provides evidence of quality to the public; and shows that the standards agreed upon by the competent authorities are being implemented. At the same time, it provides mechanisms for continuous quality improvement in the sustainability and development of the program and buffers against pressures to lower quality standards.

External quality assessment contributes to the recognition and acceptance of programs that have demonstrated their competence and quality according to standards set by the field or profession leading towards harmonisation of higher education in the region. Graduates of these programs are likewise recognised for their competent training and employability. External assessment also provides opportunities for accessing funding for research and instruction.

2.1 Preparing the assessment

An external assessment requires good preparation. The role of the experts is not an easy one. The expert team has to combine various functions. The team will:

- Check the outcomes of the self-assessment
- Reflect on the self-assessment
- Engage in dialogue and discussion with staff and students
- Act as an auditor.

An external expert team is required to combine two missions:

- The team members should listen to the faculty and act as colleagues, using their expertise and experience to offer advice and recommendations.
- At the same time, the team has to write a report that might be made public or remain confidential. However, the team will give its independent verdict on the quality in that report.

In one way the team of experts has to act collegially and in the other way it has to remain independent. It will not always be easy to combine the divergent roles.

2.1.1 The Expert Team

Composition of the team

An effective expert team, commissioned to carry out an external assessment, may have at least 5 members. Membership of an expert team should include:

- A chair-person, totally independent and unconnected with the program to be assessed. The chair does not need to be an expert in the field, but should have the confidence of those who are in the team. If possible, the chair should have experience with manage-

ment structures in higher education institutions and with the developments that have taken place over the last few years

- Two experts on the subject area/discipline in question
- An expert from the labour market area taking up graduates and/or from the professional association
- An expert on education/learning processes.

It is important that at least 2 out of the 5 members will come from outside the country.

There are some conditions that members of the expert team have to meet:

- Members should act independently
- There should be no conflicts of interest. Members should stand to gain nothing from their verdict
- Members must be accepted by the faculty to be assessed.

Retired staff can be invited to participate on the grounds that they are more independent (and have more time available). However, it is also important to have members still working in the field and with a good knowledge of recent developments in the field.

Selection and appointment

To get a good team, the IUCEA will invite the faculties that will be assessed to give names of experts that the faculty views as the *primus inter pares*. The experts to be nominated must be of high esteem.

Based on the list, provided by the faculties and possibly complemented from other sources, the IUCEA will compose the expert team. The proposed composition will be sent to the faculties to be assessed to see if there is any serious objection against anyone of the candidates. If not, the IUCEA will appoint the members of the expert team.

Independence and confidentiality

It is important that the expert team, and each member individually, act independently and without any conflict of interest. If a member has any connection with the program to be assessed, he or she will not participate in the site visit to the program concerned. To assure independence and eliminate conflict of interest, all members of the team will sign the declaration of independence (Appendix 2)

The team members are also bound to confidentiality about everything they will hear or read about the quality of the program under assessment. The Self assessment report and all interviews are confidential.

2.1.2 The Secretary

Because all assessments should be done in equivalent similar way, it is important that the IUCEA provides the secretary of each expert team. In addition to his or her duties as secretary, described below, he or she also acts as project leader during the assessment. The secretary:

- supervises the formulation of the frame of reference;
- checks the self-evaluation report for completeness and compliance with the requirements made on it;
- maintains contact with the faculty/department about the planning of the assessment;
- performs various preparatory activities for the team, including a comparative analysis of a number of aspects of the self-evaluation reports;
- makes preparations for the team's first visit;
- files the documents referring to the assessment process.

Once the team has been installed, the secretary has the following three-fold task:-

- to monitor the team's working procedure and compliance with the assessment protocol

The secretary is the connecting link between the IUCEA and the team. His or her primary responsibility is to monitor the assessment process. Is the panel following the guidelines laid down for it? Is it maintaining its independence? Are agreed procedures followed? Are all facets of quality considered?

- to support the team with specific expertise

The secretary supports the team in the fulfilment of its duties. As the chairman's right-hand person, he or she plays an active role in drafting the assessment reports. Although not formally a member of the team, the secretary does contribute specific skills in the fields of quality assessment and policy development in higher education.

- to archive the audit trail.

The secretary is responsible for keeping the documents relating to each assessment at least until the end of the assessment procedure.

2.1.3 Preparation of the experts

In general, the task of the expert team can be described as follows:

- To form an opinion about the standard of the program and the quality of the educational process, including the organisation of education and the standard of the graduates on the basis of information supplied by the faculty and by means of discussions held on site. In assessing quality, the team must look at the requirements and expectations of the student, the faculty/discipline and society, and, in particular, prospective employers.
- To make suggestions on quality improvement.

