



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



International Institute  
for Educational Planning

# Case Study

## Shaping Internal Quality Assurance from a Triple Heritage Daystar University, Kenya

Mike Kuria and  
Simmy M. Marwa

Kenya



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# Contents

List of figures and tables	4
Acknowledgements	5
Abbreviations	6
Introduction	7
1. Kenya's higher education system: History, governance, and external quality assurance	10
1.1 Development of higher education in Kenya	10
1.2 The challenge of regulation and quality assurance	11
2. Daystar University's institutional environment: History, programmes, strategic orientation, and governance	14
2.1 A short history	14
2.2 University governance system	15
2.3 Strategic orientation	17
2.4 The liberal arts approach	17
2.5 Graduate employability	18
3. The triple heritage of the IQA system at Daystar University	20
3.1 The structure of quality assurance at the university	20
3.2 Quality assurance policy	21
3.3 Traditional mechanisms for quality assurance	21
3.4 New requirements related to accreditation	22
3.5 Development of instruments for an internal approach to quality assurance	22
4. Findings of the empirical study on awareness, involvement, effects, and conditioning factors	27
4.1 Research methodology	27
4.2 Participation statistics	27
4.3 Awareness and involvement	30
4.4 Effects on teaching and learning, employability, and management	34
4.5 Conditioning factors (internal and external)	39
4.6 Overall appreciation of the effectiveness of IQA systems	41
5. Summary and conclusions	44
5.1 Summary	44
5.2 Conclusions	45
Appendix: Academic programmes at Daystar University, by school	48
Bibliography	50

# List of figures and tables

## Figures

Figure 1.1	University enrolment by sex	10
Figure 1.2	Student enrolment in universities by sex 2011/12–2014/15	11
Figure 2.1	Daystar University enrolment since 2004	14
Figure 2.2	Daystar University macro-level organigram	16
Figure 2.3	Curriculum development flow chart	16
Figure 3.1	Daystar University IQA structure	20
Figure 3.2	Example of performance-contracting flow structure	25

## Tables

Table 4.1	Disciplines (academic staff)	28
Table 4.2	Academic positions (academic staff)	28
Table 4.3	Leadership positions (academic staff)	28
Table 4.4	Length of experience (academic staff)	28
Table 4.5	Fields (administrative staff)	29
Table 4.6	Leadership positions (administrative staff)	29
Table 4.7	Highest educational achievement (administrative staff)	30
Table 4.8	Length of experience (administrative staff)	30
Table 4.9	List of interviews	30
Table 4.10	Awareness of quality policy	31
Table 4.11	Academic staff involvement in IQA tools on T/L and employability	32
Table 4.12	Administrative staff involvement in IQA tools on management	33
Table 4.13	Effects of IQA tools on T/L (academic staff)	34
Table 4.14	Effects of IQA tools on employability (academic staff)	37
Table 4.15	Effects of IQA tools on management (administrative staff)	38
Table 4.16	Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)	40
Table 4.17	Main paradigm of IQA instruments and processes	41
Table 4.18	Overall workload with IQA instruments and processes	41
Table 4.19	Overall benefits with IQA instruments and processes	42
Table 4.20	Contribution of IQA to improved management decisions	42
Table 4.21	Contribution of IQA to overall improved effectiveness	42

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Mike Kuria and Simmy M. Marwa

This case study was edited by Michaela Martin (Programme Specialist, IIEP) and Jihyun Lee (Consultant, IIEP).

# Abbreviations

<b>AFELT</b>	Association for Faculty Enhancement in Learning and Teaching
<b>CEO</b>	chief executive officer
<b>CETL</b>	collaboration for excellence in teaching and learning
<b>CHE</b>	Commission for Higher Education
<b>CQA</b>	Centre for Quality Assurance
<b>CUE</b>	Commission for University Education
<b>DVC</b>	deputy vice-chancellor
<b>EQA</b>	external quality assurance
<b>HEIs</b>	higher education institutions
<b>HoDs</b>	heads of departments
<b>ILA</b>	interim letter of authority
<b>ILPD</b>	Institute for Leadership and Professional Development
<b>IQA</b>	internal quality assurance
<b>KPIs</b>	key performance indicators
<b>MoEST</b>	Ministry of Education Science and Training
<b>MoU</b>	memorandum of understanding
<b>PCHET</b>	Professional Certificate in Higher Education Teaching
<b>QA</b>	quality assurance
<b>QAB</b>	Quality Assurance Board
<b>SAR</b>	self-assessment reports
<b>TED</b>	technology, entertainment, and design

# Introduction

Quality improvement has become one of the most important issues in higher education policy. Although public funding for higher education is in decline, universities are still expected to satisfy the learning needs of students and enrich their overall learning experience (Kanyangi, 2006), while also meeting the demands of external stakeholders through the provision of high-quality, labour market-relevant academic offerings.

Kenya's education 'master plan' (MoEST, 2007) states that quality education should demonstrate a shift in focus away from simply passing exams towards an approach that encompasses the discovery of talents and the development of analytical, cognitive, and creative potential, enhanced by the prudent utilization of resources. As Ludeman *et al.* (2009) argue, HEIs in Kenya now need to focus on students and put their needs at the centre of all they do. Quality in higher education should be viewed as the attempt to support students across a range of dimensions, including: teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, student support, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community, and the academic environment (Venkatraman, 2007; Sirvanci, 2004; Sakthivel and Raju, 2006). In a globalized world, quality in higher education should also have an international dimension, expressed through the exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers/students, and international research projects within the context of national cultural values and circumstances.

The higher education sector in Kenya has seen a dramatic increase in enrolment over the past decade. There were twice as many university students enrolled in 2013 than in 2010. This growth in enrolments was accompanied by a tremendous increase in the number of higher education institutions (HEIs), in particular private ones. As the sector grew so too did the need to regulate the quality of higher education in Kenya. In 1985, the government established a legal framework to ensure the quality of higher education. Several regulatory bodies were created subsequently, the most recent being the Commission for University Education (CUE).

Daystar University is a private university, specializing in the study of communication, education, computer science, community development, clinical and counselling psychology, and business administration and management. It began operating in Nairobi in 1974 and was chartered as a university in 1994. The university has grown from a small communications college to offer a diverse range of programmes at all levels. All its programmes are accredited by CUE. More than 5,000 students are enrolled at the university, drawn from more than 34 nations, within and outside Africa. The university is committed to a liberal arts approach to education, aimed at social transformation. It also takes a 'servant leadership' approach and emphasizes graduate employability as among its strategic orientations.

Internal quality assurance (IQA) at Daystar University is focused on a continuous effort to improve both the institution's academic offer and the experience of its students. The university's IQA system has been shaped by: (1) a traditional approach to quality assurance which is practised by all universities, especially where there are weak or non-existent external quality assurance agencies; (2) external requests for quality assurance driven by the need for institutional and programme accreditations as required by either professional bodies or national commissions and councils of higher education; and (3) the more recent emergence of an independent institutional approach to quality assurance. Given Daystar's focus on employment and employability, the assessment of employment orientation plays an important role in the university's IQA system.

Daystar University is committed to the continuous improvement of its internal quality assurance system. The university's participation in IIEP's IQA project complemented

these efforts. The main objective of the project was to document innovative and effective IQA systems at eight universities in Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Chile, China, Germany, Kenya, and South Africa, and to study their effects.

For Daystar University, the research provided the university with an opportunity to:

- Investigate stakeholder perceptions of the IQA system and its instruments.
- Identify the areas of the IQA system which could be improved (particularly in terms of teaching and learning) or better supported through continuous investment and resource allocation.

This study, more specifically, aimed to investigate: (1) the awareness and involvement of both academic and administrative staff in the IQA system; (2) the effects of the IQA system on teaching and learning, employment orientation, and management; (3) the conditioning internal and external factors; and (4) overall appreciation of the effectiveness of IQA systems. These concerns were chosen in order to assess both the overall effectiveness of the IQA system and the factors that condition it.

Primary data were collected through two online surveys submitted separately to the academic and administrative staff of the university. Academic staff were asked to reflect on IQA instruments for teaching/learning and employability, while administrative staff were asked to reflect on IQA instruments in the area of management.

In order to capture the perceptions of stakeholders in greater detail, in-depth interviews and discussions were conducted with university leaders and managers (at central and decentralized levels). Focus group discussions with senior academic leaders, senior administrative leaders, and student representatives were also arranged.

Secondary data were drawn from official documents and literature on the Kenyan higher education system, in general, and Daystar University, in particular. These were examined in order to provide the national and institutional contexts for the functioning of the IQA system at the university.

The implementation of the study was constrained by a number of factors, which are important to note. Current and reliable national statistics on higher education were unavailable. When conducting the online surveys, there was also a relatively low response rate from both academic staff (29 per cent) and administrative staff (33 per cent). However, the available data were sufficient to support identified trends. They were also representative of the target populations in terms of distribution by profession, qualifications, and length of service. The quantitative data collected through the questionnaires could also be validated by the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews with leaders.

This case study is structured as follows:

**Chapter 1** describes the Kenyan higher education system in which Daystar operates. The chapter gives a short history of Kenyan higher education from the 1960s to the present and describes the present system for external quality assurance.

**Chapter 2** explores the university's institutional environment. The chapter discusses Daystar's strategic orientation and its governance structure, with a focus on quality assurance. Existing mechanisms for the enhancement of employability are described.

**Chapter 3** focuses on the evolution of the university's IQA system, identifies the main reference documents which support IQA at the university, and considers the processes and instruments which have been developed for its functioning.

**Chapter 4** presents findings from the empirical research on academic and administrative staff awareness of IQA instruments, and their involvement with them. The chapter goes on to look at the effects of IQA instruments on teaching and learning, graduate

employability, and management, using data generated through the questionnaires (from both academic and administrative staff), the in-depth interviews with university leaders, and the focus group discussions with academic staff and students. It also identifies the internal and external factors that academic and administrative staff, university leaders, and students view as necessary for an effective IQA system. This chapter further presents data on perceptions of the workload implications, and the benefits and overall effectiveness of IQA at Daystar University.

**Chapter 5** offers a short summary of the study's findings and outlines a number of conclusions based on these findings. The recommendations are intended for implementation by Daystar University. The chapter also discusses the implications for other universities within and beyond Kenya.

# 1. Kenya's higher education system: History, governance, and external quality assurance

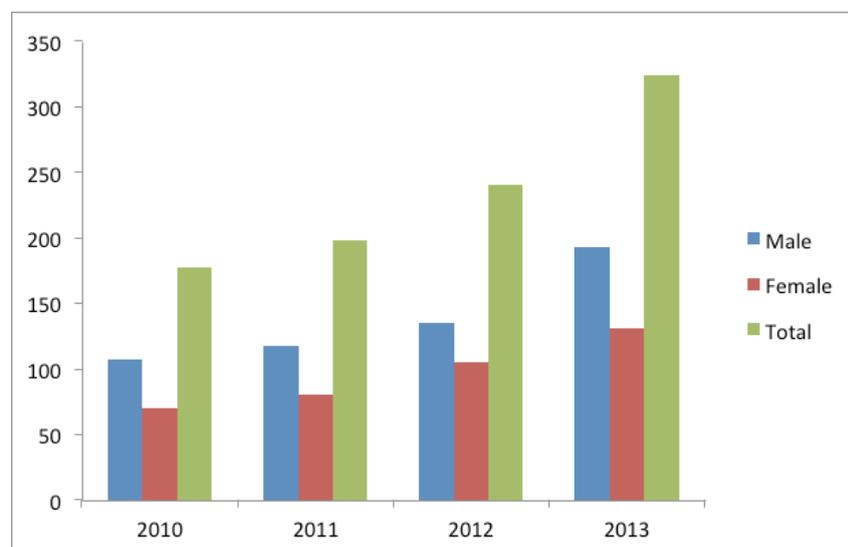
## 1.1 Development of higher education in Kenya

Higher education in Kenya can be traced back to the late colonial period. In 1956, the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi, becoming, in 1963, the University College in Nairobi (Chacha-Nyaigoti, 2004). The University College was part of the University of East Africa, which had two other constituent colleges in Dar-es-Salaam and Kampala. In 1970, the three colleges which comprised the University of East Africa became autonomous universities in their own right. The University of Nairobi thus became the first university in Kenya. It remained the only university in Kenya until 1984 when Moi University was established.

Since then, higher education institutions (HEIs) have dramatically increased in number. In 2015, the country had 22 chartered public universities (government-funded and licensed to operate as fully fledged universities with power to grant their own degrees), nine public university colleges (constituent colleges of the chartered public universities usually headed by a principal who reports to the vice-chancellor of the parent university), 17 chartered private universities (fully fledged privately owned and funded universities), five private university colleges, 13 private institutions with letters of interim authority, and one registered private institution (allowed to operate temporarily as in preparation for chartered status). The private sector has seen accelerated growth over the past 10 years and now teaches 26 per cent of all higher education students.

