

The Inter-University Council for East Africa

A Road map to Quality

Hand book for Quality Assurance in
Higher Education

Volume 1: Guidelines for Self 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 Vroeijenstijn 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

DAAD, Department for Programs, Southern Hemisphere

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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 Self-Assessment at program level offers the faculties/ departments a tool to carry out the self-assessment and to prepare for the external assessment. The volume is written in a broad and general approach. However, the tool has to be adapted to the specific situation of the university and to the specific situation of the faculty/department.

The content is based on experiences and good practices from all over the world. Universities should look at what is going on internationally, while developing internal quality assurance mechanisms. At the same time, universities can not neglect the developments in the region and in different countries. The most important materials that are 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.

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

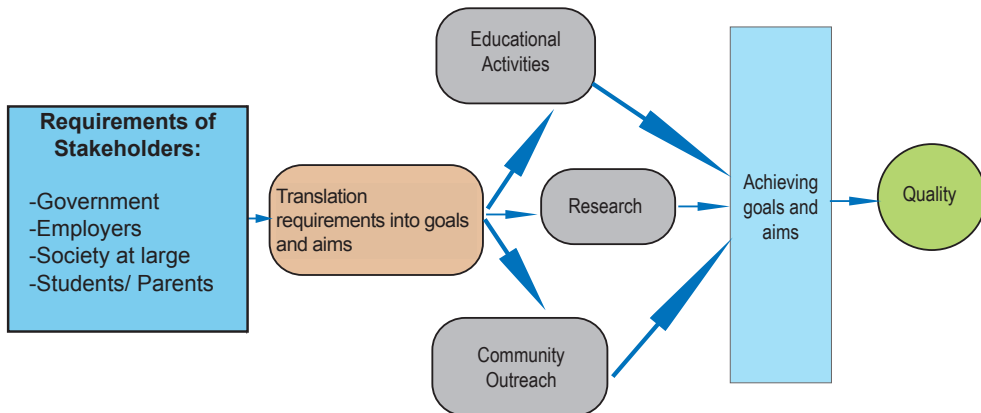


Figure 1: Stakeholders and Quality in Higher Education

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

1.3 The self-assessment for discovering quality

If we agree upon a shared concept of quality and the criteria and standards to measure our quality, we can ask ourselves: what is the best way to discover our quality? An important tool in the field of quality assurance is a critical self-assessment, also called, self-evaluation or SWOT- analysis. In this handbook the words are used interchangeably.

A critical self-assessment is important because we are sometimes too eager to accept that everything is good: “I have been teaching this way for years and my course has never caused problems. My students have always been content and employers have never complained about the graduates.” This may be true, in general. In an educational organisation, which is a professional organisation, the players should always aim to produce quality. Introducing a quality assurance system does not mean that the existing quality is not good enough. The demand for self-evaluation is not inspired by lack of quality. What it means is that quality has to be examined in a structured manner, within a well-defined framework.

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

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

An effective self-assessment is time-consuming. It requires effort by staff and students. Often, it will require an investment of time that has to be taken away from other activities. However, the returns and the profits of a good self-assessment are high. The self-assessment will provide information not known to everyone: The information often exists, but only a small group of people knows it; or the facts will have another dimension when they are connected to one another. The self-assessment involves co-workers and students in the discussion on the quality of education: the discussion will be raised beyond the level of the individual who is active in the curriculum committee or administration; and the views on quality of individual co-workers and students will be examined together in order to establish a policy for the institution. It shows on which considerations choices need to be made (choices are often made implicitly or postponed) and the information gathered is brought to bear on earlier formulated principles. A decision is reached as to whether a policy should remain unchanged or an explicit choice made.

1.4 Principles of effective self-assessment

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

- Primarily, a self-assessment should never be felt as threatening. A self-assessment should not be used to assess an individual, should never be used for punishment or reward and should never be used to blame someone.
- A self assessment aims at improvement and enhancement of the quality.
- It is necessary to create a broad basis for the self-assessment and to sensitize staff and students. The whole organisation has to prepare itself for it.
- Looking at quality is more than testing the performance. It also means organisational development and shaping the institution. Everybody has to be responsible and involved for real self-assessment.
- The management of the institution must fully support the self-assessment. Relevant information is needed for an effective policy and good management. The self-assessment serves to acquire structural insight in performance of the university;
- Carrying out a critical self-evaluation demands a good organisation. Primarily someone has to coordinate the self-assessment process. It would be good to designate someone specifically with the self-evaluation project. The coordinator has to meet some requirements:

In order to obtain the required information, it is important that the coordinator has good entry rapport at all levels of the institution. Therefore, it is very important that the coordinator has good contacts within the university, with the central management as well as with the faculties and the staff members.

- The coordinator must have the authority to make appointments.
- It is desirable to constitute a substantive team of staff in-charge of the self-assessment.
- It is important that the team is structured in such a way that the involvement of all sections is assured. The working group is in charge of the self-assessment, gathering data, analysing materials and drawing conclusions.
- It is assumed that self-assessment is an analysis supported by the whole faculty/department. Therefore, it is important that everyone should be at least acquainted with the contents of the self-assessment report and should recognise it as a document from his or her own institution. The working group may organise a workshop or seminar to discuss the draft SAR.
- Not everyone has to agree with all the points in the self-assessment report. There may be disagreement as to what are seen as weaknesses and strengths and what is to be considered as the causes of the weaknesses. Should there be very big differences of opinion between certain groups or bodies, then the SAR should report on it.