An assessment team trying to fulfil its task will encounter a lot of problems, because the generally formulated task means that the team will tend to form opinions about everything.

Therefore, for the benefit of both the team and the faculty, the terms of reference should be operationalised into a number of questions that can be formulated on the basis of the checklist (see Appendix 1). The faculty will have used this checklist for the self-assessment. The team is responsible for completing the checklist based on the information contained in the self-assessment and on information obtained during the interviews.

The training

Assessing quality is a specific skill. Normally, experts in a team are specialists in a discipline and do not have much experience in evaluation or quality assessment. Therefore, the experts must be trained beforehand.

All members should have knowledge of the basic ideas of quality and quality assurance; they all need to be aware of the dos and don'ts. The basic elements of the training are:

- What is quality?
- How can quality be measured?
- How to use the quality model
- How to cope with criteria and standards set by competent authorities?
- How to formulate a frame of reference for the assessment
- How to read the self-assessment report
- How to formulate questions
- How to organise the interviews
- How to behave during the assessment
- How to write the external assessment report

Preparatory work of the team members

As soon as the faculty has sent the self-assessment report to the assessment team, the members will study the report carefully before the team comes together in a preliminary meeting. As a starting point for the discussions during the preliminary meeting, each member will be invited to answer the following questions with regard to the self-assessment report:

- Is the report sufficiently critical and analytical?
- Have the problems that face the faculty been clearly formulated? Has the faculty indicated clearly how it will cope with the problems?
- Are you able to form a picture of the content of the curriculum, given the description in the report?
- Have the objectives (expected learning outcomes) been satisfactorily operationalised?
- Do you think the objectives and goals have been satisfactorily translated into the program?
- Do you think the curriculum reflects sufficient academic content?
- Is the curriculum well balanced?
- Can the program, as described in the report, be done in the set time?
- Do you think it is possible to produce good graduates with this curriculum?

The members will submit the answers to these questions to the chairperson of the team, who will compare the information and see if the SAR was adequate for the site-visit. If not, the chairperson can ask for additional information.

By answering these questions, the member is not tied to a final verdict. It is only a first impression, based on written information. During the site visits there will be time for developing a better-informed opinion.

A second responsibility for the members to complete beforehand involves studying some student projects/thesis works. A final project is an important assessment tool, since it helps the team members gain insight into the content and level of the program. Final projects/theses reflect how well students can apply the knowledge, skills and attitude acquired during their studies to the independent planning and execution of a task of current relevance. By reviewing the content of a number of final year projects and the marks assigned to them by the teaching staff of the program under review, the team also gains an insight into the standards and criteria applied by the teaching staff and hence into the way the teaching staff monitor the achievement of the learning outcomes expected within the framework of the program. This is why it is important that the team also studies examples of this final year project. The best way to do this is to ask the faculties to send a list with titles of final year projects that have passed the assessment. The chairperson will submit the list to the members, who may mark the final year projects that they wish to read. Every member will read at least two final year projects from the faculty. In assessing the final year essay or thesis of the final year project, each team member will give an opinion on the following aspects:

- Have the objectives of the essay and/or the hypothesis been satisfactorily formulated?
- Does the author adhere to the formulated objectives? Is the argumentation logical and consistent?
- Are the conclusions consistent with the presented material? Is the method used correct?
- Does the author present his/her material in such a way that the research can be checked?
- Have the basic concepts been clearly defined and operationalised?
- Has the chosen method and technique been applied correctly? Are notes and references clearly and consistently edited? How is the style of writing to be assessed?
- Is the author well acquainted with the literature in the field of his/her subject?
- When you mark the essay, what grade would you give?

The verdicts on the final year projects will be discussed during the preliminary meeting.

2.1.4 Preliminary team meeting

Normally the expert team will meet some time before the planned site visit for the training session and to prepare for the assessment. If this is not possible because experts from outside the country are involved, the meeting will be held on the day before the site visit begins. The topics in the meeting are:

Training of the expert team (half a day). See section 2.1.3

Assessing quality is a specific skill. Normally, experts in a team are specialists in a discipline and do not have much experience in evaluation or quality assessment. Therefore, the experts must be trained before carrying out the site visit.

