NCHE

HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR MALAWI

Promoting Quality, Accessible, Relevant and Inclusive Higher Education

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Acronyms

APQN	-	The Asia-pacific Quality Network (APQN)
ENQA	-	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQA	-	External Quality Assurance
ESG		European standards and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education
HE	-	Higher Education
HEI	-	Higher Education Institution
IQA	-	Internal Quality Assurance
INQAAHE	-	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ISO	-	International Organization for Standardization
NESP	-	National Education Sector Plan
NCHE	-	National Council for Higher Education
QA	-	Quality Assurance
QAA	-	Quality Assurance Agency
SADC	-	Southern Africa Development Community

Table of Contents

Acronyms v
Table of Contents vi
List of Figures ix
PART I 1
INTRODUCTION 1
1.1. Background 1
PART II 5
EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE 5
2.1 Introduction 5
2.2 Purpose 7
2.3. Principles of the framework for External Quality Assurance 8
2.3.1. Principle 1: Development of personnel 9
2.3.2. Principle 2: Objectives of EQA 9
2.3.3. Principles 3: Guiding External Quality Assessment and academic audits 10
2.3.4. Principle 4: Guidelines for institutional external quality audit and assurance 11
2.4 Understanding of External Quality Assurance 13
2.5 NCHE's Understanding of External Quality Assurance 14
2.6. EQA models 15
2.7 EQA Processes 17
2.8 Funding in External Quality Assurance Agency 18
2.9 Standards for Establishment of Higher Education Institution 19
2.9.1. Standard 1: Mission and Purposes 20
2.9.2. Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation 20
2.9.3. Standard 3: Organization and Governance 20
2.9.4. Standard 4: The Academic Programme 20
2.9.5. Standard 5: Students 21
2.9.6. Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship 21

2.9.7. Standard 7: Institutional Resources 21
2.9.8. Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness 22
2.9.9. Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure 22
2.10. Curriculum Development 22
2.11. Community outreach and industry engagement 23
2.12. Review of EQA System 24
2.13. Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions 24
2.13.1. Legal Framework 24
2.13.2. Eligible Applicants 25
2.14. Institutional and Programme Accreditation 26
2.15. Establishment of higher education institutions in Malawi 27
2.16. Institutional Audit 27
..... 27
2.17. Registration of Qualifications on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework 28
2.18. Registration Process 29
2.19. Accreditation Process 30
2.19.1. Eligibility for Review 30
2.19.2. Review Process 31
2.19.3. Accreditation Cycle 33
2.20. Procedures for institutional audits 33
3.3. The relationship between internal and external quality assurance 39
2.20.1. Preparing for the institutional audit 33
2.20.2. Review Process 33
2.20.3. Consequences of institutional audits 35
2.21. Forms and templates 35
PART III 37
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE 37
3.1 Purpose 37
3.2. The understanding of quality in higher education 39
3.4. The NCHE's understanding of quality assurance in higher education 41
3.5. Purpose of quality assurance in higher education 42
3.6. The difference between external and internal quality assurance 43

3.7. Approaches to internal quality assurance 44
3.8. Setting up structures for internal quality assurance 46
3.9. Ten steps for setting up an internal quality assurance system 48
3.10. Ownership of internal quality assurance system 51
3.11. Management of internal quality assurance 52
3.12. Requirements for effective internal quality assurance system 55
3.13. Embedding a quality culture 59
3.14. Closing the quality loop 61
3.15. Conclusion 62
References 63
Glossary of terms 64
EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM 66
APPENDIX EA: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 66
APPENDIX EB: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION 82
APPENDIX EC: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT 110
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM 121
APPENDIX IA: STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS 121
APPENDIX IB: GUIDELINES FOR SELF-REVIEW 139
APPENDIX IC: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSE/TEACHING 145
APPENDIX ID: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING 151
APPENDIX IE: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR CONDUCTING GRADUATE TRACER SURVEY 159
APPENDIX IF: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEYS FOR GRADUATES 166
APPENDIX IG: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATE PROFILES 168
APPENDIX IH: GUIDELINES FOR INTEGRATING RESEARCH WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION 174
APPENDIX IJ: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION 179
APPENDIX IK: GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS 182
APPENDIX IL: PROCEDURES FOR INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT 187
APPENDIX IM: GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING 190