1.5 The organisation of the self-assessment

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

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

Table 2: The process of organising self assessment

Date	Activity
Eight months before the planned end of the self-assessment	Appoint the leader of the assessment process Compose the assessment team, including students
The following 6 months	- Divide the cells to be dealt with - Each person responsible for collecting information and data collects that information - Write draft information of the cells
Four months after the start	- Discussion on the drafts in the group - Second draft
About 5 months after the start	- Discussion of the second draft with all faculty staff and students during an open hearing
Six months after the start	- Edit the comments of the hearing for the final draft
Eight months after the start	External assessment (see Volume 2 of the Road Map to Quality)

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

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

1.6 Standards and criteria to be applied

In the self-assessment, the important question is against what standards we will assess the quality? A university has to formulate its own standards and criteria, but it is essential to take into account the criteria formulated by outsiders, such as the Commission for Higher Education

(CHE) in Kenya, the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) in Tanzania or the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Uganda. Also standards formulated by a professional body must be taken into account. Furthermore, one should use internationally accepted standards. There are 18 aspects to be considered for the programme assessment: These include;

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

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

1.7 An analysis model for teaching and learning

An institution for Higher Education generally has three core activities: teaching/learning, research and community outreach. Of course, the last two activities are important too. However in the handbook the emphasis is on the quality of the educational task. To find out the quality of education, the instrument of self-assessment at program level is used. The object of the self- assessment is the program.

A program is defined as a coherent set of courses leading to a certain degree (bachelor or master). We may call the program also a curriculum. Of course, it will be sometimes more practical to combine the self-assessment of coherent programs, e.g. private law, public law and international law)

As mentioned in Section 1, quality is a concept with many aspects. There are many factors influencing quality. With regard to Teaching and Learning, the following dimensions can be distinguished:

- Quality of the input.
- Quality of the process.
- Quality of the output.

In order to map the quality in a self-assessment, we need a clear model to guard against looking at some aspects and ignoring others. Figure 2 shows a model for the analysis of the educational activities. For the Self-assessment, this analysis model will be used as elaborated in Section 2 on page 14.