Discussion on the frame of reference (see also section 2.1.5)

Every expert has implicit ideas about the quality of a curriculum or the qualities of the graduates. However, individual frames of reference will differ, due to different backgrounds and different experiences. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the assessment team will be to make the implicit opinions explicit and to formulate a frame of reference acceptable to all team members. It is against this background that the team will assess the faculties.

Discussion on the self-assessment report

During the meeting, the team will discuss the Self assessment reports and formulate questions to be asked during the site visit.

Discussion on the final year projects

The members will discuss the final year projects during this meeting.

Discussion on the program

The chairperson will set a program for the site visit in consultation with the faculty. The program will be discussed to see if it fits the team's approach. Table 2 provides a format for a site visit program.

The preparatory meeting is also important for making the group of experts into a cohesive team. Many a review team has complained that the team did not act as a team until after the end of the site visit. The intensive discussion on the frame of reference and the SAR will serve to transform the loose group into a team that can start the site visits as a team.

2.1.5 The assessment protocol

The frame of reference to be formulated by the expert team is not a sketch of an ideal curriculum, but should be considered as a set of minimum requirements for a program as seen by the team. It contains the minimum requirements for graduates to meet in a special field. What makes a biologist a biologist? What makes an electrical engineer an electrical engineer?

The frame of reference is the general assessment protocol, but filled in with subject specific or discipline specific aspects. In formulating the frame of reference, the expert committee will have to take into account the cells for the assessment of the quality of the program(s) as used for the self assessment:

- Requirements of stakeholders
- Expected learning outcomes
- Program content
- Program specification or description
- Program organisation
- Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy
- Student assessment
- Quality of academic staff
- Quality of the support staff
- Student profile
- Student advice/support
- Facilities & infrastructure
- Student evaluation
- Curriculum design & evaluation
- Staff development activities
- Benchmarking
- Achievements /graduates
- Satisfaction stakeholders

The cells are elements of the analysis model for the quality of Teaching and Learning (Figure 2) .

Using the frame of reference, the expert team should always bear in mind that the learning outcomes as formulated by the faculty have to be the starting point for the expert assessment. The intention is not to impose criteria and standards from outside. However, the learning outcomes formulated by the faculty should be discussed to see how far they are complete and clear at the academic level. And, of course, there will be a benchmark to see how far the faculty meets the criteria and standards, set by the competent authorities.