Although current, reliable, and comprehensive data are hard to come by, there is sufficient evidence to show a steady growth in terms of HEIs, as well as student enrolment, in recent years. In terms of student enrolment, statistics from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014) indicate steady growth in student numbers, as shown in *Figure 1.1*, particularly in recent times. The total number of university students almost doubled between 2010 and 2013. This growth includes a gradual increase in the number of female university students, although the enrolment rate for women students remains significantly lower than for male students.

**Figure 1.1** University enrolment by sex



Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2014. \*Note: Numbers given in thousands.

The increase in enrolment among both male and female students can be observed in almost every Kenyan university, as indicated in *Figure 1.2*, which tracks enrolment by gender from 2011/12 to 2014/15. The steady growth in student enrolment has not, however, been matched by improvements to physical infrastructure or levels of expertise.

**Figure 1.2 Student enrolment in universities by sex 2011/12 - 2014/15**

INSTITUTION	Number							
	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14+		2014/15*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Public Universities</b>								
Nairobi.....	27,084	17,219	30,710	20,185	38,693	25,376	42,328	27,618
Kenyatta.....	21,328	15,892	25,633	31,559	37,758	32,248	43,165	33,714
Moi.....	14,124	11,409	17,372	14,273	18,547	15,684	22,458	20,838
Egerton.....	7,050	5,095	4,577	3,101	7,044	4,896	8,661	5,267
Jomo Kenyatta (JKUAT).....	9,818	4,119	19,048	9,870	19,729	10,847	20,860	11,469
Maseno.....	2,809	1,742	3,953	2,159	3,922	2,247	7,356	7,412
Masinde Muliro.....	10,958	6,402	6,295	3,901	5,606	3,445	7,480	4,213
Technical University of Kenya.....	187	642	405	135	5,102	1,915	5,391	2,024
Technical University of Mombasa.....	1,000	1,038	1,828	524	3,993	1,050	4,186	1,234
Chuka.....	-	-	-	-	7,318	2,663	9,716	3,931
Karatina.....	-	-	-	-	2,700	2,014	3,095	2,209
Kisii.....	-	-	-	-	913	531	4,780	3,495
Meru.....	-	-	-	-	2,001	903	2,825	1,174
Multi Media.....	-	-	-	-	697	331	754	346
South Eastern.....	-	-	-	-	1,988	1,037	3,676	2,138
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga.....	-	-	-	-	1,259	771	2,537	1,638
Laikipia.....	-	-	-	-	857	574	3,260	2,652
University of Eldoret.....	-	-	-	-	8,059	4,507	9,447	6,215
Kabianga.....	-	-	-	-	1,004	681	3,375	2,366
Dedan Kimathi+.....	-	-	871	338	1,546	584	4,715	1,578
Pwani.....	-	-	-	-	2,666	1,591	2,981	1,603
Masai Mara.....	-	-	-	-	2,585	1,851	4,118	3,036
<b>SUB-TOTAL.....</b>	<b>94,358</b>	<b>63,558</b>	<b>110,692</b>	<b>86,045</b>	<b>173,987</b>	<b>115,746</b>	<b>217,164</b>	<b>146,170</b>
<b>Private Universities†</b>	33,114	27,598	29,554	24,905	39,980	31,666	42,454	37,994
<b>GRAND TOTAL.....</b>	<b>218,628</b>	<b>191,156</b>	<b>251,196</b>	<b>210,950</b>	<b>313,967</b>	<b>247,412</b>	<b>259,618</b>	<b>184,164</b>

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015.

## 1.2 The challenge of regulation and quality assurance

Significant increases in both the number of institutions and student enrolment have created challenges for the regulation and quality assurance of higher education in Kenya. The Commission for Higher Education (CHE) – now the Commission for University Education (CUE) – was established by the Universities Act 1985 to deal with these challenges. The CHE's mandate (Government of Kenya, 1985) included the following:

- To examine and approve proposals for academic courses and course regulations submitted to it by private universities.
- To receive applications from persons seeking to establish private universities in Kenya and make suggestions to the minister.
- To advise the government on the standardization, recognition, and equation of degrees, diplomas, and certificates conferred or awarded by foreign and private universities.
- To arrange for regular visitations and inspection of private universities.

The CHE acted as an external quality assurance (QA) agency only for private universities. Public universities were seen as autonomous entities established under an act of parliament. They were not, therefore, governed by any external agency, but were instead required to have their own internal quality assurance (IQA) systems for their academic programmes. No external agency could interfere with the decisions of public universities.

The Universities Act 2012 renamed the Commission for Higher Education as the Commission for University Education (CUE) and extended its mandate to include public universities. Twenty-two public universities were chartered in 2012 and 2013 under the new Act. One reason for this expansion was the increase in the number of parallel programmes comparable to regular programmes and funded by individual students, which admit state-funded students. Public universities introduced parallel programmes to earn extra cash to complement funding from government. This had potentially negative implications for the quality of education in public universities. For example, in order to increase student enrolment in these programmes, universities generally set lower admissions criteria than those applied to regular programmes. In some cases, the greater financial incentives meant that academic staff preferred to teach on the parallel programmes, rather than focusing on the regular programmes. It was therefore deemed necessary for CUE to exercise some level of control over public universities, as they did over private ones.

All universities in Kenya are now required to follow a common accreditation procedure in order to operate within the country. The procedure, set out in the Universities Act 2012 and elaborated in 2014's university regulations, is broadly as follows:

- Any person or institution wishing to establish a university will make an application to the CUE with the required documents, as specified in the guidelines. Such documents may include the mission and vision of the university, charters, strategic plans, programmes to be offered, facilities, and available resources.
- The CUE sets up an inspection committee comprising senior academics (one of whom must be conversant with university management), technical specialists (librarian, architect, etc.), officers of the CUE, and other professionals as the CUE deems necessary.
- The team visits the proposed university and makes recommendations for an interim authority on the basis of its report. The interim authority allows the university to operate for a period of four years. During this period, the university must implement the recommendations of the inspection team.
- The institution is re-inspected after four years by a committee appointed by the CUE to verify that it is ready for the award of a charter. Re-inspection is based on a self-assessment report (SAR) produced by the university and a site inspection by a team appointed by the CUE. The CUE may visit universities annually to make a recommendation on the award of a charter.
- The CUE makes a final decision for the award of charter to the cabinet secretary.
- The cabinet secretary sends the recommendation to the president.

The Universities Act 2012 and the 2014 university regulations identify the CUE as the main external quality assurance agency for higher education in Kenya. The university external quality assurance (EQA) in Kenya has two levels: institutional and programme levels. At institutional level, chartered universities and those operating under an interim letter of authority (ILA) are issued with either a re-inspection certificate or a charter on the basis of the quality of their programmes and services. Chartered universities (duly registered and authorized to operate as HEIs) are reviewed or re-inspected every five years (Government of Kenya, 2014). The ILA is a tentative arrangement under which institutions must comply with registration requirements by a specified future date. Universities which fall short of the expected standards are asked not to admit further students until they have improved their performance. In extreme cases, they may be required to close down, with their students redistributed to other universities. This approach ensures that universities offer

quality academic offerings/deliverables and remain faithful to their mission and vision statements.

At programme level, the CUE has developed regulations to ensure quality at all levels, including for curriculum development, delivery, and review. While all universities must now have their programmes accredited by the CUE, the regulations set out different processes for chartered universities and universities with letters of interim authority (ILA) when it comes to the development and delivery of new curricula. Universities with letters of interim authority cannot launch programmes before they are approved by the CUE, while chartered universities can develop and launch new programmes provided they submit the curriculum for accreditation within six months of the launch. In order to operate under this system, chartered universities must satisfy the following criteria:

- They must have a functional internal quality assurance system, evidenced by a quality assurance structure, an established and well-staffed quality assurance unit, and an approved quality assurance policy the implementation of which should be evident.
- They must have a system for peer review of academic programmes and send a report to the CUE on a regular basis.
- The vice-chancellor must submit the curriculum to the CUE, with a letter indicating that the programme is approved by the university structures and that the resources necessary for the programme are available.
- The submitted curriculum must also be accompanied by supporting documentation, such as a needs assessment survey, minutes from the senate, departmental and school board approvals, and documentation of available resources.

The higher education landscape in Kenya has thus changed dramatically in recent years. In addition to the dramatic increase in the number of universities and students, the government has instituted a legal framework to ensure the quality of higher education. The formation of the CHE in 1985 was a key moment in the development of quality assurance. Private universities were first targeted by the CHE for regulation to ensure they met academic quality standards. However, a comparable risk was later identified for public universities and, since the enactment of the Universities Act 2012, all universities in Kenya must be chartered and their programmes accredited under the regulation of the CUE. Daystar University has been operating as a chartered university since 1994, and all its programmes are accredited by CUE. A detailed description of Daystar University is presented in the next chapter.

## 2. Daystar University’s institutional environment: History, programmes, strategic orientation, and governance

### 2.1 A short history

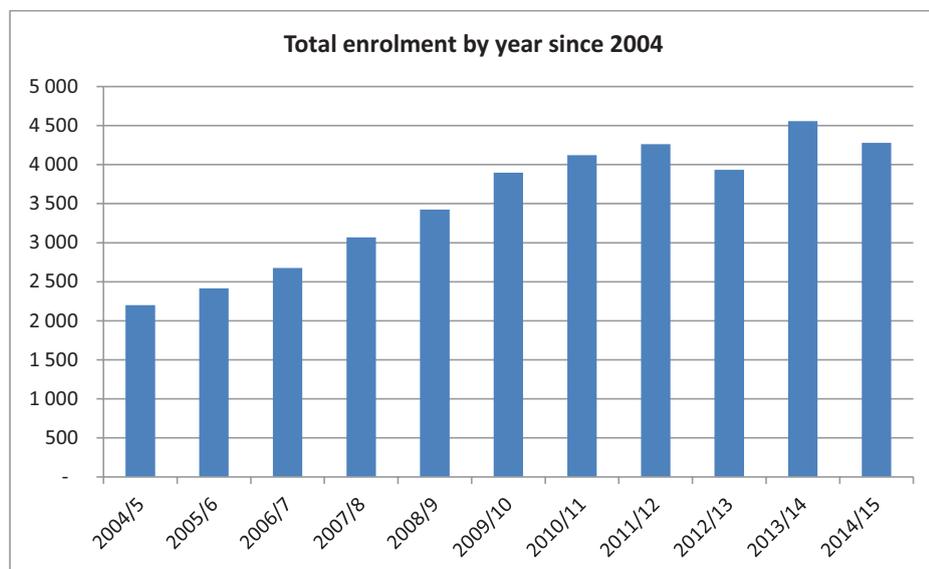
Daystar University began operations in Nairobi in 1974, offering bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes in communication, in collaboration with Messiah and Wheaton Colleges in the US. This collaboration continued until 1994 when the institution was chartered by the CHE as an independent, fully fledged Kenyan university.

Daystar is a non-denominational Christian university based in Nairobi. The university is neither profit-oriented nor controlled by any religious institution, though it espouses Christian values. Students of all faiths are admitted provided they are willing to respect the culture and practice of the university, as stipulated in its legal documents. The university takes a liberal arts approach to education. It runs an interdisciplinary curriculum that extends beyond students’ areas of specialization.

The university has two campuses. The Nairobi city campus is located over approximately five acres of land, while the Athi River campus is based on a 300-acre area of land on the slopes of Lukenya Hills in Machakos county (Daystar University, 2012).

Student enrolment at the university has grown from less than 100 students in the 1970s to more than 5,000 in 2015, including international students from more than 30 nations within and outside Africa. Like other HEIs in Kenya, the university has expanded over the past 10 years, as indicated in *Figure 2.1*.

**Figure 2.1** Daystar University enrolment since 2004



Source: Daystar University Data, 2015 (unpublished).

The university offers a wide range of programmes at undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral levels. Subjects covered include education, computer science, community development, clinical and counselling psychology, and business administration and

management. These programmes are organized under the following schools: Arts and Humanities, Business and Economics, Communication, Language, and Performing Arts, Human and Social Sciences, and Science, Engineering, and Health. For the detailed academic programmes, see *Appendix*.

Daystar was the third private university to be accredited in Kenya, following the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton (1991) and the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (1992).

## 2.2 University governance system

The governance system of Daystar University is multi-layered. The Daystar University Company sponsors the university for legal purposes. As founder and sponsor, the company's role is defined in the charter (Government of Kenya, 1994) as to carry out the following functions:

- To oversee the mission of the university.
- To appoint the chancellor of the university.
- To elect chair and members to serve on the council of the university.
- To receive reports on the operation and progress of the university.

The highest governing body of the university is the council. The governance, control, and administration of the university is vested in the council by the charter which, it states, 'shall act and exercise all legal rights, powers and privileges of the University as provided in the Charter' (Government of Kenya, 1994).

The executive functions of the university are carried out by the management board and senate. The regular administration of the university is the responsibility of the management board. Members of the management board include the vice-chancellor, who acts as chair, the deputy vice-chancellor for planning and administration, who acts as secretary, and other deputy vice-chancellors, managers, directors, and deans.