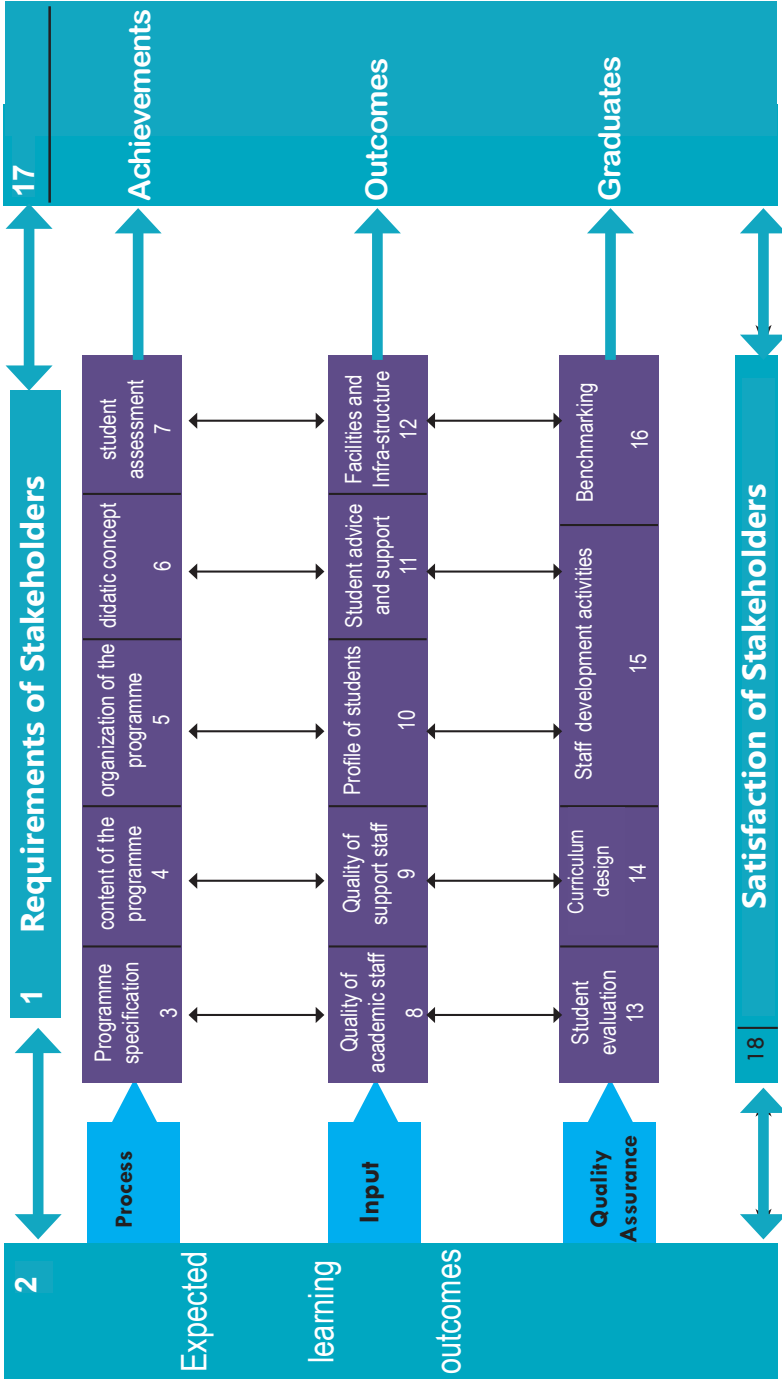


Figure 2: The analysis model for the Self-Assessment of Teaching and Learning

How to use the model

1. The criteria to be met are given in Section 2, under the heading of the aspect (e.g.2: Expected learning outcomes, or 12: Facilities & infrastructure) .

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

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

In general, one may say that the formulated criteria can be seen as the minimum requirements. If needed, an explanation and interpretation of the criteria is given.

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

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

3. To help you to find evidence, a set of questions are formulated under the heading “looking for evidence” that can be used in finding the needed indications. This is not a conclusive list. Note that the questions are not to be seen as a questionnaire that needs to be completed, but they are guides on what to look for.

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

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

- All aspects (cells of the model) need to be discussed. It is not possible to make a selection.
- For each cell the following steps are to be taken:
 - Description
 - Analysis
 - Formulation strengths and weaknesses
 - Evidence for meeting the criteria
 - Action plan for improvement
- When it is the first time, do not worry too much about white spots. Include them in the action plan

SECTION 2: The self-assessment

2.1 The quality aspects to be assessed

i) Requirements of stakeholders

The faculty/department responsible for the program has a clear idea about the relevant demands and needs of all stakeholders.

Explanation

Higher Education has many stakeholders and all stakeholders have their own ideas and expectation about quality. These stakeholders include:

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

Each stakeholder will appreciate different aspects of quality and because all stakeholders have their own ideas and expectations, it can be said that quality is a matter of negotiation between the academic world and the stakeholders. In this negotiation process, each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, his/her requirements. The organisation (faculty or department) as supplier of the academic training must try to reconcile all these different wishes and requirements. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the expected learning outcomes of the program.

Looking for evidence

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

ii) Expected learning outcomes

The program/curriculum has clearly formulated learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, attitude) reflecting the relevant demands and needs of all stakeholders.

Explanation

Before the quality can be assessed, there is a need to know clearly what students are expected to learn. Learning outcomes must therefore be clearly formulated. Students come to the university to learn something. Therefore, we have to formulate very clearly what we expect the student to learn and what we expect our graduates to have learned in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude. The expected learning outcomes form the starting point for the self-assessment. There should be a distinction between generic academic skills and discipline specific skills.

Looking for Evidence

- What are the expected learning outcomes (ELO) of the program?
- How do the ELO fit into the mission of the institution as a whole?
- Does the labour market express specific requirements for graduates to meet? Is there a well-defined job profile for the graduates of this program?
- How do you try to tune the program to the labour market?
- How are the objectives made known to the staff and the students?
- To what extent do we think the objectives have been realised?
- Do we have any plans to adjust the objectives? Why?

THE PROCESS (CELL 3 – 7 OF THE MODEL)

iii) The Program specifications (or program description)

Universities are recommended to publish, for each program they offer, a program specification/description which gives the intended learning outcomes of the program in terms of:

- knowledge and understanding that the students will have acquired upon completion of the program
- cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis
- subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills, clinical skills, etc.

Explanation

The formulated learning outcomes must be translated into the program. It is important that the objectives are well known to everybody. Therefore, universities are recommended to publish a program specification or description for each program they offer. The program specification is a source of information for:

- Students
- Employers, particularly about the skills and other transferable intellectual abilities developed by the program.
- Professional and statutory regulatory bodies that accredit higher education programs, leading into a profession or other regulated occupations.

Looking for evidence

- Are the objectives/expected learning outcomes translated into the program and its courses?
- Does the university has a clear program/curriculum specification/description?
- Is the description known to staff and students?

iv) The content of the program/ curriculum

- The program shows a balance between specialist contents and general knowledge and skills.
- The program takes into account and reflects the vision, mission, aims and objectives of the institution.
- The objectives and expected learning outcomes of the program are explicit and are known to staff and students.
- The program shows the expected learning outcomes of the graduate. Each course should clearly be designed to show the expected learning outcomes of the course. To obtain this, a curriculum map/program map must be constructed and made.

Explanation

The content of a program is closely linked to the translated goals and aims. The formulated learning outcomes determine the content of the program. Furthermore, the program must be coherent and up-to-date. For each course it should be clear how it contributes to the achievement of the overall learning outcomes.