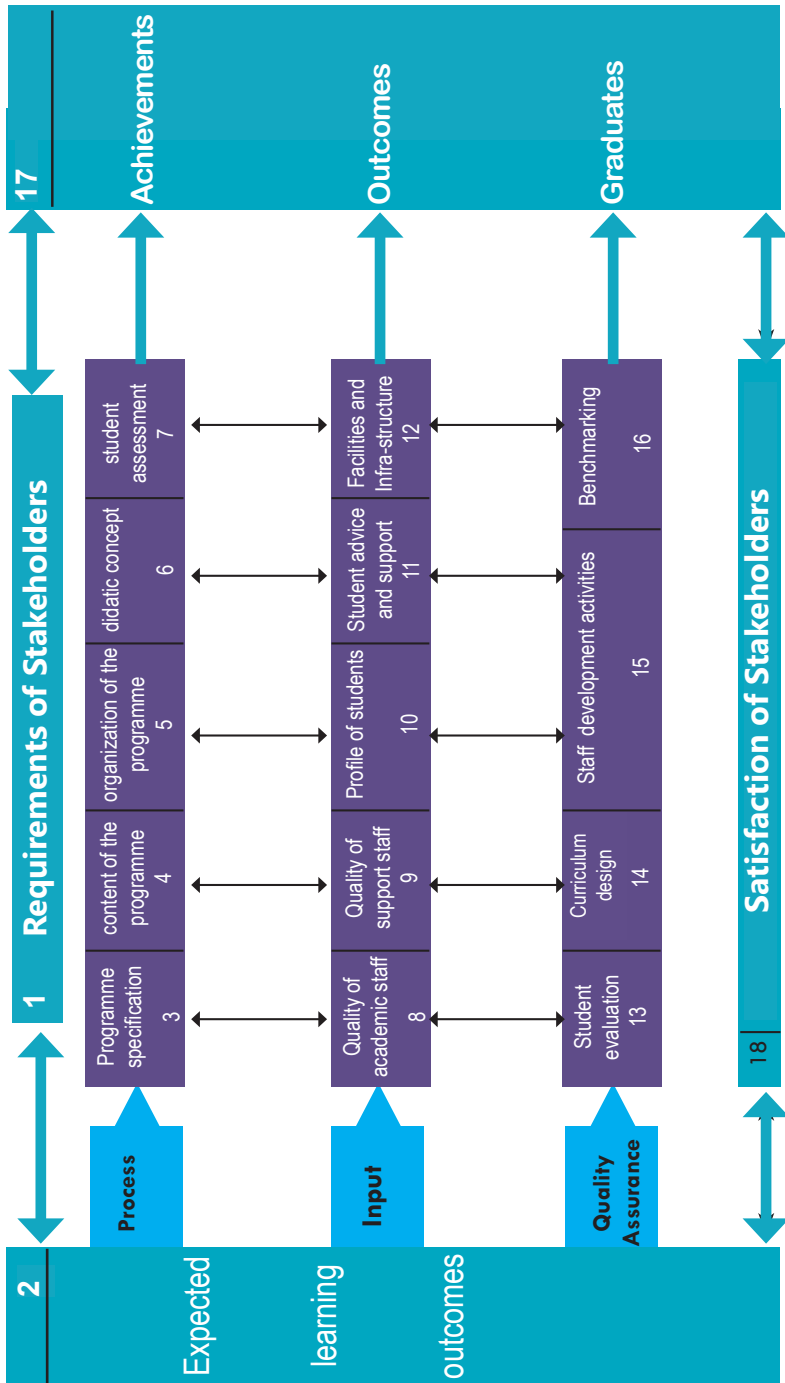


Figure 2: An analysis model for the self-assessment of Teaching and Learning

2.2 The assessment

After the preparatory meeting, the expert team will come together again for the site visit. If the preparatory meeting was held on the day before the site visit, the team will start directly with the site visit.

2.2.1 What is the expert team looking for?

The expert team assesses the quality of the program. The team will already have discussed several aspects during the preliminary meeting. The SAR will already have provided detailed information. During the site visit, the team will be looking for evidence with the following questions in mind:

- Are the objectives /the expected learning outcomes clearly formulated?
- How are these translated into the curriculum?
- Do the exams reflect the content of the program and courses?
- Have graduates really acquired the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes?

The team is on a fact-finding mission. Of course, the SAR is the basic source of information and should provide the basic information. But other sources should also be used:

- The interviews
- The list of the literature used
- The final graduation project
- Assessment and examination papers
- Course descriptions and readers

This is why it will be necessary to reserve time in the visit program for studying these materials.

2.2.2 The site visit program

The chairperson of the team will confirm the program for the site visit in consultation with the faculty according to a given format (see Table 2). Before hand, appointments will have been made with whoever staff members and students the team would like to talk to.

The interviews start with a discussion involving the writers of the self-assessment report. In this interview, the team can ask for clarification of any obscurities and explanation of any topics that are not totally clear.

The interviews with the students are purposely planned to take place before the interviews with the staff members. The students are a very rich source of information, but the information needs to be checked and tested against the ideas of the staff members. Student interviews are important to get an insight into the study load, the didactic qualifications of the staff, the coherency of the program, to find out if they are acquainted with the learning outcomes/objectives, the organisation of the curricula and the facilities. These student interviews should be held in the absence of staff members, so that they can speak freely. The size of the student groups is ideally about ten each time. It's best to talk to about 10 students from the first year,

10 from say the second and third years, and 10 who are nearly at the end of their studies. The composition of the student panels requires special attention. It is important that the group is as far as possible representative of the whole student population in that field, i.e. that it not only includes the good students, but also the less gifted ones. It is better not to leave the invitation of students to the faculty or the staff. The best way is to ask a student organisation (if there is any) to nominate the students. If there is no such organisation, the expert team will invite students at random.

Table 2: Draft program for a site visit

| Time | Activity |
|--|---|
| 15:00 on the day before the official visit | Team members meet in the hotel for information about their task and discussion on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SAR • Specific questions • The program |
| 18:00 | Reception by the VC/Rector and other officials; dinner |
| Day 1 9:00 - 17:00 | Interviews with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the writers of the self-assessment report • students • staff members • curriculum committee/examination committee • student advisers |
| 19:00-20:00 20:00 | Dinner for the expert team Short meeting for discussion on the findings of the day and for setting the program for the next day |
| Day 2 9:00 - 11:00 | interviews with the faculty board additional interviews, if needed visit to facilities |
| 11:00 - 12:00 | Meeting with the management of the institution |
| 12:00 - 13:00 | Lunch for the expert team |
| 13:00 - 16:00 | Formulation of the findings |
| 16:00 - 16:30 | Feedback to the faculty board |

Interviews with staff members will be used for discussion on the content of the curriculum, the goals and objectives/expected learning outcomes. “Why and how did you choose this program?”. Other topics to be discussed include the examinations, the final paper (if any), the final year research projects, etc. It is advisable to talk with groups of about 10 staff members and with the plenary team. Only form subcommittees when it is absolutely necessary.