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Malawi 7
Figure 2: Stakeholder lenses 15
Figure 3: Curriculum Consultation Cycle 23
Figure 4: Establishment of Public Higher Education Institution 27
Figure 5: Establishment of Private Higher Education Institution 28
Figure 6: Quality Assurance Mechanisms 40
Figure 7: Deming Quality Assurance Cycle 50
Figure 8: Quality Assurance Hierarchy 53

PART I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The quality of Malawi's higher education system is critical to the achievement of national development goals, for the transformation of our society, and for producing well-rounded graduates with attributes and competencies that are personally, professionally and socially valuable. Therefore, Malawi's higher education institutions should concern itself with preparing graduates who will make a significant contribution to national development by ensuring that students are exposed, as much as possible, to opportunities that will mould them into fully rounded citizens. Such citizens will be empowered to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural advancement of the country and to be able to engage competitively in diverse activities locally, nationally, as well as globally.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are responsible for internally ensuring that their core functions of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement are of high quality. Likewise, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is responsible for external quality assurance in higher education in the country. The NCHE is committed to facilitating, coordinating and promoting sustainable and competitive development of higher education institutions by responding to challenges facing higher education. Through this endeavor, the Council is facilitating the strengthening of internal quality assurance systems of Malawi's higher education institutions. Robust internal quality assurance systems are important in enabling higher education institutions to contribute meaningfully towards the fulfilment of national and regional developmental needs.

Malawi's HEIs are at different stages of developing their internal quality assurance systems (policies and practices). For example, some HEIs have a dedicated office or unit responsible for coordinating and facilitating internal quality assurance while others are still in the planning phase. Therefore, there is need to harmonize quality assurance practices in HEIs in Malawi.

Furthermore, there is need to identify and establish internal quality assurance benchmarks for Malaw's HEIs. A common framework for internal quality assurance is, therefore, needed in view of rapid expansion of cross-border education in the region and beyond. This will help to strengthen the quality of higher education provision in Malawi's HEIs.

Against this backdrop, NCHE has developed this framework which provides a blue print for enhancing both external and internal quality assurance in Malawi's HEIs. The purpose of this Framework is to build and inculcate a culture of quality in HEIs that will results in higher education that is responsive to industry needs concerning both employment and self-employment. The framework also sets minimum quality assurance standards for HEIs in Malawi. It provides the ultimate goal to safeguard the quality of outputs against international competitors in the light of factors such as globalisation, internationalization, massification, knowledge-based economy, and the demand for the fourth industrial revolution. Similarly, it aspires to elevate the quality of education in line with international principles and guidelines provided by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) just to mention a few. To achieve this, the framework provides an overview of the establishment of robust external and internal quality assurance systems in higher education institutions.

The framework is presented in two parts; External Quality Assurance (EQA) and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). On the one hand, the EQA is based on activities supporting the IQA but managed and implemented by the regulatory bodies. On the other hand, the IQA focuses on the institutional and programmatic level quality assurance mechanisms, processes, and procedures managed and implemented by the HEIs.

1.2. The National Council for Higher Education

The NCHE is a statutory institution established by the Higher Education Act No. 15 of 2011 In line with its constituting legislation, the Council is mandated to:

a) Promote and coordinate education provided by higher education institutions

b) Register and de-register higher education institutions
c) Determine a framework for funding public higher education institutions
d) Harmonise selection of students to all public universities
e) Regulate, determine and maintain standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications, academic facilities
f) Develop a national qualification framework which is compatible with regional and international standards
g) Determine criteria and procedures for registration and de-registration of higher education institutions
h) Accredit both public and private higher education institutions;
i) Design and recommend an institutional quality assurance system for higher education;
j) Recommend to the Minister institutional quality assurance standards for the establishment, standardisation and accreditation of higher education institutions including standards of:
    i. Teaching and learning,
    ii. Infrastructure, physical plant and equipment
    iii. The development of curricula
    iv. Libraries and learning resource centres
    v. Safety of teaching and learning facilities
    vi. Student-transfer between programmes and higher education institutions.
k) Provide guidance for terms and conditions for awarding grants and scholarships to students of public higher education institutions
l) Ensure that higher education institutions have high calibre of members of staff by:
    i. Prescribing standards and maintaining minimum requirements for engagement of members of staff to all levels of higher education institutions
    ii. Advising on conditions of employment
    iii. Overseeing continuous professional development for members of staff of higher education institutions; and

iv. From time to time, prescribing, maintaining and reviewing a code of conduct of professional ethics for members of staff of higher education institutions.

m) Assess, evaluate and recognise qualifications attained at a foreign higher education institution
n) Represent interests of the Malawian higher education regionally and internationally
o) Monitor the implementation of international agreements concerning higher education
p) Promote international cooperation and facilitate exchanges of higher education
q) Advise the Minister on all matters of higher education.