Looking for evidence

- Do the contents of the program reflect the expected learning outcomes?
- Can the program be considered as adequate for achieving the expected learning outcomes?
- Are the courses in the program clearly interrelated?
- Is the program coherent?
- Is there a balance between specific and general courses?
- Do the courses demonstrate a growing complexity over the years?
- Is the program content up-to-date?

v) The organisation of the program

- The program is designed in such a way that the subject matter is integrated and also strengthens other courses in the program
- The program shows range, depth and coherence of the courses
- The program structure shows clearly the basic courses, the intermediate courses, the specialist courses and the final thesis or dissertation.

Looking for evidence

- Why is this program structure chosen?
- Has the program been changed structurally over recent years? If so, why?
- Where there any requirements specified on the internal coherence of the courses? Who set these requirements?
- Is the first year of the program a good introduction into the subsequent parts of the program?
- Is the link between the basic program and phase of specialisation adequate?
- Is the organisation of the various specialisations satisfactory?
- Is the relation between basic courses, intermediate courses and specialist courses and the optional course in the program satisfactory?
- Are bottlenecks experienced within the program?
- Is the instruction/teaching provided by other departments satisfactory?
- Is the chosen academic year structure (trimester or semester) adequate/appropriate?
- What is the opinion of those involved ?

vi) Didactic concept and teaching/learning strategy

- The didactic concept promotes action learning
- The didactic concept is student-oriented. Hence, the conception of teaching is the facilitation of learning.
- Quality learning embraces the principles of adult learning
- In promoting responsibility in learning, teachers should:
 - a. create a teaching-learning environment that enables individuals to participate responsibly in the learning process
 - b. provide curricula that are flexible and that enable learners to make meaningful choices in terms of subject content, program routes, approaches to assessment and modes and duration of study
- Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by peers, with the intention of achieving quality student learning.

Explanation

Didactic concept means the strategy developed by the faculty with regard to the didactic and pedagogical approach in the program. What didactic and pedagogic approaches are practised? Of course there is no single didactic concept that is valid for all. However, at least one has to think about the didactic model behind the program.

Looking for evidence

- Is there an explicit didactic concept and teaching learning strategy shared by all staff members? Is this adequate?
- Are the instructional methods used (organisation of self-instruction for students, size of classes, organisation of seminars, practical courses/internships etc.) satisfactory?
- What is the role of the computer in the program?
- Is there sufficient variety in the teaching/learning methods?
- What circumstances prevent the use of desired instructional methods (number of students, material infrastructure, lecturer skills)?

If research is a core activity for the university:

- When do students come into contact with research for the first time?
- How is the interrelationship between education and research expressed in the program?
- How are the research findings included in the program?
- The practical training of students (trainees) is a specific aspect in the didactic concept.
- Describe the position given to practical training in the program:
- Is practical training a compulsory part? What is size in credit points.
- Have any criteria been formulated for the practical training to comply with?
- What is the level of preparation for practical training in the program (concerning content, method and skills).
- Is the level of the practical training satisfactory?

- Are there any bottlenecks in the practical training? If so, what causes them?
- How are students coached?
- How is the assessment done?

vii) Student assessment

- The system of assessment and examination provides an effective indication whether the students have reached the expected learning outcomes of the program or its components.
- The tests, evaluations and examinations are in line with the content and learning objectives of the various parts of the program.
- The program provides individual students with adequate feedback concerning the extent to which the various learning objectives have been achieved.
- The program ensures adequate consistency of the student assessments.
- The assessment is adequately organized (as regards e.g. announcement of the results, opportunities to re-sit tests or examinations, compensation arrangements etc.).
- The examination committee functions adequately and performs its statutory tasks

Explanation

Student assessment is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of such assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge that exists on testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the efficiency of teaching and learner support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- Be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other program objectives;
- Be fit for purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative;
- Have clear and published grading/marking criteria;
- Be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the students' progression towards achieving the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification; where possible, not relying on the verdicts of single examiners;
- Take into account all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- Have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- Ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- Be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures;
- Inform students clearly about the assessment strategy being used for their program, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subjected to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

Looking for evidence

- To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover the content of the courses and program? To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover to the objectives of the courses and of the program as a whole?
- Do the assessments have clear and published grading/marking criteria? Are the pass/fail criteria clear?
- Are a variety of assessment methods used? What are they?
- Are the assessment/examination regulations clear?
- Are the procedures clear? Are they well known? Well followed?
- Are any safeguards in place to ensure objectivity?
- Are the students satisfied with the procedures? What about complaints from students?
- Do clear rules exist for re-assessments and are students satisfied with them?
- Is there special form of student assessment is the final project (essay, thesis or assignment)? This requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and their ability to manipulate the knowledge in a new situation.
- Do clear regulations exist for the final project/final essay?
- Are the criteria for the final project clear?
- Is the level of the final project/final essay satisfactory?
- Do any bottlenecks exist for producing the final project? If so, why?
- Describe how students are coached.