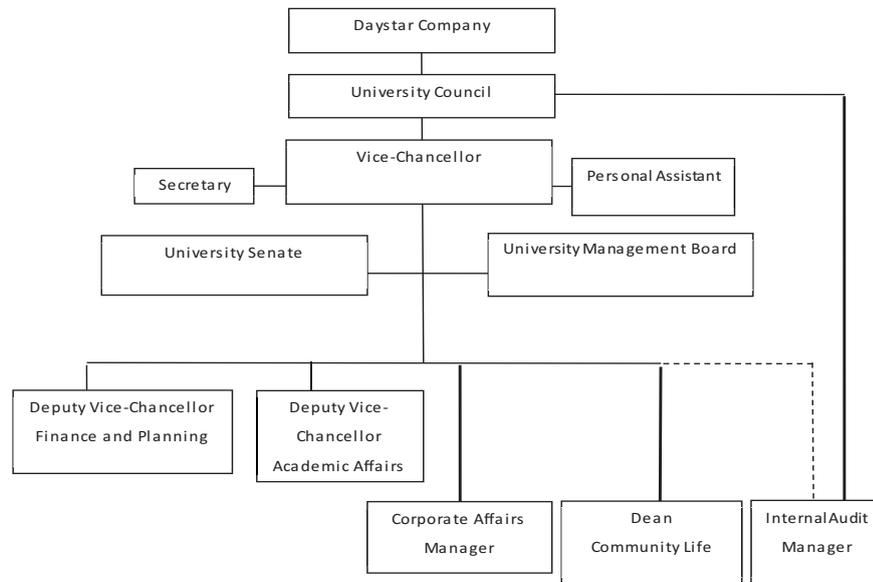
The senate is responsible for academic matters such as the development and review of curricula, the admission of students, the promotion of academic staff, and research. The senate oversees the academic division, which comprises academic deans, the director of the Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA), the director of the Institute for Leadership and Professional Development (ILPD), the director of the Research, Publications, Consultancy and Postgraduate Bureau, the chief librarian, and the university registrar. The vice-chancellor is chair of the senate and deputy vice-chancellor for academic affairs the secretary. Membership of the senate includes heads of department and their assistants, deans, directors, the chief librarian, the university registrar, and student representatives. Its functions are clearly defined in the university charter, with a clear focus on academic matters (Government of Kenya, 1994). The key functions are [author's italics]:

- *To propose to the council for approval the short-term and long-term academic plans, and their modifications based on continuous evaluation.*
- To receive and approve examination results.
- *To discuss, evaluate and recommend to the council the affiliation of degree programmes and other programmes leading to academic awards offered by the constituent colleges, and to supervise them.*
- *To propose to the council the financial needs of the academic, training, and research programmes of the university.*
- To develop, evaluate, and propose modifications to programmes.

The academic division prepares documents and proposals for the senate. These documents are, in the first instance, submitted by departmental board to the directorates or school boards. Before a curriculum can be approved by the senate, it must go through all these stages, from departmental boards to the directorates or school boards to the academic division.

The macro-level organisation of the university is described in *Figure 2.2*:

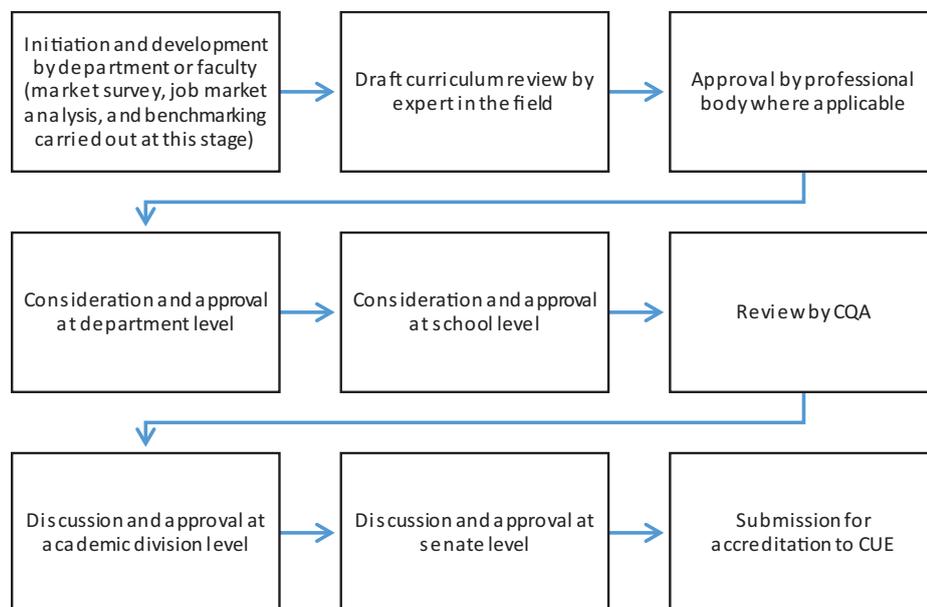
**Figure 2.2 Daystar University macro-level organigram**



Source: Daystar University, 2011.

Active at all these levels is the Centre for Quality Assurance, which acts as gate keeper to ensure that proposed curricula comply with university standards and guidelines before they are approved by the academic division and the senate. The process is as described in *Figure 2.3*)

**Figure 2.3 Curriculum development flow chart**



Source: Daystar University, 2015.

## 2.3 Strategic orientation

Daystar's mission is stated as follows: 'Daystar University seeks to develop managers, professionals, researchers and scholars to be effective, Christian servant-leaders through the integration of Christian faith and holistic learning for the transformation of church and society in Africa and the world' (<http://www.daystar.ac.ke/vision.html>). The university's mission is realized through five-year strategic plans. The current strategic plan covers the period from 2011 to 2016. Each strategic plan is commissioned by the university, with experts sometimes invited to contribute to its development. Once the strategic plan has been developed and discussed by all stakeholders using a situation (SWOT) analysis, it is submitted for approval to the senate, management board, and university council.

The strategic plan for 2011–2016 identified the following strategic issues and objectives for the period:

- Student growth
- Academic programmes
- Human resource development
- Christian spiritual formation
- Infrastructure
- Finance
- Governance
- Research, publication, and consultancy

The 2011–2016 strategic plan acknowledges the need for quality assurance in its opening statement: 'The number, quality and relevance of programmes determine the number of potential students at the University. New programmes should be relevant to the needs of the economy and society' (Daystar University, 2011). The key words in the university's strategic orientation are 'liberal arts', 'servant leadership', and 'transformation'. These are also reflected in the mission of the university. Special attention is also paid to the employability of graduates in the strategic orientation.

## 2.4 The liberal arts approach

Daystar University's students are exposed to various fields of knowledge through general education. General education classes cover a wide range of topics, such as communication and culture, public speaking, philosophy, writing, environmental science, mathematics, history, and political science. The general education curriculum is mandatory for all students irrespective of their specialisms. Students at Daystar must also attend at least 75 per cent of each course they enrol on. This approach aims to produce well-rounded and holistic graduates able to operate within and outside their fields of study.

The university also encourages active learning through small class sizes. The decision to maintain small class sizes reflects the university's commitment to active learning. The maximum class size at Daystar is, in normal circumstances, 60 students. There is some variation, depending on the nature of the course. Writing classes, for example, are limited to a maximum of 40 students. This strategic approach is unique not only in Kenya but also in the wider region where class sizes can be as large as 500 students.

### ***Servant leadership***

Servant leadership is another key aspect of the university's strategic focus. To challenge the poor governance, civil strife, and dictatorship widely witnessed in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, the university has endeavoured to produce skilled professionals with servant-leadership skills and attitudes. By doing so, the university aims to foster values of selflessness, service to humanity, and integrity, and to produce professionals dedicated to leadership and service to society.

### ***Transformation of church and society***

To achieve its aspiration to become an ‘African institution of higher learning for the transformation of church and society’, Daystar has focused on developing academic programmes that address the needs of society. Programmes aim to produce skilled graduates for the labour market, with specific needs identified through market survey. No new programme is approved by the university without a market survey validating the need for graduates of the proposed programme.

## **2.5 Graduate employability**

Daystar University was set up in response to the practical needs of society. As a private university without state funding, Daystar has made significant efforts to provide academic programmes that meet labour market demand and reflect the interests of students and their families. For instance, the university introduced community development and communication studies to produce communications materials that met the needs of society at that time. The practical orientation of its academic programmes demonstrates that graduate employability has always been a top priority.

Daystar has maintained a reputation for high graduate employability. The university is rated the second best private university in Kenya in terms of employability (Corporate Services Ltd, 2015). Most of the university’s graduates find a job within six months. A 2015 tracer study found that 51.9 per cent of graduates were employed within one year, and 17.3 per cent before they left the university. More than one in 10 (12.2 per cent) started their own enterprises, while 13.6 per cent were still unemployed. A study by the British Council found that graduates in Kenya take, on average, five years to secure a job (British Council, 2014).

The university has also established internal mechanisms to sustain the high levels of employability among graduates. One key mechanism is the job placement office, a career planning and development subsection of student affairs, within the Community Life department. The placement Office is ‘committed to the career development of students and graduates of Daystar University. Through a range of career services and programmes, the office provides students with job market information and relevant advice to help actualize their career aspirations’. Another function of the placement office is to identify internship opportunities for students. This is described in more detail below.

### ***Linking students with industry***

Daystar has a long-standing practice of linking graduates with the labour market through internships. The internships principally aim to: (1) ensure students acquire skills necessary for the job; and (2) provide an opportunity for academic staff to keep updated on the requirements of the labour market. The placement office carries out independent research to identify companies which might offer practical placements or internships for students. It then disseminates the information to eligible students. Students can apply directly or through the office, which also offers student support in refining their CVs in line with the requirements of relevant organizations.

### ***Networking and MOUs with companies***

The placement office negotiates memoranda of understanding (MOUs) between the university and certain employers to ensure a given number of students from Daystar are regularly placed with them as interns. Some organizations request interns directly and inform the placement office of their recruitment plans. The placement officer identifies students, according to the criteria set by the employer, and forwards a shortlist for interview.

### ***Organizing career days***

Through its placement office, the university organizes career recruitment days, either on its own initiative or at the request of companies. The job placement office organizes a themed career fair for prospective graduate students every year. Companies have an opportunity to use university premises to advertise their services and sometimes recruit students for employment. A media organization, for example, might administer writing tasks for students, selecting trainees on the basis of their performance. Those who successfully complete the training are hired and assigned duties both locally and internationally.

### ***Daylink Employment Bureau***

The placement officer works closely with the Daylink Employment Bureau, which operates a web-based tool to link current students and job-seeking alumni with employment opportunities. Employment opportunities are sometimes identified through alumni who are running their own businesses or are knowledgeable about job opportunities in their workplaces or elsewhere. Job-seeking alumni and students upload their CVs and update them on a Daylink database. Daylink makes strategic partnerships with human resource organizations and prospective employers. It also holds career seminars for students on a quarterly basis in conjunction with alumni and prospective employers.

### ***Mentorship***

The placement office organizes a mentorship programme for prospective graduate students. The idea is that an alumni professional mentors a young graduate in a specific field. A mentorship may be formal or informal and can include mentees visiting their mentors at work to observe their daily routines. Mentors are also invited on to campus to provide advice to students on career choices.

In short, Daystar University has, like other universities in Kenya, experienced significant growth both in student numbers and the programmes it offers since it was founded in 1974 and, in particular, since accreditation in 1994. Its management structure is regulated by statutory documents such as its charter, which was granted by the Government of Kenya. In terms of strategic orientation, the university is guided by a five-year strategic plan, with the current one covering the period from 2011 to 2016. In pursuit of the university's mission to produce graduates for social transformation, the university has prioritized academic programmes that meet the needs of society. Daystar is dedicated to enhancing the employability of its graduates and has created a job placement office to ensure constant linkage between the university and the labour market. Such institutional changes have helped shape the IQA system of the university. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

### 3. The triple heritage of the IQA system at Daystar University

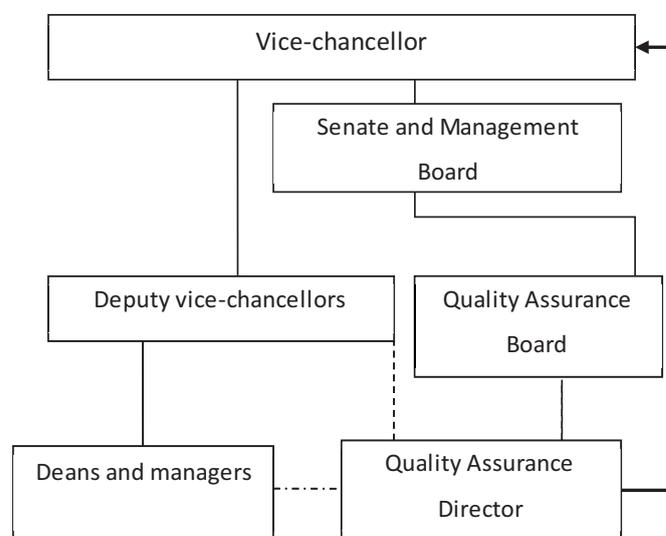
The IQA system at Daystar University has evolved over time, in line with national and regional higher education frameworks. Today's set of processes and mechanisms are based both on traditional approaches to quality assurance and on newer mechanisms, supported by an internal QA structure and shaped by institutional needs.