Other interviews will be held with members of a curriculum committee and with members of the committee responsible for examinations. This will depend on the national context. During the interview with the curriculum committee, the question of how the curriculum is kept up to date will be discussed as will the question on how innovations are planned and realised, etc. The interview with the examination committee must clearly show how the quality of the examinations and degrees is assured.

One part of the program looks at the facilities: Lecture halls, working group rooms, laboratories, practical rooms, libraries, etc. During this tour, it will be possible to feel the atmosphere in a lecture hall with students. The team can split up into small groups when visiting the facilities.

It is advisable to organise an open hour where individual staff members and individual students can talk with the experts. The secretary should ensure that this open hour is made well known to the faculty. A staff member or student who wishes to talk with the team should go directly to the chairperson of the team. The faculty does not need to know who is talking to the team.

An important question is: “Should a team attend lectures?” The quality of education depends foremost on the interaction between staff and students. It is logical that the experts should attend lectures, tutorials and seminar or research groups. However, given the short time for the site visit it is quite impossible to do so. To get an impression of how things are going in the lecture halls, a team can agree to walk into a lecture hall “in action” to feel the atmosphere. However, it must be stressed that it is not a responsibility of the team to assess an individual staff member.

2.2.3 Formulating the findings

The afternoon of the second day is used for drawing up the findings. There are about three hours available for this difficult task. The best method is as follows:

- completion of the checklist by the individual members
- discussion of topics to be treated in the oral report
- formulation of the oral report by chairman and secretary.

Members will use the first hour to complete the checklist (see Appendix). It is very important to fill out the list on the spot. Do not take the list home for completion. Of course, a mature verdict is important, but so is a first impression. Another reason for doing it at the end of the visit is that the chairperson needs the list in order to prepare the draft report.

The committee members are requested to give a mark between 1 and 7 for the various aspects. The reason for this is twofold: on one hand, it confronts the team with possible discrepancies between the verbal verdicts and the graded verdicts after processing the information. “We all say that a certain aspect may be assessed as good; however, when looking at the marks we are only going to award an ‘adequate’. How is that possible?” On the other hand, this grading is necessary for the final report.

To have some idea of the value of the figures, bear the following ideas in mind:

- Score 1-2 when you believe this aspect should be considered as critical. The university senate or faculty board have to act directly. Something has to be done and cannot wait.
- Score 3 when you believe this aspect is unsatisfactory. It must be improved, but does not directly threaten the quality of the graduate.
- Score 4 when you believe the situation is satisfactory. The faculty may be satisfied, but there is no reason to be proud.
- Score 5 when you believe this topic can be assessed as more than satisfactory, but not excellent.
- Score 6 when you believe this topic can be assessed as more than satisfactory and can be seen as an example of good practice.
- Score 7 when you believe this topic can be assessed as excellent. The faculty can be proud of it and it is certainly a strong point.

After completing the checklist, the chairperson will draw up an inventory of the topics to be treated in the oral presentation. Therefore, it will be handy to mark the topics in the checklist. Based on experience, it seems that about 45 minutes is needed to discuss the topics. The chair will formulate the content of the oral presentation, based on the discussions with all members. In these 45 minutes, the other members can use the time to visit facilities, if this is still needed.

The oral presentation

The oral presentation to the faculty board at the end of the visit holds a special position in the process. Sometimes, findings and conclusions are not really suitable for the report, but the team would like to make a critical statement about them. In that case, the oral presentation can be used to formulate strongly worded recommendations. In order to do justice to this principle, the oral presentation is not public; the team reports to the faculty board. The chairperson should stress that this is an interim report; some conclusions may change during the final discussion on the report. It is advisable not only to mention the faculty’s weaknesses, but also its strengths.

2.2.4 The expert team’s report

After a visit to the faculty, the chairperson will write a first draft of the report, using the completed checklists and the minutes of the oral presentation. Table 3 gives an outline of the content of the assessment report.