INPUT VARIABLES (CELL 8-12)

A department's quality not only depends on the program itself. We also have to look at the preconditions set for delivering the program:

- The quality of the program will be nearly impossible to achieve without qualified and competent academic and support staff
- The quality of the entering student will influence the quality of our process and the quality of the output.
- Besides human resources, financial resources are equally important for delivery of a quality program., Financial resources are important for the program's funding and financing for the facilities.

viii) Quality of academic staff

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

Explanation

The quality of a program depends on the interaction between the academic staff and the student. We expect that the academic staff are competent and qualified. Competent teaching staff are able to:

- design and deliver a coherent teaching and learning program
- apply a range of teaching and learning methods and select methods most appropriate to desired learning outcomes
- employ a range of techniques to assess students' work and match these to intended learning outcomes
- monitor and evaluate their own teaching performance and evaluate programs they deliver
- reflect upon their own teaching practices

There will be no quality without qualified and competent staff. In this respect, under this criteria, we have to look at:

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

Size of the staff and their qualifications

Use Table 3 to specify the number of staff. The term staff covers full-time and part-time teaching staff and visiting lecturers. Mention possible vacancies separately, and specify the reference date for the data. Specify the staff/student ratio and the staff/graduate ratio as per Table 4.

Table 3: Size of staff and their qualification

Category	M	F	Total		Percentage of PhDs
			People	FTEs *	
Professors					
Full-time teachers					
Part-time teachers					
Visiting lecturers					
Support staff					
Total					

* FTE stands for Full Time Equivalent. This is a unit to calculate the investment of time. 1 FTE is equal to about 40 hours per week (full-time employment). A staff member with a weekly appointment of 8 hours is 0.2 FTE.

Table 4: Staff/student ratio and staff/graduate ratio (please specify the year)

Total FTE for the training*	Number of Students	Number of graduates Year:	Number of students per FTE-training	Number of graduates per FTE-graduates

*Realistic estimate of the number of FTEs used for the training. The number of students enrolled in the program at the beginning of the academic year. If this number is not considered to be representative, please specify what it should be made in the text.

Looking for evidence

- Are the academic staff competent and qualified for their job? Are the competencies and expertise of the staff adequate for delivering this program?
- Are there any problems with the human resources? Age profile? Are vacancies difficult to fill? What difficulties are there in attracting qualified staff?
- What policy is pursued with regard to the employment of staff, both in teaching and research?
- What about teaching load? The staff/student ratio? The staff/graduate ratio?
- How many contact hours of service-instruction are given in other programs and departments?

Staff management

- Does the department have a clearly formulated staff management structure?
- Is staff recruitment based on experience in teaching and research?
- Is there a system of staff appraisal?
- What role do teaching qualifications and teaching activities play in the career of the staff members?
- What does the department think of its HR policy so far?

- What future developments are there?
- How are teachers prepared for the teaching task?
- Is the teaching delivered by the staff supervised and assessed?

ix) Quality of support staff

Criterion

There is adequate support in terms of staffing at the libraries, laboratories, administration and student services.

Explanation

Program quality depends mostly on interaction between staff and students. However, academic staff cannot perform well without the quality of the support staff. These might be staff members who support the library, laboratories, computer facilities etc.

Looking for evidence

- Are the library support staff members competent and sufficient?
- Are the laboratories support staff members competent and sufficient?
- Are the computer facilities support staff members competent and sufficient?
- Are the administrative support staff members competent and sufficient?

x) The Profile of the students

- There are clearly formulated admission criteria for undergraduate and graduate programs
- If students admission involves selection, the procedure and criteria are clear, adequate and transparent
- The planned study load is in line with the real study load

Explanation

The quality of the output depends a lot on the quality of the input. This concerns also the students admitted for the program.

The intake

- Give a summary of the intake of first year students using Table 5
- Give a summary of the total number of students enrolled in the program using Table 6.

Table 5: Intake of first-year students (last 5 academic years)

Academic year	Full-time			Part-time		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total

Table 6: Total number of students (last 5 academic years)

Academic year	Full-time			Part-time		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total

Looking for evidence

- How do you analyse the development of the student intake? Are there reasons to worry? What are the causes of problems? What are the prospects for the future?
- What are the admission procedures? Are students selected? If so, how are they selected? What are the requirements?
- What policy is pursued with regard to the intake of students? Does the department aim to increase the intake or to stabilise it? Why?
- What measures are taken to effect the quality and size of the intake? What effect do these measures have?

Study load

- Does the department use a credit points system? How are credits calculated?
- Does the program's actual study load correspond with the prescribed study load?
- Is the study load divided equally over and within academic years?
- What measures are taken in the field of program development and/or student advice when parts of the program deviate from the prescribed study load (too difficult/heavy or too easy)? Are these measures effective?
- Can an average student complete the program in the planned time?

xi) Student advice and support

- Student progress is systematically recorded and monitored, feed back to students and corrective actions are made where necessary.
- In establishing a learning environment to support the achievement of quality student learning, academic staff do all in their power to provide not only a physical and material environment which is supportive of learning and which is appropriate for the activities involved, but also a social or psychological one.

Explanation

How students are monitored and supported by staff is essential to a good student career. A university must ensure that a good physical, material, social and psychological environment is in place.