PART II

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

2.1 Introduction

Malawi's External Quality Assurance System for Higher Education is premised on the provisions of the Higher Education Act No. 15 of 2011. Specifically, the Act provides for:

a) The establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and the definition of its functions and powers
b) The establishment, governance and regulation of public higher education institutions
c) Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which includes:
    i. Registration and regulation of private higher education institutions;
    ii. Registration of qualifications on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF);
    iii. Accreditation of higher education institutions; and
    iv. Accreditation of programmes.

The NCHE is also responsible for the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMI) and tracer studies. This document, however, only focuses on registration of private higher education institutions, registration of qualifications on the HEQF, and accreditation of higher education and programmes.

In Malawi, only private higher education institutions are required to be registered with the NCHE. Public HEI's are not subjected to this registration process because they are already established by their respective enabling Acts of Parliament Thus, as a concept, registration of a higher education institution with the NCHE refers to the process or act of granting a private HEI authority to operate as an HEI in the country. It is illegal for any private HEI to operate as a higher education institution without registering with the NCHE.

In contrast, however, the concept of programme registration applies to both public and private HEIs. Thus, as a concept, registration refers to the process or act through the NCHE grants an HEI authority to deliver a proposed programme of study. Practically, registration entails an HEI submitting a programme to the Council and the Council, in turn, conducting a quality assurance check of the programme to inform its decision about the programme. Once the Council establishes that the programme meets its minimum quality standards, it enters it in its register of quality assured programmes thereby permitting the concerned institution to offer the programme.

Accreditation is the process or act of recognising that an HEI, or a programme offered by it, meets minimum quality standards in terms of the physical, human, financial, teaching and learning resources; management and operational procedures and an acceptable standard of academic life focusing on teaching, research, community service and expert service in line with Section 28 of the NCHE Act No.15 of 2011. For an institution or programme to be accredited it must meet national and international quality standards of the factors outlined in Section 28(2) of the NCHE Act.

As is the case with programme registration, both private HEIs and public HIEs need to be accredited by NCHE and to have their programmes registered in HEQF. A private higher education institution that is duly registered can continue to offer a registered non-accredited programme for as long as it is making effort to have the programme attain the accreditation status. Similarly, a public higher education institution may continue to offer an HEQF registered programme that is not accredited for as long as it is working on attaining an accreditation status.