Table 3: Content of an assessment report

| |
|--|
| <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background of the external –assessment: Why is the assessment done?• Composition of the team• Short description of the university and the department responsible for the curriculum• Short description of the program (in such a way that an outsider has a good idea about the content of the program) |
| <p>Chapter 1: Requirements of stakeholders and expected learning outcomes</p> |
| <p>Chapter 2: The process</p> <p>2.1 Program specification</p> <p>2.2 Program content</p> <p>2.2. Program organisation</p> <p>5.2.3 Didactic concept</p> <p>5.2.4 Student assessment</p> |
| <p>Chapter 3 The input</p> <p>3.1 Quality of academic staff</p> <p>3.2 Quality of support staff</p> <p>3.3. The students</p> <p>3.4. Student advice/support</p> <p>3.3 Facilities and infrastructure</p> |
| <p>Chapter 4: Quality assurance</p> <p>4.1 Student evaluation</p> <p>4.2 Curriculum design</p> <p>4.3. Staff development activities</p> <p>4.4. Benchmarking</p> <p>4.4 Feedback stakeholders</p> |
| <p>Chapter 5: achievements and graduates</p> <p>5.1 Achieved outcomes (graduates)/graduate profile</p> <p>5.2. Pass rate and dropout rate</p> <p>5.3. Average time to degree</p> <p>5.4 Employability</p> |
| <p>Chapter 6: Stakeholder satisfaction</p> <p>6.1. Opinion - Students</p> <p>6.2. Opinion - Alumni (graduates)</p> <p>6.3. Opinion - Labour market</p> <p>6..4 Opinion - Society</p> |
| <p>Chapter 7 Strengths-weaknesses analysis</p> <p>7.1 Summary of strengths</p> <p>7.2 Summary of weaknesses</p> <p>7.3 Summary of the recommendations</p> |

When the expert team will assesses equivalent similar program in other universities, the expert team will try to give in a general chapter a comparison of the programs, the state-of-the-art of the discipline and the view of the expert team on the developments. The team should not spend too much time describing its ideas about desired developments in their field. Of course, the experts will make use of the opportunity to reflect on them, but these reflections should not delay a rapid feedback to the faculties, who will wish to take immediate action based on the findings of the committee.

The 1st draft will be discussed with the team members. The 2nd draft will be sent to the faculty for comment. The comments should concern only factual errors and inaccuracies, not the differences in opinion. The expert team will decide what to do with the comments. After the feedback from the faculty, the chairperson of the expert team will send the final report both to the Vice-Chancellor and to the Dean of the faculty responsible for the program.

If the faculty disagree with the way the assessment is done or disagree with the findings of the expert team, it may contact the organisers of the assessment (IUCEA). The IUCEA will install an independent committee to investigate the complaints.

For the time being, the reports of the external assessment are confidential. The university will decide if it will make the report public or not. At least the university will use the report for improvement and for formulating the quality plan.

2.2.5 Concluding Remarks

The guidelines given in this chapter are intended to help the expert team, not to make external quality assessment a bureaucratic process. Each team of experts will tend to look for its own approach; every discipline is different. The guidelines should not be a straitjacket. However, it should take very weighty arguments to deviate from the process described. The approach given here will save the experts time and offer faculties a fair assessment.