Looking for evidence

- What role do staff members play in informing and coaching students?
- What role do they play in integrating students into the department?
- How is the information flow to potential students organised? Is sufficient attention paid to the requirements of their educational background?

- Does the future student get a good impression of the education offered? Is the information evaluated? If so, what happens with the results?
- How are students informed about the study program?
- Is attention paid to study progress? Is student progress recorded? Does the recording lead to problems being pointed out in time? When is first contact made with problem cases? Does this result in remedial and/or preventive actions being introduced for the individual student or program development?
- Is special attention paid to coaching first-year students? If so, how does it work?
- Are there specific facilities to provide study skills for students with problems? Are these available within the department, the faculty or centrally? How is information on these matters organised?
- Is separate attention paid to coaching advanced students?
- Is assistance given in completing the final project? Where can students who get stuck with their practical training or final project get help?
- How are students advised on problems concerning course options, change of options, interruption or termination of studies?
- Is information provided on career prospects? Do students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the labour market by means of practical training, application courses and the like?
- If students wish to extend their course of study, are the reasons considered? If yes, what are usually the findings and what measures do they result in?
- To what extent do the structure and organisation of the program contribute to students taking on an active study approach?
- To what extent does the program challenge students to make a satisfactory investment in their studies/program?
- Are you satisfied with the tools available to improve study progress?

xii) Facilities and infrastructure

- The physical resources to deliver the program, including equipment, materials and information technology are sufficient
- Equipment is up-to-date, readily available and effectively deployed
- Information technology systems are set up or upgraded regularly
- University computer centres continuously provide a highly accessible computer and network infrastructure that enables the campus community to fully exploit information technology for teaching, research and development, services and administration.

Explanation

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

sheets, internet and intranet, CD-ROMs, maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery and others.

Looking for evidence

Teaching rooms

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

Didactic aids and tools

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

QUALITY ASSURANCE (CELL 13 – 16)

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective and efficient quality assurance activities which ensure that programs are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency. A well functioning quality assurance system has at least the following elements:

- Student evaluation (13)
- Curriculum design (14)
- Staff development activities (15)
- Benchmarking (16)

xiii) Student evaluation

- The department makes use of student evaluation on a regular basis
- The outcomes of the student evaluation are used for quality improvement
- The department provides the students with feedback on what is done with the outcomes of the evaluation.

Explanation

Students are the first to judge the quality of teaching and learning. They experience the delivery method. They have an opinion about the facilities. Of course, the information given by students has to be counterbalanced by other opinions. Nevertheless, the university is expected to carry out student evaluations and to use the outcomes for improvement.

Looking for evidence

- Does the university use student evaluations in a structured manner?
- Who is responsible for the evaluations?
- What is done with the outcome of the evaluations? Are there any examples of this contributing to improvements?
- What is the input of the students who sit on the committees involved in the internal quality assurance process?

xiv) Curriculum design and evaluation

- The curriculum design (or redesign) is done in a structured way, involving all stakeholders.
- There is a well functioning program or curriculum committee
- The curriculum is regularly evaluated
- Revision of the curriculum takes place at reasonable time periods
- Quality assurance of the curriculum is adequate

Explanation

Developing or designing a curriculum is a special activity. Too often, a curriculum is seen as a number of courses provided by the present professors. They sometimes act like small shop-keepers, selling their own product, but not knowing what others offer. Curriculum design should start with the formulation of the expected learning outcomes. The next question will be what courses are needed to achieve the objectives and finally who will teach the courses. It is important that a curriculum is seen as a joint enterprise.

Looking for evidence

- Who is responsible for designing the curriculum?
- How is the labour market involved in the curriculum design?
- How do curriculum innovations come about? Who takes the initiative? On the basis of what signals?
- Who is responsible for implementation?
- When designing curricula, is there any benchmarking with other institutions?
- In which international networks does the department participate?
- With which institution abroad does exchange take place?
- Has the program been recognised abroad?

Course and curriculum evaluation

- How is the program (curriculum) evaluated? At course level? At curriculum level?
- Is the evaluation done systematically?
- How are the students involved in evaluating the education and training?
- How and to whom are the results made known?
- Is anything done with the results? How is this made transparent?

xv) Staff development activities

- Staff development needs are systematically identified, in relation to individual aspirations, the curriculum and institutional requirements.
- Academic and supporting staff undertake appropriate staff development programs related to identified needs

Explanation

It is important that the teaching staff have full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching: have the necessary skills and experience to effectively communicate their knowledge and understanding to students in a range of teaching contexts; and be able to access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching ability and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

Looking for evidence

- Does the university have a training program for the academic staff about:
 - Curriculum design
 - Test development and construction
 - Teaching skills
 - Computers in the class room
- Does the university offer the academic staff possibilities to develop and extend their teaching abilities by participation in conferences etc?

xvi) Benchmarking

The faculty/department uses the instrument of benchmarking for analysing the quality of its program and its performance.