#### 3.1 The structure of quality assurance at the university

Daystar's Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) was established in 2006 with a mandate of improving the quality of the university's academic and non-academic offerings at all levels. It cuts across the entire university spectrum, with the director of the centre reporting directly to the vice-chancellor. The CQA develops and implements IQA instruments such as policies, standards, guidelines, and procedures. It also carries out or coordinates audits of the university's teaching and learning through, for example, internal and external assessment of academic programmes, external examinations, student evaluations, teaching and learning environment audits, tracer studies, graduate exit surveys, and employer satisfaction surveys. The CQA links the university to the Commission for University Education (CUE), which is responsible for both institutional and programme accreditations in Kenya (see Chapter 1).

The quality assurance structure is designed to fit within the university's overall governance system (see Figure 3.1). A quality assurance board (QAB) advises the vice-chancellor on quality assurance issues and sets the university's quality agenda. The director of the CQA works closely with the QAB, deputy vice-chancellors, academic deans, and managers in dealing with QA issues related to all departments.

**Figure 3.1 Daystar University IQA structure**



Source: Daystar University, 2014: 18.

### 3.2 Quality assurance policy

The university has a quality assurance policy, approved by the senate in 2011. The policy expresses the university's commitment to quality assurance. Its main goal is to ensure that relevant and appropriate standards are achieved in order to provide quality education, research, and community service. The policy states that, through adhering to its guidelines, the university community 'will develop and sustain a culture of quality seeking and quality assurance'. In particular, the QA policy aims to achieve the following objectives (Daystar University, 2013):

- To safeguard and improve academic standards and the quality of education at the university.
- To ensure the integrity of academic awards at the university.
- To ensure that all programmes are of a high standard and of continued relevance to the church and society in the country and beyond.
- To continually improve the quality of consultancy and community services offered by the university.
- To enhance the constant improvement of all support services for the university community.
- To develop and refine IQA mechanisms systematically to be applicable to all programmes and services at the university.

The establishment of the CQA and the development of the QA policy are two recent developments which align with national, regional, and international trends in higher education.

The historical development of the university's IQA system can be described as follows: (a) traditional mechanisms for quality assurance; (b) new requirements related to accreditation; and (c) an institutional approach (independent, internal, and systematic). The next section describes in greater detail each development stage.

### 3.3 Traditional mechanisms for quality assurance

Traditional mechanisms for quality assurance have been used by most universities in East Africa, including Kenya. These mechanisms include internal examination moderation, external examination moderation, student evaluation, and supervision of student internships. This traditional system has been widely used, particularly by institutions without accreditation requirements. Daystar University has used the following traditional instruments for quality assurance.

#### ***Internal examination moderation***

Internal examination moderation, which takes place every semester, subjects every examination to scrutiny by academic peers before it is approved. The university ensures that every lecturer covers and evaluates the entire syllabus according to Bloom's taxonomy, the objective of which is to classify different levels of learning to be tested in student assessments. Moderation also attends to depth of coverage. Internal moderation additionally ensures that the level of difficulty for examination questions is commensurate with the student's level of advancement in the programme. Any anomalies identified are addressed and rectified before the exam is administered.

#### ***External examination moderation***

The second tool for quality assurance is the external moderation system. This involves inviting an external peer to review exams after they have been administered. The main objective is to ensure that the exam questions were clearly posed and that markers faithfully and fairly complied with marking schemes. Weighting marks for each examination

section may be adjusted depending on the findings and recommendations of the external examiner. Suggestions for improvement are also provided for future examinations.

### ***Student evaluation***

Student evaluations are carried out every semester as a tool to assess the effectiveness of teaching and learning from the student perspective. The feedback is sent to both individual lecturers and their immediate supervisors for follow-up. The CQA examines the results of the student evaluation to identify areas of concern for the improvement of teaching and learning. Recently, the university introduced an online feedback system, allowing students to raise concerns and offer feedback during term-time.

### ***Supervision of student internships***

As noted above, student internships are a long-standing practice at Daystar. The university strives to ensure they are tightly linked to the learning objectives of the academic programmes, as well as to employability outcomes for graduates and the needs of the labour market. During internships, students are visited by their tutors, providing an opportunity for employers to give feedback about students' competence and readiness for employment. Tutors and supervisors produce a report on students' performance during the internship period. The university uses this report to grade the students and review curriculum and teaching methods to make sure that graduates are well prepared for the labour market.

## **3.4 New requirements related to accreditation**

Accreditation plays a critical role in Daystar's quality assurance system, as it does in other private universities. Traditionally, every university in Kenya has been free to determine course content and delivery, as well as who is qualified to teach in their institutions. In spite of this autonomy, private universities were, unlike public universities, required to seek further institutional and programme accreditations. Daystar University, as a private university, has always met its accreditation requirements, at both institutional and programme level. It is required to undergo institutional re-accreditation every five years, though timelines are usually determined by the CUE. The university was first accredited in 1994, re-inspected in 2005, and again in 2012.

The accreditation process involves (1) self-evaluation by the university, (2) a visit from the CUE, and (3) the issuing of a re-inspection certificate with recommendations for improvement. The focus of re-inspection is on the extent to which the recommendations of previous inspections have been implemented. All programmes at Daystar must be accredited by professional accreditation bodies and/or by CUE before being offered to students. Professional degrees must be accredited by professional bodies. The criteria for external accreditation are set either by the relevant professional accrediting organizations or by the CUE. The accreditation system is used to ensure that basic quality criteria are met at both institutional and programme level.

## **3.5 Development of instruments for an internal approach to quality assurance**

Since 2006, the university has taken a more institutionally driven approach to quality assurance. The CQA was established and a quality assurance policy was developed (Daystar University, 2013). The university has also been systematically developing, revising, and implementing several quality assurance instruments used for internal quality analysis or employability enhancement. Some of these instruments are specifically developed to enhance teaching and learning, employability, or management practices.

## ***Instruments to enhance teaching and learning***

### *Student (course) evaluations*

Student evaluations are among the oldest and most consistently used QA instruments at Daystar University. The term ‘student evaluation’ is used synonymously with course evaluation. At the end of every semester students are given a chance to evaluate their learning experience in specific courses.

Student evaluation forms are administered by the registrar’s office. The student evaluation form has three sections: (1) questions concerning students on a range of issues, including readiness for class, participation in class, seeking help from teachers, enjoyment, and sense of achievement; (2) questions about the course, concerning, for example, the provision of a clear course outline, the relevance of reading materials, the alignment of assignments with course objectives, the inclusion of current developments in the field, and satisfaction regarding the stated course objectives, and (3) questions concerning instructors on, for example, preparedness for class, the promotion of learning, the encouragement of student participation, the use of suitable evaluation methods on student learning, and availability for help.

In the past, results were sent to deans and heads of department (HoDs) who were meant to study the results and discuss them with lecturers, agreeing areas for improvement and plans to address them. However, this system was found to be inefficient. Results are now sent directly to individual lecturers by the CQA, though deans and HoDs still get copies for follow-up. This change is informed by recognition that student evaluation should be for improvement rather than the fulfilment of bureaucratic requirements. The lecturer should be the primary custodian of the results of student evaluations and the main implementer of their recommendations.

### *Programme evaluation through graduate exit studies (by students)*

Programme evaluation by students is achieved through graduate exit surveys. The graduate exit survey targets students in the final year of their studies. This means they can provide feedback on their experience of the university as a whole, rather than their experience of a single course offered in one term. Their experience of teaching and learning is fresher and more recent than that of alumni who have spent several years in the labour market. The first graduate exit survey was carried out in 2012. A second one will be conducted in 2016 and every three years thereafter. Students are asked to rank departments and their services and to provide reasons for their ranking. The university uses the survey to estimate the satisfaction levels of students with regard to the services it offers, including teaching and learning. On the basis of its findings, the university implements improvement plans related to areas such as infrastructure, pedagogy, curriculum, and others. Graduate exit surveys can, therefore, be seen as comprehensive summative student evaluations on programmes.

### *Internal and external programme evaluation*

Daystar University institutionalised internal and external programme review through a process involving self-assessment at programme level followed by validation by external reviewers. This QA process is documented in *The Roadmap to Quality: A Handbook on Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (Inter-University Council of East Africa, 2010). According to the CUE, accredited universities will only be allowed to design and provisionally launch new academic programmes if ‘the University has institutionalized regular peer review of its academic programmes and has submitted to the Commission a report’. Internal and external programme review has, therefore, become essential for universities in Kenya.

Internal and external programme review constitutes one system with two interlinked steps. First, academics and students carry out programme self-evaluation in order to measure the extent to which expected learning outcomes are being met and the quality of each programme ensured. The team's findings are collected in a self-evaluation report (SAR). The second step involves (external) peer reviewers evaluating the programme, based on the SAR and their own observations during a site visit. Daystar University usually invites experts in the field, labour market representatives, or alumni to act as external reviewers. Following these two steps, the university creates an improvement plan based on the recommendations in the SAR and the peer review report. The internal and external programme review system is still in the process of implementation at Daystar; not all programmes have been through the system as yet. However, the university plans to ensure that all programmes are eventually subject to the process.

### ***Instruments to enhance employability of graduates***

#### *Tracer studies*

The purpose of the tracer studies is to evaluate the extent to which students' studies at Daystar University are relevant to their needs and challenges after graduation. The results from the tracer studies are used to review the curriculum and improve approaches to teaching and learning. In 2010, Daystar University conducted its first-ever graduate tracer study. A second study was carried out in 2015. The university now requires teaching units and the CQA to conduct tracer studies every five years. However, the frequency of graduate tracer studies depends on schools, centres, institutes, and departments. The university sometimes asks particular units to carry out graduate tracer studies with respect to particular teaching programmes. According to the quality assurance policy, only recent graduates (within two or three years of graduation) should be involved in graduate tracer studies. The 2010 study was an exception. All traceable graduates were allowed to respond as this was the first time such a survey had been done.

#### *Employer Surveys*

Like tracer studies, employer surveys are a recent phenomenon at Daystar University. They were conducted in 2010 and 2015, with employers asked to rate Daystar graduates against other graduates, indicate their strengths and weaknesses, and recommend essential skills for the labour market. In-depth interviews with employers were also conducted, particularly in mass media industries in which high numbers of Daystar graduates are employed. Informal employer surveys are sometimes carried out at departmental level during internship visits and through private arrangements between employers and staff in relevant departments.

#### *Jobs market analysis*

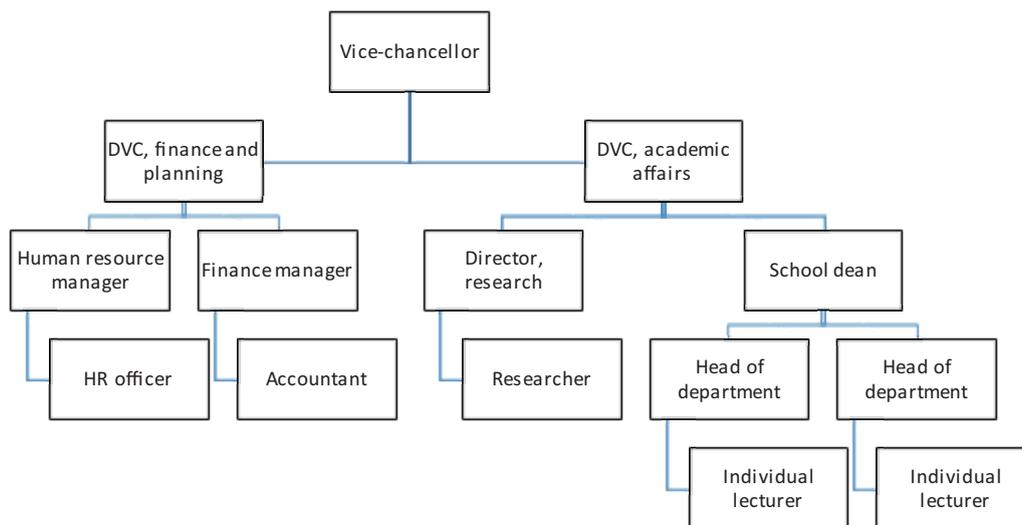
Jobs market analysis takes place in the process of curriculum development. For a curriculum to be approved by senate, the department must carry out a market survey and demonstrate how the new study programme contributes to satisfying the demands of the labour market. The survey is administered to identify the market need for graduates of the programme and to identify possible areas of improvement for each programme based on the jobs available. No curriculum will be approved unless it can demonstrate that programme graduates will be able to find jobs. Internships also provide an opportunity for staff to interact with employers and analyse the jobs market, as well as open days organized by the university at which employers are invited to promote their enterprises and recruit students. Departments use such opportunities to interact with employers and collect data necessary for curriculum development.