Appendix 1: Checklist on the quality of a program

| | Scores | | | | | | |
|--|--------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <i>1. Requirements of stakeholders. The faculty/department has a clear idea</i> | | | | | | | |
| • about the relevant needs and requirements of the government | | | | | | | |
| • about the relevant needs and requirements of the labour market | | | | | | | |
| • about the relevant needs and requirements of the students/parents | | | | | | | |
| • about the relevant needs and requirements of the academic world | | | | | | | |
| • about the relevant needs and requirements of the society | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>2. Expected learning outcomes (objectives)</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The program has clearly formulated learning outcomes | | | | | | | |
| • The program promotes learning to learn and life-long learning | | | | | | | |
| • The expected learning outcomes cover generic skills and knowledge as well as specific skills and knowledge | | | | | | | |
| • The expected learning outcomes clearly reflect the requirements of the stakeholders | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>3. Program specification</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The university uses program specifications/program description | | | | | | | |
| • The program specification shows the expected learning outcomes | | | | | | | |
| • The program specification is informative for the stakeholders | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>4. Program content</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The program content shows a good balance between general and specific skills and knowledge | | | | | | | |
| • The program reflects the vision and mission of the university | | | | | | | |
| • The expected learning outcomes have been adequately translated into the program | | | | | | | |
| • The contribution made by each course to achieving the learning outcomes is clear | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>5. The organisation of the program</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum is coherent and all subjects and courses have been integrated | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum shows breadth and depth | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum clearly shows the basic courses, intermediate courses, specialist courses and the final project (thesis, etc.) activities | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum is up-to-date | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>6. Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| • The staff have a clear teaching/learning strategy | | | | | | | | | |
| • The teaching/learning strategy enables students to acquire and manipulate knowledge academically | | | | | | | | | |
| • The teaching/learning strategy is student oriented and stimulates quality learning | | | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum stimulates active learning and facilitates learning to learn | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>7. Student assessment</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| • The assessments reflect the expected learning outcomes and the content of the program | | | | | | | | | |
| • Student assessment uses a variety of methods | | | | | | | | | |
| • The criteria for assessment are explicit and well-known | | | | | | | | | |
| • The standards applied in the assessment are explicit and consistent | | | | | | | | | |
| • The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance and scrutiny | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>8. Quality of the academic staff</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| • The staff is qualified and competent for the task | | | | | | | | | |
| • The staff are sufficient to deliver the curriculum adequately | | | | | | | | | |
| • Recruitment and promotion are based on academic merits | | | | | | | | | |
| • Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and skills | | | | | | | | | |
| • Time management and incentive systems are designed to support the quality of teaching and learning | | | | | | | | | |
| • Accountability of the staff members is well regulated | | | | | | | | | |
| • There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment | | | | | | | | | |
| • Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented. | | | | | | | | | |
| • There is an efficient appraisal system | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>10. The student</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| • The selection of entering students (if there is selection) is adequate | | | | | | | | | |
| • There is an adequate intake policy | | | | | | | | | |
| • There is an adequate credit points system | | | | | | | | | |
| • The actual study load is in line with the calculated load | | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>11. Student advice and support</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| • There is an adequate student progress system | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| • Students get adequate feedback on their performance | | | | | | | | |
| • Coaching for first-year students is adequate | | | | | | | | |
| • The physical and material environment for the student is satisfactory | | | | | | | | |
| • The social and psychological environment for the student is satisfactory | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | |
| <i>12. Facilities and infrastructure</i> | | | | | | | | |
| • The lecture facilities (lecture halls, small course rooms) are adequate | | | | | | | | |
| • The library is adequate and up-to-date | | | | | | | | |
| • The laboratories are adequate and up-to-date | | | | | | | | |
| • The computer facilities are adequate and up-to-date | | | | | | | | |
| • Environmental Health and Safety Standards should meet the local requirements in all respects | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | |
| <i>13. Student evaluation</i> | | | | | | | | |
| • Courses and curriculum are subject to structured student evaluation | | | | | | | | |
| • Student feedback is used for improvement | | | | | | | | |
| • The department provides the students with feedback on what is done with the outcomes | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | |
| <i>14. Curriculum design & evaluation</i> | | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum was developed as a joint enterprise by all the staff members | | | | | | | | |
| • Students are involved in the curriculum design | | | | | | | | |
| • The labour market is involved in the curriculum design | | | | | | | | |
| • The curriculum is regularly evaluated | | | | | | | | |
| • Revision of the curriculum takes place at reasonable time periods | | | | | | | | |
| • Quality assurance of the curriculum is adequate | | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | | |
| <i>15. Staff development activities</i> | | | | | | | | |
| • There is a clear vision on the needs for staff development | | | | | | | | |
| • The staff development activities are adequate to the needs | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>16. Benchmarking</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking to get a better view on its performance | | | | | | | |
| • The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking for curriculum design | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>17 Achievements/the graduates</i> | | | | | | | |
| • The level of the graduates is satisfactory | | | | | | | |
| • The pass rate is satisfactory | | | | | | | |
| • The drop out rate is acceptable | | | | | | | |
| • The average time for graduation is in line with the planned time | | | | | | | |
| • The graduates can find easily a job. The unemployment rate is at acceptable level | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| <i>18 Feedback stakeholders</i> | | | | | | | |
| • There is adequate structural feedback from the labour market (employers) | | | | | | | |
| • There is adequate structural feedback from the alumni | | | | | | | |
| Overall opinion | | | | | | | |
| Overall verdict | | | | | | | |

Appendix 2: Independence of team members

The expert teams are expected to assess the quality of the programs in an authoritative, critical and independent way. Therefore, the teams must conform to high standards of quality. Safeguards are necessary to make sure that these standards can be met and to demonstrate that they are actually fulfilled.

The team and the team members have to act independently. The independence of the team and its members means that their judgement is not influenced by the institution or program under review or by any other interested parties. An important safeguard in this respect is the disclosure procedure, which means that any potential conflict of interest, bias or undue influence is reported and undesirable effects are minimised through clear agreements. This is not only aimed at finding and preventing actual undesirable influences, but also to detect what could give the impression of undue influence. A number of evidently undesirable situations (such as financial interests) are explicitly forbidden. The rules of conduct (section 3) describe how to deal with such situations.