Explanation

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

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

Looking for evidence

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

xvii) The achievements: the graduates

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. In assessing our quality we have to look not only at the quality of our process, but also have to take into account the output. First of all, we must look at our graduates. Did they achieve the expected standards? Are the achieved outcomes equal to the expected outcomes? Have the graduates acquired the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes? How far the program has achieved its expected learning outcomes can be measured against several criteria as stipulated below:

a. The profile of the graduates

- The final qualifications achieved by the graduates are in line with the formulated expected learning outcomes of the program.
- The content and level of the graduation projects are in line with the degree (bachelor's or master's) awarded.
- Graduates are able to operate adequately in the field for which they have been trained.

Explanation

Quality has been formulated as achieving our objectives in an efficient and effective way, assuming that the goals and aims reflect the requirements of all our stakeholders in an adequate way. The final test of our quality is the graduate. Did he or she really achieve the expected learning outcomes? This is not easy to measure and can only be known by means of feedback from the labour market and feedback from alumni.

Looking for evidence

- Is the average standard of our graduate satisfactory?
- Do the achieved standards match the expected standards?
- Do our graduates easily get jobs? Are the jobs that the graduates get in accordance with the level of graduation?
- Have any changes been signalled in the labour market prospects of graduates over the last few years? What are the prospects?

b. Pass rates and drop out rates

- The department responsible for the program has set targets for the student success rate (i.e number of graduates per year) and the duration of studies comparable with those for other relevant programs.
- The actual student success rate is in line with these targets.

Explanation

Because the output quality has to be evaluated within the framework of the process, we have also to look at the efficiency of our provisions; among others we have to look at the pass rates and the dropout rate; the average time to complete a degree program (graduation time); and the employability of graduates.

Pass rates or success rate: number of students successfully finishing the program

Drop out rate: number of students that does not finish the program. The dropout may be enrolled in another academic program in or outside the department, but for the program he or she left, it is counted as dropout.

Provide information on the pass rate and dropout rates of the various years (cohort) according to Table 7.

Table 7: Student performance (last 8 to 10 cohorts)

Academic year	Size cohort *	% first degree after			% dropout after			
		3 year	4 years	>4years	1 years	2 years	3 years	>3 years
			**			**		

* numbers must be the same as in the intake Table 3

** percentages are cumulative.

Looking for evidence

- What is the opinion of the department about the pass rate? If not satisfactory, what measures have been taken to improve the pass rate?
- Have any fluctuations in the success rate been seen over the last five years?
- How high is the dropout rate? Are there explanations for the dropout rate?
- Does the department know where the dropout students are going?

c. Average time to graduation

The average time for graduation is in line with the planned time for finishing the program.

Average time to graduation

Indicate the average number of years a student spends on a program. If necessary, categorise the students in groups.

- What does the department think of the average time to graduate?
- What measures have been taken to promote graduation and to shorten the average time to graduate?
- What effect have these measures had?

d. Employability of the graduates

The employment/unemployment rate of the graduate are in line with the target set by the faculty.

Graduate unemployment

- What percentage of graduates found a job within six months of graduation over the past five years? How many within a year?
- What percentage of graduates are still unemployed 2 years after graduation?

xviii) Stakeholder satisfaction

The faculty/department must have a structured method to obtain feedback from all stakeholders for the measurement of their satisfaction.

Explanation

After analysing the input, the process and the output, we have to analyse the satisfaction of all stakeholders. What do they think about our performance? How do we know that? This part may cause difficulties for the department, because it may not have any tools to measure the “satisfaction rate” yet. It does not make sense to first develop tools to collect information within the framework of the ongoing analysis. It is sufficient to see that tools are missing and to describe how the problems might be solved in the near future.

Looking for evidence

Opinion - Students

- Does the department know what students think about the courses, the program? The teaching? The examinations?
- Is student evaluation carried out regularly? Is it done adequately?
- What is done with the outcomes of student evaluations?
- How does the department cope with complaints from students?

Opinion - Alumni (graduates)

- Does the department interview graduates on a regular basis?
- What is the opinion and feedback of graduates when they are employed?
- Is the feedback of the alumni used to adjust the program?

Opinion-Labour market

- Do structured contacts exist with employers and the labour market for getting feedback on graduates?
- How do employers appreciate the graduates? Are there any specific complaints? Do the employers appreciate specific strengths?
- How do we cope with complaints from the labour market?

2.2 The self-assessment report (SAR)

After completing the self-assessment, the outcomes of the assessment will be written down in a Self Assessment Report (SAR). The SAR is an important document. On one hand, it contains the basic information for the external expert team that will come and assess the quality of the program. On the other hand, it is the basic document for the faculty/department for the formulation of an action plan or quality improvement plan for the coming years.

The content of the SAR follows the lines of the cells (fig.2), discussed during the self-assessment process.

For each cell one should:

- Describe clearly the state-of-the art. An outsider must understand the situation.
- Analyse the situation. What is your opinion about it? Satisfied or not? If not, why not?

One should indicate whether:

- The formulated criteria have been met and evidence provided.
- Describe the weaknesses and strengths concerning the aspects of the cell.

Some remarks about writing the SAR

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

Content of the self-assessment report

Table 8 defines the content of the self-assessment report. Be sure to discuss the report within the faculty and ensure that everybody owns the process.