## Instruments to enhance management

### *Performance contracting (target and service-level agreements)*

Performance contracting as a quality assurance instrument is not explicitly mentioned in Daystar's QA policy. However, the university has introduced a system where each academic and administrative staff member sets performance targets based on selected key performance indicators (KPIs), which they agree with their immediate supervisors each year. Performance contracting is, therefore, inextricably interwoven with target and service-level agreements, for individuals as well as for units, but the term preferred by the university is 'KPIs'. The key performance indicators must be linked to a specific objective in the university strategic plan. The vice-chancellor sets KPIs with the deputy vice-chancellors and unit heads. The DVCs and the respective unit heads then set KPIs with staff reporting to them. This process continues until every individual in each unit has his/her own targets, as shown in Figure 3.2:

**Figure 3.2** Example of performance-contracting flow structure



Although it may seem an entirely top-down process, the targets for KPIs are set through negotiation between staff and their supervisors, with staff able to make suggestions as to what those targets might be. Reviews are carried out on a quarterly basis to establish the extent to which each target is being met. At the end of the year, each staff member is evaluated by their immediate supervisor to determine achievement against their key performance indicators. Those with high achievement levels are financially rewarded.

### *Unit or department self-evaluation*

Unit or departmental self-evaluation is directly linked to performance contracting. Unit targets are set by the unit head and his immediate supervisor. The university's long-range strategic planning committee meets quarterly to assess progress towards the targets agreed by the university and the various units. Before the committee meets, each unit carries out a self-evaluation and prepares a presentation. This presentation provides a basis for the next step, unit evaluation by peer review.

### *Unit evaluation (by peer review)*

Like unit self-evaluation, unit evaluation by peers is also linked to performance contracting. The long-range strategic planning committee meeting provides an opportunity for peer review. After each unit has presented its self-evaluation, other committee members

provide their assessment and make recommendations as to the way forward. On the basis of this feedback, units may revise their focus, their strategic approach, or even their future KPIs.

This description of IQA instruments and processes in the areas of teaching and learning, employability, and management demonstrates that Daystar University uses a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing tools for IQA. As with many other universities, management-related instruments are not covered by the university's IQA policy, and are not, therefore, seen as an integral part of the IQA system. The instruments related to teaching and learning and employability, however, focus heavily on soliciting feedback from stakeholders, thus facilitating the continuous adaptation of the academic offer to the needs of students and employers.

## 4. Findings of the empirical study on awareness, involvement, effects, and conditioning factors

This chapter presents the research methodology and the findings of an empirical study of the IQA system at Daystar University. The findings are presented in terms of the main questions posed by this study, namely: (1) the awareness of academic and administrative staff of the IQA system, and their involvement in it; (2) the effects of the IQA system on teaching and learning, employment orientation, and management; (3) the conditioning internal and external factors; and (4) the overall appreciation of the effectiveness of IQA systems. These concerns were chosen in order to assess both the overall effectiveness of the IQA system at Daystar University and the factors that condition it.

### 4.1 Research methodology

To investigate these questions, this case study adopted a multi-stakeholder approach. The stakeholders include academic and administrative staff, students, and university leadership. This approach was adopted to allow Daystar University to triangulate perceptions and present differences in opinions.

The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The respective perceptions of academic and administrative staff were collected through two online surveys, specifically adapted to those IQA instruments with which each staff grouping was most familiar.

The survey was sent to 107 academic staff, 31 (29 per cent) of whom responded, and 94 administrative staff, 31 (33 per cent) of whom responded. However, it should be noted that only 21 administrative staff members responded initially, prompting the researchers to send reminders which drew 10 more responses. The response rate represents an acceptable threshold for the identification of trends and indicators in the areas surveyed.

In order to capture the more in-depth perceptions of different stakeholders, six academic and administrative heads were interviewed individually. Seventeen department heads and programme directors and 22 students participated in the focus group discussions to discuss the effectiveness of the IQA system and procedures at the university.

### 4.2 Participation statistics

This section provides general descriptions of the respondents to the online surveys, and the participants in the interviews and focus group discussions.

#### **Survey questionnaire participants**

##### *Academic staff*

Table 4.1 shows the disciplines of academic staff who took part in the online survey. The majority of academic staff respondents were from social sciences at 51.6 per cent, followed by humanities and business management, each at 16.1 per cent. This is consistent with overall staff distribution across disciplines in the university.

**Table 4.1 Disciplines (academic staff)**

Disciplines	Percentage of respondents
Social sciences	51.6%
Humanities (e.g. philosophy, religion, philology, etc.)	16.1%
Natural sciences (e.g. biology, chemistry, geography, etc.)	6.5%
Business and management	16.1%
Life and health (e.g. medicine, psychology, nursing, etc.)	3.2%
Others, namely: computer science (05), architecture (13), management information systems (01), English (02)	6.5%
Total	100%

Around 70 per cent of respondents were either lecturers or senior lecturers, as shown in Table 4.2. This was followed by associate professors and assistant lecturers, both with figures of 9.7 per cent. This broadly reflects the distribution of academic staff by position across the university.

**Table 4.2 Academic positions (academic staff)**

	Full professor	Associate professor	Senior lecturer	Lecturer	Assistant lecturer	Graduate assistant	Other	Total
Percentage	0%	9.7%	35.5%	35.5%	9.7%	0%	9.6%	100%

According to Table 4.3, the dominant leadership positions among academic respondents were deputy heads of department and members of committees or boards, both of which accounted for 33 per cent of the total. The next most common leadership position was dean of faculty, with 20 per cent.

**Table 4.3 Leadership positions (academic staff)**

	Head (or deputy head) of programme	Head (or deputy head) of department	Dean (or vice dean) of faculty	Member of a committee or board	I do not want to answer	Other	Total
Percentage	0%	33%	20%	33%	13.3%	0.7%	100%

Table 4.4 shows that most academic staff respondents had worked at Daystar University for more than five years. More than a third (35.5 per cent) had worked there for between five and 10 years, with as many saying they had worked at Daystar for between 11 and 20 years. More than one in 10 (12.9 per cent) had more than 20 years' experience at the university. Only 16.1 per cent had less than five years' experience.

**Table 4.4 Length of experience (academic staff)**

	Less than 5 years	Between 5 and 10 years	Between 11 and 20 years	More than 20 years	Total
Percentage	16.1%	35.5%	35.5%	12.9%	100%

### Administrative staff

According to Table 4.5, most of the administrative staff who took part were engaged in financial management (25.8 per cent) or worked in the library (19.4 per cent). The rest were fairly evenly distributed with none of the other departments scoring more than 13 per cent.

**Table 4.5 Fields (administrative staff)**

Fields	Percentage of respondents
Strategic/academic planning	3.2%
Financial management	25.8%
Quality assurance/quality enhancement	0%
Institutional research	0%
Facility management (including transport services)	12.8%
Human resource (administrative) management	0%
Academic staff development	0%
Student services (registration, assessment, counselling)	9.7%
IT services	6.5%
Public relations/marketing	6.5%
Legal affairs	0%
Research service	0%
Library	19.4%
International relations	0%
Institutional leadership	3.2%
Other	12.9%
Total	100%

Table 4.6 shows that 48.4 per cent of administrative staff respondents identified head (or deputy head) of section as their leadership position. Head (or deputy head) of administration accounted for 12.9 per cent.

**Table 4.6 Leadership positions (administrative staff)**

	Head (or deputy head) of administration	Head (or deputy head) of unit	Head (or deputy head) of section	Other	Total
Percentage	12.9%	0%	48.4%	38.7%	100%

As Table 4.7 indicates, more than half of administrative staff participants had master's degrees (51.6 per cent). Those whose highest educational achievement was a bachelor degree accounted for 35.5 per cent of participants, with 6.5 per cent citing vocational training and 3.2 per cent a secondary school diploma. None of the participants held a doctoral degree.

**Table 4.7 Highest educational achievement (administrative staff)**

	Secondary school diploma	Vocational training	Bachelor degree	Master's degree	PhD/ doctorate	Other	Total
Percentage	3.2%	6.5%	35.5%	51.6%	0%	3.2%	100%

Table 4.8 shows that most administrative staff respondents had been with the university for more than five years. More than a third (35.5 per cent) had between five and 10 years' experience at the university, while those who had worked for 11–20 years and more than 20 years, both accounted for 22.6 per cent of the total.

**Table 4.8 Length of experience (administrative staff)**

	Less than 5 years	Between 5 and 10 years	Between 11 and 20 years	More than 20 years	Total*
Percentage	19.4%	35.5%	22.6%	22.6%	100%

\*Note: The figures were rounded off to the nearest one decimal place. This explains why Table 4.8 does not neatly add up to 100 %. This however does not statistically affect the results.

### ***Interviews and focus group discussion participants***

Table 4.9 describes the functions of interviewees and focus group discussion participants. Individual interviews were conducted with six people in academic and administrative leadership positions. Two of the interviewees were deputy vice-chancellors (for academic affairs, and finance, administration and planning, respectively), while two deans were selected, from the School of Business and Economics and the School of Science, Engineering and Health. As graduate employability is a major focus for the university, two employers were also interviewed: one from a media company and one from a telecommunications firm.

The focus group discussions involved 17 members of academic staff, among them various heads of academic programmes, and 22 students. The academic staff participants comprised five representatives from the School of Business and Economics, five from the School of Science, Engineering and Health, and seven from the School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts. Of the 22 students, five were student leaders based at the Nairobi campus, while 17 were alumni of Daystar University.

**Table 4.9 List of interviews**

Individual interviews	Focus group discussions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-chancellor, Academic Affairs</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-chancellor, Finance Administration and Planning</li> <li>• Dean, School of Business and Economics</li> <li>• Dean, School of Science, Engineering and Health</li> <li>• Managing editor of regional (East Africa) media house</li> <li>• Manager of a telecommunications company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five faculties from the School of Business and Economics</li> <li>• Five faculties from the School of Science, Engineering and Health</li> <li>• Seven faculties from the School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts</li> <li>• Ten alumni from Mombasa campus</li> <li>• Seven alumni from Nairobi campus</li> <li>• Five student leaders from Nairobi campus</li> </ul>

## **4.3 Awareness and involvement**

This section analyses the data concerning IQA awareness and involvement at Daystar University. Staff awareness of and involvement in internal quality assurance processes and tools are major factors conditioning the effectiveness of IQA at a university. These

issues will be explored using the findings of the academic and administrative staff surveys. This section also includes the perspectives of university management, academic staff, and students expressed during the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

### **Awareness of quality assurance policy**

The survey questionnaires investigated the extent to which academic and administrative staff were aware of quality policy in general. Since there is no quality manual for IQA processes at Daystar University, this item was not investigated in the survey.

#### *Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)*

According to Table 4.10, the level of awareness of quality assurance policy was high among both academic and administrative staff at Daystar University. More than 70 per cent of both staff groups knew that the quality assurance policy existed at Daystar and reported that it was useful in their work. Overall awareness of the existence of the policy was slightly higher among administrative staff (90 per cent) than among academic staff at (83.4 per cent). Ten per cent of administrative staff however reported that the quality assurance policy was not useful for their work, while none of the academic staff regarded it as not useful. Although administrative staff seem to be more aware of the quality assurance policy, academic staff found it more useful than did administrative staff.

**Table 4.10 Awareness of quality policy**

		Quality policy
Yes, this document exists and is useful for my work	Academic staff	76.7%
	Administrative staff	73.3%
Yes, but this document is not useful for my work	Academic staff	0%
	Administrative staff	10%
Yes, it exists but I do not have to deal with it	Academic staff	6.7%
	Administrative staff	6.7%
No, my university does not have such a document	Academic staff	0%
	Administrative staff	0%
I don't know	Academic staff	16.7%
	Administrative staff	10%
Total	Academic staff	100%
	Administrative staff	100%

#### *Interview and focus group discussion data on quality assurance policy and manual*

During the focus group discussions, some academic staff reported having only vague awareness of the quality assurance policy and little understanding of its contents. There was more understanding among senior academic staff. The deans and heads of department who took part in the in-depth interviews said they were well aware of the existence the policy and of some of its functions. This is not surprising since the quality policy was approved by the senate and most of those in university leadership positions were involved in its discussion and adoption. Many of the students who took part in the interviews did not know of the existence of either the policy or the Centre for Quality Assurance.

### ***Involvement in IQA instruments***

The survey questionnaires also investigated the extent to which academic and administrative staff were involved in IQA tools at Daystar University. The specific IQA instruments for teaching and learning presented in the questionnaires were: (1) student evaluation, (2) programme evaluation, and (3) internal programme evaluation (by department). The tools for employability were: (1) graduate tracer studies, (2) employer satisfaction surveys, and (3) jobs market analysis. Lastly, the following tools were presented as tools for management: (1) unit self-evaluation, (2) unit external evaluation, (3) target agreements, (4) service-level agreements. The interview and focus group participants mentioned a number of IQA tools which were different from the ones used for the survey. This shows that staff have divergent understandings of the processes and tools that make up the IQA system of the university. For comparability of data, the IQA instruments mentioned during the interviews and focus group discussions are only analysed in depth if they are the same as those used in the survey questionnaires.

#### *Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)*

According to Table 4.11, academic staff seem to be more involved in IQA instruments for teaching and learning than those for employability. Overall, the IQA tools for teaching and learning had higher averages in terms of involvement, feedback, use, and usefulness.