General safeguards

General safeguards regarding the independence of panels are:

- team members who are (or were) committed to institution or programs under review, should not participate in the assessment thereof
- the team as a whole is responsible for the definitive assessments
- the definitive assessments are presented in draft to the participating institutes for factual correction and to check whether adequate use was made of all relevant information
- there is a procedure for appeal against the assessments.

Specific measures

- The faculty/department under review must report any potential conflict of interest, bias or undue influence regarding candidates of the panels.
- The members of the expert team will sign a letter of independence. The members commit themselves to maintain an independent position during the assessment and not to allow undue influence to affect their judgement. Completing and signing the independence form is a requirement for installation as a team member
- potential conflicts or tensions that are reported in the independence form (or by other means) are discussed in the committee and an assessment is made to what extent these could unduly affect the judgement (or appear to do so). Measures are then taken to avoid undesirable effects. Such measures range from completely or partially excluding an expert from the assessment, to carefully counterbalancing or otherwise neutralising undesirable effects. The report states how potential tensions were detected and how these were dealt with in order to warrant the independence of the judgement.
- the team members must reconfirm or update their declaration during the final committee

meeting and state that they have actually fulfilled the requirements.

Rules of conduct for the expert team

- A team member must avoid any influence in the assessment from persons or parties committed to the programme or institute under review, or from other interested parties.
- A team member must maintain sufficient distance from personal ideas, convictions or preferences about the academic area under review.
- A team member uses the following information for the assessment:
 - The self study and annexed documentation provided by the faculty/department
 - Any additional data provided at the request of the expert team
 - The interviews held in the course of the review
 - Observations made during site visits.
- The assessment made by a team member must conform to quality standards that prevail in the scientific world in general and in the relevant academic disciplines in particular. **Relevant aspects in this respect are:**
 - expertise and professionalism
 - independence and objectivity
 - carefulness and consistency
 - transparency and absence of bias.
- A team member does not use information gathered in the course of the review for personal purposes. Confidential information is treated appropriately.
- A team member who is (or was) closely involved with the institute or program under review, does not participate in that particular assessment or in the interviews concerned.
- A team member does not accept presents or remunerations from the program or institute under review.
- A team member does not have financial or commercial stakes in the programme or institute under review, nor in any associated companies or organisations.

Independence and Disclosure form for members of the expert teams

1. Conflict of interest assessment

Do you perceive any risk of conflict of interest or serious appearance of such conflict in your participation in the external assessment?

No Yes

If the answer is yes, please provide a brief description and analysis of the potential for conflict.

2. Declaration about financial interests

"I declare that I have no financial links with any of the persons, programmes or institutes under review and that I have not accepted and will not accept any financial or other remunerations from outside sources for my participation in the external assessment. I declare that I will report any offers of such remuneration to the chairman of the review committee."

3. Declaration of independence

"I have read the principles and rules applying to this assessment and I declare that I will follow these to the best of my ability and that will judge without influence from the institute, program or other stakeholders, and without bias, personal preference or personal benefit."

4. Declaration about confidentiality

"I declare that I will keep all information, gathered during the assessment with high confidentiality."

Name: Date: Signature:

Note: If your situation with respect to potential conflict of interest changes in the course of the review, you are obligated to submit an updated disclosure statement. Information provided in this disclosure form will be restricted to authorised persons.

Appendix 3: 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 Resources |
| 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 for 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 | Tanzania Commission for Universities |
| TEEP | Transnational European Evaluation Project |

Appendix 4: 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 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 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).**

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 type 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 the 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 *programme*

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 refers to the process of allowing institutions and higher education systems to take control of ensuring quality providing they are **accountable to principal 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 checks 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 checks 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

FACULTY: *Faculty is:*

1. the organisational unit in 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 contributions 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.

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 that refers 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

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: The term 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 is operating in the same milieu as the reviewer(s).

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.

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.

PHD (DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY): See *doctoral degree*

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

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

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

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 and 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 or undertaken by an institution of higher education.

Q

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

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) 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 EVALUATION: See *evaluation*

QUALITY GUIDELINES: See *guidelines*

QUALITY MONITORING: See *external quality monitoring*

QUALITY REVIEW: See *review*

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

TRANSFERABILITY: See *credit transfer*

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.

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.