Table 8: Content of a self-assessment report at program level

<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How was the self-assessment carried out?• 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 2.2 Program content 2.3 Program organisation 2.4 Didactic concept 2.5 Student assessment</p>
<p>Chapter 3: The input</p> <p>3.1 Quality of the academic staff 3.2 Quality of the support staff 3.3 The students 3.4 Student advice/support 3.5 Facilities and infrastructure</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Quality assurance</p> <p>4.1 Student evaluation 4.2 Curriculum design 4.3 Staff development activities 4.4 Benchmarking</p>
<p>Chapter 5: Achievements and graduates</p> <p>5.1 Achieved outcomes (graduates)/graduate profile 5.2 Pass rate and dropout rate 5.3 Average time to completion of degree 5.4 Employability</p>
<p>Chapter 6: Stakeholder satisfaction</p> <p>6.1 Opinion - Students 6.2 Opinion - Alumni (graduates) 6.3 Opinion - Labour market 6..4 Opinion - Society</p>
<p>Chapter 7: Strengths-weaknesses analysis</p> <p>7.1 Summary of strengths 7.2 Summary of weaknesses 7.3 Quality plan for the coming years</p>

Strengths/weaknesses analysis

The self-assessment process is followed by a strengths-weaknesses analysis. At the same time, this serves as a check to see how far the university is in compliance with the given criteria. This is best done using Table 9 and the checklist (Appendix I). There are 18 specific aspects for assessment, and 68 sub-criteria in total. The checklist in the appendix shows all the criteria and sub-criteria.

Table 9: Analysis of strength/ weaknesses

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Requirements stakeholders							
2	Expected learning outcomes							
3	Specification of the program (program description)							
4	Content of the program							
5	Program organisation							
6	Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy							
7	Student assessment							
8	Quality of academic staff							
9	Quality of the support staff							
10	The students							
11	Student advice/support							
12	Facilities & infrastructure							
13	Student evaluation							
14	Curriculum design							
15	Staff development activities							
16	Benchmarking							
17	Achievements/graduates							
18	Satisfaction stakeholders							

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

- 1 = absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2 = inadequate, improvements necessary
- 3 = inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4 = adequate as expected
- 5 = better than adequate
- 6 = example of good practice
- 7 = excellent

The overall assessment of the different aspects is based on the scores given to each sub-aspect in the category. But of course not all sub-aspects have the same weight. This means that you cannot mathematically calculate an average. You have to balance the various sub-as-

pects and to judge the weighting of each of them. Positive aspects may compensate for some negative ones. Marking each aspect leads to a verdict on each aspect of the model. Filling in the total score in Table 9 produces a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses.

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

Summary of strengths

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

Summary of weaknesses

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

2.3 Follow up after the self-assessment

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

- if connected with an external assessment, the expert team will visit the faculty/department and discuss with you the SAR. The assessment might lead to recommendations for improvement (see Volume 2: Guidelines for external assessment)
- if not connected with any formal external assessment, the university may decide to invite some colleagues from other universities to carry out an inter-collegial assessment and ask for the formulation of recommendations (you may use volume 2 Guidelines for external assessment).
- In all cases, the outcomes of the self-assessment must be translated into a quality plan that shows what activities the university will undertake in the near future. The self-assessment will show us where we are now and will give us the direction to where we would like to be, say, in 5 years' time.

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

Appendix 1 : Checklist on the quality of a program

	Scores						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Requirements of stakeholders. The faculty/department has a clear idea							
• 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							
2. Expected learning outcomes (objectives)							
• 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							
3. Program specification							
• 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							
4. Program content							
• 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							
5. The organisation of the program							
• 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							
6. Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff have a clear teaching/learning strategy 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching/learning strategy enables students to acquire and manipulate knowledge academically 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teaching/learning strategy is student oriented and stimulates quality learning 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The curriculum stimulates active learning and facilitates learning to learn 							
Overall opinion							
7. Student assessment							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessments reflect the expected learning outcomes and the content of the program 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student assessment uses a variety of methods 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The criteria for assessment are explicit and well-known 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standards applied in the assessment are explicit and consistent 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance and scrutiny 							
Overall opinion							
8. Quality of the academic staff							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff is qualified and competent for the task 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff are sufficient to deliver the curriculum adequately 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment and promotion are based on academic merits 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and skills 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time management and incentive systems are designed to support the quality of teaching and learning 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability of the staff members is well regulated 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an efficient appraisal system 							
Overall opinion							

9. Quality of the support staff									
• There are adequate support staff for the libraries									
• There are adequate support staff for the laboratories									
• There are adequate support staff for computer facilities									
• There are adequate support staff for the student services									
Overall opinion									
10. The student									
• 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									
11. Student advice and support									
• 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									
12. Facilities and infrastructure									
• 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									
13. Student evaluation									
• 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: 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 3: Glossary

This is an international analytic glossary of issues related to quality in higher education. Each item is listed below with a core definition synthesized from various sources. For a full analytic review including context, associated issues related terms 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.

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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 pro-

cess 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 stu-

dent 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), includ-

ing 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.