The IQA tool with the highest level of involvement was internal programme evaluation by departments, with an average of 3.8. This was followed by student evaluation (3.3) and programme evaluation by students (3.0). Similarly, academic staff reported having had most feedback from internal programme evaluation. Although many academic staff were engaged in student evaluation, they reported not receiving regular feedback on the evaluation results. Their perception as to the use and usefulness of internal programme evaluation was the highest, with averages of 3.5 and 3.8, respectively.

Among IQA tools for employability, employer surveys had the highest average staff involvement (2.3). The graduate tracer studies were the IQA tool least used by academic staff to enhance graduate employability. The results are not surprising as the least well known instruments tend also to be those the university has most recently introduced. The tracer studies have only been conducted twice at Daystar and the results of the second study were still to be released when the research was conducted. The three IQA instruments for graduate employability were perceived as equally useful, with averages of 2.3, suggesting the importance of raising awareness of the use of graduate tracer studies and jobs market analysis among academic staff.

**Table 4.11 Academic staff involvement in IQA tools on T/L and employability**

	<b>Involvement</b>	<b>Feedback</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>
Student evaluation	3.3	2.8	3.1	3.5
Programme evaluation (by students)	3.0	2.5	2.7	3.1
Internal Programme evaluation (by department)	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.8
Graduate tracer study	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.3
Employer survey	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.3
Jobs market analysis	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.3

\*Note: Averages were calculated as follows: 1. A numerical value was attributed to response categories with, for instance, 5 = very much and 1 = not at all. 2. Averages were then calculated in the following way: (number of responses x 5) + (number of responses x 4) + (number of responses x 3) + (number of responses x 2) + (number of responses x 1) / the total number of responses.

Table 4.12 shows that administrative staff were most involved in unit or department self-evaluation and target agreement, with an average of 3.8 and 3.5, respectively. Despite the high involvement of administrative staff, less feedback was received from the unit or department self-evaluation than from the target and service-level agreements. Unit evaluation by peers was the IQA tool in which administrative staff were least involved, with an average of 2.8. In terms of perceptions of use and usefulness, none of the instruments for management had an average of less than 3.0. In particular, service-level agreement (performance contracting) was seen as most useful with an average of 3.6. This was not surprising given that it is initiated at the beginning of each academic year and is in constant focus throughout the year. Administrative staff appear to regard these tools as both well-used and highly useful.

**Table 4.12 Administrative staff involvement in IQA tools on management**

	Involvement	Feedback	Use	Usefulness
Unit or department self-evaluation	3.8	3.2	3.1	3.4
Target agreements between units and institutional leadership	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.4
Service-level agreements (performance contracting)	2.9	3.3	3.1	3.6
Unit evaluation (peer review)	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.1

\*Note: All figures are averages (see Table 4.11 for explanation).

*Interview and focus group discussion data on the awareness of and involvement in IQA instruments*

The interview and focus group discussion data indicated that some stakeholders perceived feedback on the IQA instruments as insufficient. In the focus groups, some academic staff pointed out that they did not always receive student evaluation results, although they undertook student evaluations every semester. In the in-depth interviews with departmental heads and the office of the DVC for academic affairs, the importance of linking the IQA instrument to their outcomes in terms of the effectiveness of the system was mentioned.

These results were supported by the focus group discussions with students. Despite their involvement in student evaluations, they did not receive feedback and were not aware that their recommendations had been used to inform university decisions for improvement. Programme evaluation by department was not mentioned by the students, suggesting that few had been involved in it. However, internal and external examination moderations were identified as effective IQA instruments for teaching and learning by the students, although they are not ordinarily involved in either internal or external examination moderation.

In summary, the data indicate an appreciably good level of awareness of quality policy as well as involvement with IQA instruments at the university. The university can use this high level of involvement to further build its IQA practices and processes. Specifically, the provision of continual feedback based on data generated through IQA instruments should be prioritized to enable the various QA stakeholders within the university to deliver optimally on their mandates. Some IQA instruments, such as tracer studies and jobs market analysis, may need to be promoted more actively as they are comparatively unknown, though their potential is recognized by the various stakeholders interviewed.

## 4.4 Effects on teaching and learning, employability, and management

This section focuses on the effects of the IQA system on teaching and learning, employment orientation, and management. The analysis is based on data generated through the questionnaire surveys administered to both academic and administrative staff, the interviews with university leaders, and the focus group discussions with selected academic departments and students. The comparative analysis on of the effects on teaching and learning, employability, and management is also presented by different stakeholder groups. The findings are presented by area of focus.

### **Teaching and learning**

The following IQA tools for teaching and learning and employability were investigated to measure their effects on teaching and learning processes: student evaluation, programme evaluation, graduate tracer studies, and employer satisfaction surveys. These instruments were selected because they were the most regularly used for improving the quality of teaching and learning.

#### *Survey questionnaire data (academic staff)*

Table 4.13 shows the responses of academic staff as to the effects of selected IQA instruments on teaching and learning. Overall, IQA tools for teaching and learning were perceived to have more positive effects on teaching and learning than tools for employability.

**Table 4.13 Effects of IQA tools on T/L (academic staff)**

	Student evaluation	Programme evaluation	Graduate tracer survey	Employer survey
Improvement of the overall coherence of study programmes	3.2	3.4	2.0	2.9
Improvement of the content coverage of courses	3.6	3.4	2.0	3.0
Improvement of the content coverage of study programmes	3.4	3.5	2.1	3.0
Improvement of teaching performance	3.4	3.5	2.0	3.3
Improvement of the student assessment system	3.1	3.3	2.0	3.1
Improved learning conditions	3.3	3.3	2.2	3.1

\*Note: All figures are averages (see Table 4.11 for explanation).

According to Table 4.13, programme evaluation had higher average values with respect to most areas of teaching and learning outcomes than the other IQA tools. The only exception was improved content coverage of courses, where student evaluation had a slightly higher average score of 3.6. This can be explained by the fact that student evaluations at Daystar University are mainly conducted at course level. Although programme evaluation also had a positive impact on the content coverage of courses, the areas respondents considered it most improved were content coverage of study programmes and teaching performance, both of which had averages of 3.5.

When it comes to IQA instruments for employability, employer satisfaction surveys seemed to have a more positive impact on teaching and learning in general than the graduate tracer study. In particular, teaching performance was said to be significantly improved through the employer survey. It was reported to influence student assessment and learning conditions in a positive way, both having averages of 3.1. The positive impact

of employer surveys may be attributed to the higher involvement of academic staff in this instrument. This suggests that higher involvement of academic staff in IQA instruments may result in greater impacts on teaching and learning. Despite having the smallest reported effect on teaching and learning, the graduate tracer study was found the most effective in improving learning conditions.

#### *Interview and focus group discussion data*

- Effect of student evaluation on teaching and learning

University leaders and academic staff agreed that student evaluations have led to better teaching and learning. The term ‘student evaluation’ is used synonymously with ‘course evaluation’ at Daystar University.

Interviews with academic deans and heads of department revealed that student evaluation had led to the discontinuation of part-time academic staff contracts; the reassignment of permanent staff from courses where students raised complaints; the review of course syllabuses, their outlines, and required texts; and staff development activities to address identified problems. Training on student assessment was cited as one such staff development course.

In focus group discussion and during the in-depth interviews with management staff, it emerged that the university has introduced the following practices as a result of student evaluation.

- Pedagogical training for all academic staff

According to the interviews with heads of department, deans, and senior administrative staff, student evaluations revealed that academic staff were experiencing difficulties with their pedagogical skills. The university developed a course for teaching staff, known as the Professional Certificate in Higher Education Teaching (PCHET), to address these issues. The course aims to ensure that teaching staff can prepare curriculum appropriately; deliver it in a way that allows active learning and critical reflective thinking; and are able to assess students’ acquisition of key skills and competences. The course comprises three units:

1. Teaching for Critical Reflective Thinking,
2. Evaluation of Student Learning as a Productive Learning,
3. Course and Curriculum Development and Revision.

It was reported that when this course was first introduced it was received with scepticism by some academic staff. However, this has begun to change. After the first part of the course (Teaching for Critical Reflective Thinking) was offered in July 2014, the second part, which is an online module, was oversubscribed within one hour of announcement. In the focus group discussions, a few staff members who had participated in these courses reported that their experience of teaching and learning had significantly improved. One head of department, who had taken some of the course, expressed a wish to make PCHET mandatory for all his staff.

- Active participation in the Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching (AFELT)

Another way in which Daystar has addressed the pedagogical skills deficiencies highlighted by students during course evaluations has been through participation in the Association for Faculty Enrichment in Learning and Teaching (AFELT). Daystar University has become an active member of AFELT (AFELT, 2014), a national initiative of private universities which aims to:

1. Facilitate the advancement of areas of research and practice of various academic disciplines.
2. Collaborate with like-minded organizations and individuals.

3. Provide multiple opportunities for academic staff to engage in continuing professional development.
4. Facilitate the art of research and development in education.

Objective three is particularly relevant to PCHET, which aims to promote professional development. The coordinator of Daystar's Centre for Collaboration for Excellence in Teaching and Learning is the founding chair of AFELT. Daystar membership and participation in this forum shows its dedication to improving teaching and learning.

- CETL's Focus on Faculty workshops

The Centre for Collaboration for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) organizes weekly meetings known as 'Focus on Faculty' workshops. The meetings give academic staff an opportunity to discuss and learn about innovative teaching methods through either face-to-face or virtual meetings with experts. The face-to-face workshops are usually organized around TED talks on subjects directly or indirectly relevant to teaching and learning at university level, including how to deal with innovation or controversial issues. Participants listen to the TED talk and share experiences from their classrooms. CETL workshops are also sometimes organized around a book on teaching and learning, giving participants an opportunity to share relevant practical experience from their own classrooms.

- Vice-chancellor's forum with staff and students

One of the outcomes of student evaluation mentioned during the interviews was the introduction of a vice-chancellor's forum for staff and students. The forum was created to give students and staff an opportunity to interact with the CEO of the university. It can be used to give feedback on university plans or simply to keep updated about them. It was reported that the forum was introduced after students complained of the unhealthy distance between them and senior administration.

Only a few of the students interviewed were aware that improved teaching and learning were, in part, the consequence of their own input to student evaluation. Although they were aware of the vice-chancellor's forum, they did not associate it with student evaluation. If they were aware of the impact their feedback has, it might increase their engagement in IQA tools and processes.

(i) Effect of programme evaluation on teaching and learning

Academic staff reported that curriculum was improved through programme evaluation, with course content changed in accordance with market trends. Professional courses have also been introduced at the university as a result of programme evaluations and students have had the opportunity to attend lectures given by professionals. However, not as many students enrolled on the professional courses as indicated an initial interest in them. Academic staff reported that some students who did not enrol on the professional courses complained that they did not have enough course choice. This indicates the importance of raising student awareness on the professional courses.

(ii) Effect of tracer studies on teaching and learning

University leaders, heads of department, and academic deans reported that tracer studies informed their strategic decisions, including on the review of curriculum and academic resource allocation. However, academic staff argued few were aware and involved in tracer studies. The students interviewed were also unaware of tracer studies. This suggests that more staff and students need to be involved in discussing the results of tracer studies. In general, findings from tracer studies should be more widely accessible and communicated to different stakeholders at the university.

(iii) Effect of employer surveys on teaching and learning

Heads of department reported that individual departments maintain independent relationships with employers for the supply of graduates and interns. Academic staff are, therefore, aware of decisions made following their interactions with employers. This seems to validate the earlier suggestion that greater involvement of staff in IQA activities might result in greater impact on teaching and learning at the university.

### **Graduate employability**

*Survey questionnaire data (academic staff)*

Table 4.14 shows the effects of IQA tools on employability. The IQA instruments for teaching and learning had more positive effects on the employability of graduates than the tools devised specifically to promote employability. Student evaluation was most effective in enhancing the employability of graduates with an average of 3.4. Programme evaluation and employer surveys also improved employability, with averages of 3.2 and 3.1, respectively. The tool perceived as least effective for employability was the tracer study. This may be because the tracer study is a relatively new and unknown IQA tool at Daystar.

**Table 4.14** Effects of IQA tools on employability (academic staff)

	Student evaluation	Programme evaluation	Tracer study	Employer survey
Enhanced employability of graduates	3.4	3.2	2.1	3.1

\*Note: All figures are averages (see Table 4.11 for explanation).

*Interview and focus group discussion data*

There was quite a lot of variation in different stakeholder groups' perceptions of the effectiveness of IQA instruments. Students said in the interviews that they rated the effects of course evaluation on their employability as high or very high. They felt that Daystar's student evaluation system contributed to the positive impression the university's graduates made on the labour market, a finding supported by the deans of schools and departmental heads during the in-depth interviews.

The academic staff said in the interviews that programme evaluation contributed to the improvement of graduates' performance in the labour market as it was based on feedback from both students and employers. For instance, it was reported that a department increased student admissions as a result of receiving positive labour-market feedback through programme evaluation.

The heads of department noted the impact of employer surveys on graduate employability during the interviews. Academic staff thought the surveys highly effective, although the results were not widely known or formally used within the university. It was also pointed out that concrete data (statistics) were not immediately available. The university may need to consider introducing a more formalized and systematic approach to disseminating the findings from employer surveys.

Most interviewees also argued that tracer studies had the potential to improve graduate employability if recommendations from alumni and employers were properly taken into consideration.

## Management

The question of the contribution IQA instruments make to management was put only to the administrative staff. The IQA instruments examined were unit self-evaluation, unit peer evaluation, target agreements between units and university leadership, and performance contracting. The respondents were asked to state the extent to which each of these instruments contributed to the following administrative processes: improved strategic planning; effectiveness of administrative operations; and greater service orientation.

### *Survey questionnaire data (administrative staff)*

Table 4.15 illustrates the effects of IQA tools on management. Performance contracting seemed, in general, to contribute most to improved management. Its biggest impact was on strategic planning with an average of 3.8. Strategic planning at Daystar was as heavily influenced by target agreements. Both performance contracting and target agreements promoted the effectiveness of administrative operations and service orientation at the university more than unit self-evaluation and unit peer evaluation. Unit self-evaluation had a higher average than unit peer evaluation in terms of strategic planning. Administrative operations were also significantly improved through unit self-evaluation and unit peer evaluation, with both averages of 3.4.

**Table 4.15** Effects of IQA tools on management (administrative staff)

	Unit self-evaluation	Unit peer Evaluation	Performance contracting (service-level agreements)	Target agreements, units and leadership
Improved strategic planning	3.4	3.3	3.8	3.8
Effectiveness of administrative operations	3.4	3.4	3.6	3.5
Greater service orientation	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.5

\*Note: All figures are averages (see Table 4.11 for explanation).

### *Interview and focus group discussion data*

The interview and focus group data reveal that some academic staff do not appreciate the importance of IQA instruments for management and tend, instead, to decry their involvement with such instruments. During the interviews, one lecturer said: 'Our workload is too high, so quality assurance sounds more applicable for public relations officers than for lecturers'. This indicates that the university needs to create a closer working relationship between academic and administrative staff on QA matters. The students in their focus group discussions said that Daystar University needs to involve all staff in shaping an IQA culture within the institution. This can maximise the impact of IQA on academic programmes and learner experience. This is consistent with the aspiration of the university's leaders to invest more in the IQA system in coming years to improve learner experience and the academic offer.

Overall, the findings suggest that the use of IQA instruments at Daystar has improved teaching and learning practices, strengthened the links between university and industry, and made administrative performance targets clearer. However, there seems to be a gap between academic and administrative staff in terms of perceptions and approaches to

quality assurance. This means that the university needs to encourage the development of a quality culture among different stakeholders. Another gap that needs to be addressed is the university's feedback mechanism. The main concern for students was that they did not get feedback on the outcomes of their involvement with IQA instruments and specifically student evaluations. IQA instruments tend to have a greater impact in universities where there is an ingrained IQA culture.

The overall impact of an institution's IQA system is determined by a range of conditioning factors, internal and external. Both are discussed in the next section.

## 4.5 Conditioning factors (internal and external)

This section presents the internal and external conditioning factors for the effectiveness of the IQA system at Daystar University. Internal conditioning factors were investigated by triangulating the data generated from the survey questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussions. The internal factors identified were: (1) leadership support; (2) financial incentives as a top-up to salary for contributing staff; (3) support by students; (4) visibility of measures derived from internal quality assurance procedures; (5) a solid data information system; (6) transparent information on internal quality assurance procedures; (7) scientific evaluations of internal quality assurance procedures; (8) active participation of all stakeholders in internal quality assurance procedures. As for external conditioning factors, their analysis was entirely based on qualitative data from the interviews. The interview guidelines emphasized the role of external quality assurance and university autonomy.

### ***Internal conditioning factors***

The academic and administrative survey questionnaires were used to investigate both the existence of internal conditioning factors for the IQA system at Daystar University and their importance. This information was then triangulated with the interview and focus group discussion data. The comparative analysis of the effects on employability by different stakeholder group is provided in the section below.

#### *Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)*

According to *Table 4.16*, both academic and administrative staff regarded leadership support as the most important internal conditioning factor, with averages of 4.8 and 4.7, respectively. The support of students was regarded as the second most important factor among academic staff. Administrative staff, on the other hand, valued a solid data information system, transparent information on IQA procedures, and active participation of all stakeholders, all with averages of 4.4.

When it comes to perceptions of the presence of internal factors, administrative staff had higher averages than academic staff, apart from for the visibility of IQA procedures and the active participation of all stakeholders. This suggests that administrative staff are more positively inclined towards the IQA system in general. Administrative staff said that financial incentives were most present at the university with the average of 4.6, while academic staff thought of this as the least present factor, at 1.9. While the visibility of measures from the IQA procedures was the least present factor for administrative staff, it was viewed as highly present by academic staff.

**Table 4.16 Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)**

	Academic staff		Administrative staff	
	Importance	Presence	Importance	Presence
Leadership support	4.8	-	4.7	3.8
Financial incentives for contribution of staff	4.3	1.9	4.0	4.6
Support by students	4.5	2.5	4.3	3.0
Visibility of measures derived from internal quality assurance procedures	4.3	2.9	4.2	2.7
Solid data information system	4.4	2.5	4.4	3.0
Transparent information on internal quality assurance procedures	4.4	2.7	4.4	3.0
Scientific evaluations on internal quality assurance procedures	4.3	2.8	3.9	2.8
Active participation of all stakeholders in internal quality assurance procedures	4.4	2.8	4.4	2.3

\*Note: All figures are averages (see Table 4.11 for explanation).

#### *Interview and focus group discussion data*

The lack of financial support for programme evaluation was noted by one academic staff member who said: ‘We receive little institutional support for programme review when we ask for it’. However, some academic staff in the focus group discussions argued that the university had supported them to review their curriculum. Given the wider trend as evidenced by the quantitative data, it is clear that there is a need for the university to provide relevant support to academic staff. Financial incentives should also be considered where necessary.

In summary, both academic and administrative staff acknowledged the importance of the specified conditioning factors. Senior leadership support was recognised by both staff groups as important. There was, however, a slight difference when it came to perceptions of the actual presence of these factors. Overall, administrative staff were more aware of the presence of internal conditioning factors than the academic staff.

### **External conditioning factors**

#### *Interview and focus group discussion data*

The main external conditioning factor for the IQA system at Daystar University appeared to be the relationship between the university and the Commission for University Education (CUE). The relationship between the university and other accrediting agencies was also frequently mentioned in the focus group discussions and the in-depth interviews with the deans, heads of department and the deputy vice-chancellor for academic affairs.

One of the deans said that the university was obliged to keep to the ‘straight and narrow road’ because of the constant ‘surveillance’ of the CUE. The academic staff members interviewed also appreciated that compliance with external standards drove the university to maintain higher graduate employment rates than some other universities in Kenya (Achuka, 2015).

However, it was also reported during in-depth interviews with deans and HoDs that external accrediting agencies such as the Nursing Council of Kenya and the Engineering Board of Kenya contributed to delays to the launch of new academic programmes. The

agencies withhold programme accreditation if the university does not meet either their own regulations and requirements or those of the labour market. This led to delays to programmes in nursing and electronic engineering. In some cases, participants reported that proposed core texts became obsolete as a result of postponed accreditation. The deans and HoDs also said that the accrediting agencies could be too prescriptive, leaving the university little room to incorporate its liberal arts approach to education.

The students interviewed were completely unaware of the role of the CUE as well as of the professional accrediting agencies.

## 4.6 Overall appreciation of the effectiveness of IQA systems

*Survey questionnaire data (academic and administrative staff)*

As Table 4.17 shows, compliance with external standards was viewed by both academic (30.8 per cent) and administrative (42.9 per cent) staff as the main focus of Daystar’s IQA system. Both groups also identified improvement and the enhancement of organizational learning as the next most significant paradigms for IQA instruments and processes. This suggests that although the majority of staff at Daystar see the IQA system as externally driven, they still acknowledged that it can be used as a tool to enhance quality within the university.

**Table 4.17 Main paradigm of IQA instruments and processes**

	Compliance with external standards	Accountability towards stakeholders	Enhance organisational learning	Improvement	Control	Other	Total*
Academic staff	30.8%	11.5%	19.2%	26.9%	11.5%	0%	100%
Administrative staff	42.9%	19%	14.3%	14.3%	4.8%	4.8%	100%

\*Note: The figures were rounded off to the nearest one decimal place. This explains why Table 4.17 does not neatly add up to 100%. This however does not statistically affect the results.

Table 4.18 describes academic and administrative staff perceptions of workload created by IQA instruments and procedures at Daystar. Around half of the academic and administrative staff perceived their workload as high: 44.4 per cent and 52.4 per cent, respectively. Interestingly, 14.8 per cent of academic staff claimed their workload was very high, while only 9.5 per cent of administrative staff considered their workload to be very high. However, it appeared that some of academic staff were unaware of the IQA instruments and processes, with 11.1 per cent of them choosing ‘I do not know’ when asked about their IQA-related workload. It should be noted that 10 administrative staff skipped this question, compared to four academic staff. While the skipping of some questions may have skewed the data slightly, the result is nevertheless consistent with the more positive perceptions of IQA procedures exhibited by administrative staff, in comparison to academic staff, noted in other areas.

**Table 4.18 Overall workload with IQA instruments and processes**

	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	None at all	I do not know	Other	Total
Academic staff	14.8%	44.4%	7.4%	22.2%	0%	11.1%	0.2%	100%
Administrative staff	9.5%	52.4%	28.6%	0%	0%	9.5%	0%	100%

Administrative staff perceived more benefits of IQA procedures and processes than academic staff. As Table 4.19 indicates, 95.2 per cent of administrative staff judged the benefits of IQA as moderate to high, compared to 78.6 per cent of academic staff. Some academic staff rated the overall benefits as 'low' (3.6 per cent) or 'none at all' (7.1 per cent). Those who chose 'I do not know' when asked about the benefits of the IQA system were higher among the academic staff (10.7 per cent) in comparison with administrative staff (4.8 per cent). This indicates that administrative staff are more aware of the overall benefits with the IQA instruments and processes than are academic staff.

**Table 4.19 Overall benefits with IQA instruments and processes**

	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	None at all	I do not know	Total
Academic staff	39.3%	0%	39.3%	3.6%	7.1%	10.7%	100%
Administrative staff	14.3%	57.1%	23.8%	0%	0%	4.8%	100%

When academic staff and administrative staff were asked to indicate the extent to which IQA at Daystar University contributes to improved management decisions, the results indicated a slightly higher appreciation on the part of administrators (see Table 4.20). While 62 per cent of administrators said the contribution to improved management decisions was either high or very high, only 50 per cent of academic staff agreed. A higher percentage of academic staff said that IQA made little or no contribution to improvements in management decisions or acknowledged they did not know. This indicates that administrative staff have more appreciation of the IQA system's contribution to improved management decisions than do academic staff.

**Table 4.20 Contribution of IQA to improved management decisions**

	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	None at all	I do not know	Total
Academic staff	15.4%	34.6%	30.8%	0%	7.7%	11.5%	100%
Administrative staff	23.8%	38.1%	28.5%	4.8%	0%	4.8%	100%

Similarly, administrative staff viewed IQA's contribution to the overall improved effectiveness of the university more positively than did academic staff. As Table 4.21 shows, 90.4 per cent of administrative staff perceived it as moderate to very high, compared with 77.7 per cent of academic staff. This suggests that, in general, administrative staff had a greater appreciation of the contribution of IQA to the overall effectiveness of the university than academic staff. This is in line with previous findings concerning administrative staff perceptions of overall workload and benefits. Administrative staff viewed their IQA-related workload as higher, but also rated the system's benefits higher.

**Table 4.21 Contribution of IQA to overall improved effectiveness**

	Very much	Much	Moderately	Little	Not at all	I do not know	Total
Academic staff	22.2%	25.9%	29.6%	3.7%	0%	18.6%	100%
Administrative staff	33.3%	38.1%	19.0%	4.8%	0%	4.8%	100%

*Interview and focus group discussion data*

Compliance with external standards was considered by both staff groups to be the main paradigm of the IQA system at the university. The role of the Commission for Higher Education with reference to quality was frequently cited by both teaching staff and senior administrators in the focus group discussions. Academic and administrative staff agreed

that the presence of external conditioning factors meant that the quality of the university was maintained more effectively.

There seems to be disagreement between the different stakeholders as to the overall benefits and contribution of the IQA system to the university. Administrative staff seem to appreciate the overall benefits more than do academic staff, although their workload was reported in the survey questionnaire to be higher. This is consistent with the findings of the in-depth interviews with the senior administrative staff, deans, and heads of department.

Some academic staff showed little understanding of the benefits of IQA instruments and procedures, while others displayed negative attitudes towards them. There was a discrepancy with reference to workload and the perceived benefits among the academic staff, suggesting that workload was perceived to be high, while the benefits were seen as moderate. Some academic staff in the focus group discussions said that QA was mainly a top-down process, which obliged them to comply with external standards while their workload increased accordingly. This suggests that the university must improve academic staff appreciation of the overall benefits of the IQA system. One of the recommendations in the focus group discussions with academic staff was to conduct workshops regularly in order to inform them of the benefits of the system and its uses for improvement.

While acknowledging the difficulties and limitations of some of the IQA instruments, all agreed that Daystar should invest more on the IQA system as it contributed to the effectiveness of the university. The students in their focus group discussions observed that the university's reputation in the labour market had been improved as a result of its focus on the IQA system. The practices cited by students included examination moderation and student evaluations.

## 5. Summary and conclusions

### 5.1 Summary

This study has examined Daystar University's internal quality assurance system with reference to specific IQA instruments. It demonstrates how the university's IQA system has been shaped by a triple heritage. This heritage comprises traditional IQA instruments, which continue to exist at the university, and the requirements that have emerged from both institutional and programme accreditation exercises, which entailed the creation of the Centre for Quality Assurance and the development of the university's quality policy. More recently, Daystar University has developed a set of new IQA instruments, to satisfy the need for information and stakeholder feedback and ensure that quality enhancement becomes a continuous process.

As a result, Daystar University has developed a set of interrelated and mutually reinforcing tools for IQA. Most of these instruments focus on the enhancement of teaching and learning, though employability is also a strong feature of Daystar's IQA system. As in many other universities, management-related instruments are currently not covered by the IQA policy of the university, and are not seen as an integral part of the IQA system.

The study aimed to establish the level of different stakeholders' awareness of QA policy and their involvement in IQA instruments. The research also explored the effects of the various IQA instruments on teaching and learning, graduate employability, and management. In addition, internal and external factors were identified to assess the effective functioning of the IQA system at the university. Finally, analysis of the different stakeholders' perceptions of the overall orientation of Daystar's IQA system, and their appreciation of it, was undertaken.

The main finding of the study is that awareness of and involvement in the IQA system varies considerably, depending on the intensity of use within the university. The majority of academic and administrative staff reported a higher awareness of the existence of the university's quality assurance policy. The interviews and focus group discussions suggested that this could be explained by the involvement of academic and administrative leaders in the development of the quality policy.

When it comes to the involvement of the IQA instruments, academic staff were more familiar with those used to improve teaching and learning than those used to promote employability. Academic staff perceptions on student evaluation and programme evaluation were higher in terms of involvement, feedback, use, and usefulness. However, tracer studies and job market analysis were not as widely known among academic staff. This was explained by the fact that these instruments were relatively new to the university, with a lower frequency of use. Similarly, students seemed only to be aware of student evaluation as they are directly involved in it. They indicated, however, that they did not always receive feedback from student evaluation surveys, and that they did not receive regular feedback from other IQA instruments. Administrative staff indicated regular involvement in the IQA tools for management. The majority of administrative staff found the IQA instruments for management to be largely useful. This may be attributed to the higher involvement of administrative staff with leadership responsibilities as well as to the mainly administration-oriented areas investigated in the questionnaire.

Overall, the IQA instruments were perceived to have had a positive effect on teaching and learning, employability, and management, although their effects were interpreted differently by the different stakeholders. According to academic staff, the practices related to teaching and learning and the employability of graduates were significantly improved through student evaluation and programme evaluation. Student evaluation

was also perceived as most effective for employability by the students, the deans, and the heads of departments; more so than graduate tracer studies. Despite the relatively positive effects of employer satisfaction surveys on employability reported in the survey questionnaire, such surveys were neither formally used nor widely known by the different stakeholders at the university, according to the interview and focus group discussion data. Administrative staff reported that performance contracting had the biggest impact on university management as this instrument greatly improved strategic planning, administrative operations, and the service orientation of the university. Considering the positive effects on the university, it was suggested in the interviews and focus group discussions that the university should encourage the active involvement of academic staff in the IQA instruments for management.

Turning to the conditioning factors, both academic and administrative staff agreed that leadership support was the most important internal factor for the effectiveness of the IQA system at Daystar University. A difference was observed in terms of the perceptions of the two groups as to the presence of the internal factors. Academic staff were less aware of the presence of such factors than were administrative staff. The main difference of opinion between the two staff groups concerned financial incentives. Somewhat surprisingly, compliance with the standards set by the Commission for University Education and professional accrediting agencies was seen as an important external conditioning factor for the effectiveness of the IQA system, rather than as a constraining factor. While deans and senior academic staff recognized the contribution of such factors to the university's IQA system, the students were unaware of the existence and functions of external accrediting bodies.

Lastly, administrative staff not only indicated a higher workload as a result of IQA measures, they also showed a greater appreciation of its benefits than academic staff. Administrative staff also rated the contribution of the university IQA system highly in terms of both improved management decisions and the overall improved effectiveness of the university. Academic staff generally had less appreciation of the purpose and benefits of the IQA system. The positive evaluation of the IQA system is partly explained by staff perspectives as to the main paradigm for IQA instruments and procedures. According to the survey, both academic and administrative staff identified compliance with external standards as the main paradigm. It was reported in the interviews and focus group discussions that such external conditioning factors were regarded by members of both staff groups as helpful in ensuring quality at Daystar University.

## 5.2 Conclusions

The research findings have implications for both Daystar University and other HEIs within and outside Kenya. Conclusions are addressed first to the university, then to other HEIs.

### ***Specific conclusions for Daystar University***

First, although student evaluation was the most widely known IQA tool within the university, its overall impact on teaching and learning was rated lower than programme evaluation. This discrepancy between use and impact is related to the perceived lack of feedback resulting from student evaluation. It should be noted that a number of academic staff indicated that they did not receive their student evaluation results. Similarly, students reported that it was difficult to observe any change as a result of their feedback. However, university leaders and academic staff reported that some management actions, including termination of staff contracts, had been effected in the course of follow-up to student feedback. The university needs to develop a more effective mechanism to disseminate the results of student evaluation. This would improve the effect of student evaluation on different aspects of the university.

Second, the value of an IQA instrument should be determined not by its formal status within the university but by its application. Some departments, for example, made use of employer surveys and jobs market analysis, though these methods were still to be formalized as IQA instruments for employability. It emerged in the focus group discussions that departments making informal use of such instruments had been able to review their curricula in accordance with current labour market demands and thus improve graduate employability. The university should therefore consider conducting employer surveys more regularly and perhaps organizing them at university rather than just departmentally.

Third, while the liberal arts philosophy of the university contributes to high graduate employability, the requirements of accreditation threaten the survival of this approach to education. There is need for the university to engage the accrediting agencies more actively to facilitate a more liberal approach to curriculum development and review.

Fourth, the university should consider holding annual or biannual meetings with academic staff to discuss QA issues and receive reports based on data collected using the various IQA instruments. This would help to address the lower involvement of academic staff reported in the interviews. It would also provide an opportunity for academic staff to be involved in the analysis of the results and their implications for teaching and learning; to identify linkages between the results of IQA instruments with their day-to-day activities; and to make a contribution to the review and administration IQA instruments in the future. This would not only give academic staff a sense of ownership but also provide for faster and more collaborative implementation of proposed improvement plans since academic staff, as implementers, would be involved in their formulation.

### ***Generic conclusions***

This research raised the core issues in implementing an effective IQA system. As such, it is applicable not only to other Kenyan universities but also to other HEIs beyond the national context.

#### *Senior management involvement*

University leaders must support the IQA system and be involved in its implementation. Without the support of leadership, IQA initiatives are likely to have no effect. Such support must be anchored to and incorporated in university policies. Moreover, it is important that senior management support is visible, to both academic and non-academic staff. Special attention needs to be paid to academic staff who often view the IQA system as a means of control by university management, and not as a mechanism for improvement in which they need to be directly involved. It is important that academic staff are encouraged to use IQA tools and to be active participants rather than mere recipients.

#### *Staff involvement*

Every staff member must be actively involved in the IQA system. In order to achieve this goal, the provision of financial incentives should be considered. Reward mechanisms for staff who contribute notably to quality assurance in the university should be explored. Academic staff involvement in the IQA system may mean increases to workload and, without any additional financial incentive, their participation may continue to lag behind their administrative counterparts. It is also important that academic staff are made to appreciate the importance of their involvement in making the IQA system a success.

#### *Staff capacity*

The capacity of staff is critical to delivering positive IQA outcomes. IQA demands skill sets (including, for example, research, pedagogical, and administrative skills), which staff may not possess. A university should therefore provide support for staff to develop these vital

skill sets and create a scholarly environment. Daystar University, for example, established teaching and learning centres in order to build institutional capacity. Staff development activities can be linked to other IQA tools, such as student evaluation, which help identify weaknesses in capacity. Such weaknesses may be pointed out with reference to student assessment, course curriculum development, or pedagogical skills. Other areas of deficiency or weakness can emerge from the analysis of data collected through different IQA tools. The areas of weakness identified can indicate a need for training and capacity building.

#### *Student involvement in IQA is key*

The best way to know whether an IQA system is working is to test it out with learners. Students are some of the most important stakeholders within a university and should not be passive in the development of an institution's IQA system. The active involvement of students will make the system more readily acceptable to the university community and support its rapid adoption. Students should not, however, be seen only as sources of data. Instead, as key stakeholders, they should be informed how their input is to be used in the future improvement of the university. Changes in university administration or teaching and learning practice should be communicated to students. Regular meetings with students can be used to keep them updated as to the different effects of IQA instruments used at the university.

#### *The future of IQA in Kenya*

Daystar's experience suggests that other Kenyan universities can develop their IQA systems successfully if they emulate the university's practice. The CUE's enthusiasm for universities developing their own IQA infrastructure and culture suggests a policy and funding environment supportive of such developments. As the CUE continues its work with Kenyan universities to build robust IQA systems that reflect the growing demands of different stakeholders, each Kenyan university must make a constant effort by asking the following key questions: What is working in our context? What is not working and why? Where do we need to start in terms of IQA? Answering these questions will invigorate institutional IQA momentum and, subsequently, encourage institutions to take action. The experience of Daystar, a private university based in Nairobi, suggests that attaining an effective and beneficial IQA system is feasible. Given the competitive environment in which Kenyan universities operate, the future belongs to those that make genuine efforts to improve their IQA systems, as shown in the case of Daystar. In implementing their IQA systems, however, universities must take into consideration the multiple perspectives of stakeholders, including academic and administrative staff, students, employers, and alumni. There must also be recognition that an effective IQA system sometimes involves significant expense. Such investment is nonetheless worthwhile as it will lead to better outputs and greater graduate employability.

## Appendix: Academic programmes at Daystar University, by school

School	Department	Major
<b>Arts and Humanities</b>	Theology and Pastoral Studies	BA Biblical and Religious Studies
		BTh Theology
		MA Christian Ministries
		MTh African Theology
	Peace and International Studies	BA International Relations and Security Studies
		BA Peace and Conflict Transformation
	Education	BEd Bible and French
		BEd Bible and Music
		BEd English and Literature
		BEd Business and French
		BEd Music and French
		BEd Early Childhood
		BEd Physics and Mathematics
		BEd Computer Science and Mathematics
		PGD Education
<b>Business and Economics</b>	Commerce	BCom Accounting
		BCom Business Management
		BCom Purchasing and Business Logistics
		BCom Law Option
		BCom Marketing
		BCom Management Information Systems
		MBA Finance
		MBA Human Resource Management
		MBA Project Management and Entrepreneurship
		MBA Strategic Management
		MBA Marketing
	Economics	BSc Economics
		MSC Economics

School	Department	Major
<b>Communication, Language, and Performing Arts</b>	Communication	BA Communication, Electronic Media
		BA Communication, Print Media
		BA Communication, Public Relations
		BA Communication, Advertising
		BA Technical and Professional Communication
		MA Communication, Media Studies
		MA Communication, Corporate
		MA Communication, Development
		PhD Communication
	Language and Performing Arts	BA English
		BA French
		BA Kiswahili
		BA Literature
		BA Music
<b>Human and Social Sciences</b>	Community Development	BA Community Development, Rural
		BA Community Development, Integrated
		BA Social Work
		MA Community Development
		MA Monitoring and Evaluation
	Psychology	BA Psychology and Counselling
		MA Counselling Psychology
		PhD Clinical Psychology
	Institute of Child Development	MA Child Development
		PGD Child Development
<b>Science, Engineering, and Health</b>	Computer Science	BSc Applied Computer Science
	Science	BSc Physics
		BSc Mathematics
		BSc Environmental Health
		BSc Actuarial Science
		BSc Biomedical Science
	Nursing	BSc Nursing
		BSc Nursing Upgrade
	Pre-University	Pre-University

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## The case study

Kenya has seen a dramatic increase in student enrolment over the past decade in higher education institutions (HEIs), in particular through the expansion of private education. In order to regulate the quality of the sector, the government established a new legal framework, and various regulatory bodies were established for quality control. As a private university in Nairobi, Kenya, Daystar University (DU) has made considerable efforts to develop an internal quality assurance (IQA) system, in response to the traditional demand for quality, new requirements related to external quality assurance, and the need to take into account the employability of its graduates.

Conducted within the framework of an international research project implemented by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), this case study focuses on how the university's IQA system has been shaped by a triple heritage and how this contributes to quality and employability.

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