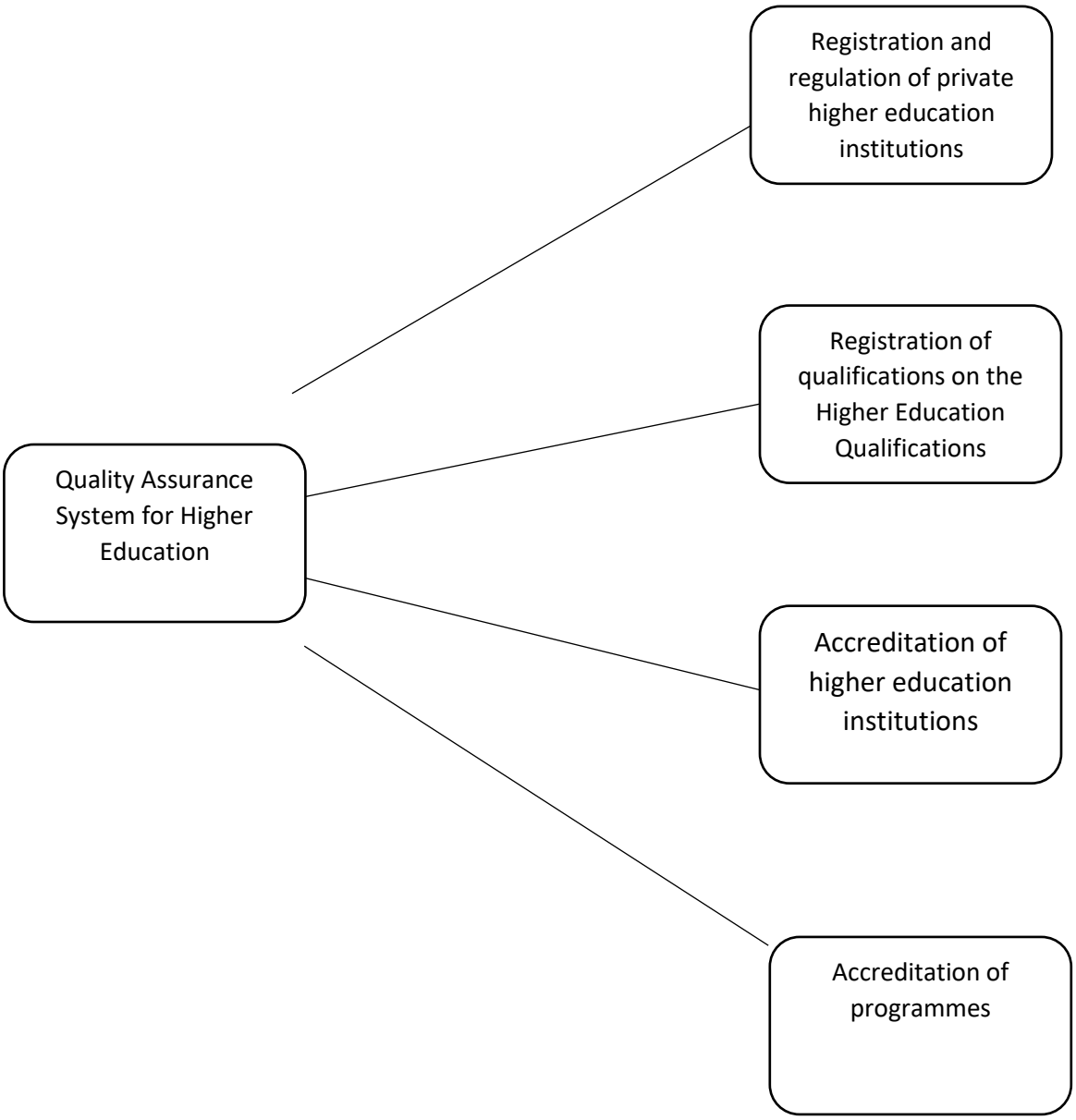

Figure 1: The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Malawi

2.2 Purpose

The main purpose of this EQA framework is to:

a) Operationalise the mandate of the NCHE as given in the NCHE Act No.15 of 2011 (g-J):

g) *To determine minimum criteria and procedure for registration and de-registration of higher education institutions*

h) *To accredit both public and private higher education institutions*

i) *To design and recommend quality assurance system for higher education*

j) *To recommend to the minister institutional quality assurance standards for the establishment, standardization and accreditation of higher education institutions, including standards of:*

   i. *Teaching and learning*

   ii. *Infrastructure, physical plant and equipment*

   iii. *The development of curricula*

   iv. *Libraries and learning resource centres*

   v. *Safety of teaching and learning facilities; and*

   vi. *Student transfer between programmes and higher education institutions.*

b) Provide a common reference point for all agencies involved as external quality assurance bodies within higher education. It shall thus provide consistency in EQA across HEIs in Malawi;

c) Provide a sphere of operation within IQA on the needs/ standards that guarantee quality. It shall thus be used by higher education institutions in Malawi to harmonise their IQA and EQA by aligning them to the proposed framework

d) Provide best practices in EQA that will be used in Malawi.

This framework is not intended to serve as a substitute of minimum standards for regulation; on the contrary, it simply complements the minimum standards.

2.3. Principles of the framework for External Quality Assurance

The framework for EQA in Malawi higher education is underpinned by the SADC Principles of External Quality Assurance, which include the following:

2.3.1. Principle 1: Development of personnel

External Quality Assurance for education and training assists individual HEI s to:

a) Develop internal quality culture and quality management systems

b) Develop and or improve the institution's quality assurance policy and system

c) Provide bases for explicit comparison of inputs, processes and outputs with other institutions within the same country or internationally (benchmarking)

d) Determine the institution's capability to offer academic programmes

e) Provide a basis for the institution's continued and increased funding by the owners and donors

f) Justify the institution's autonomy and matching public accountability

g) Check the institution's compliance with legal and other requirements

h) Provide independent information about the institution to its stakeholders, namely prospective students, employers, and financiers

i) Justify a country's quality and standards of its higher education sector as a whole.

2.3.2. Principle 2: Objectives of EQA

The external quality of an institution is normally assessed and assured by reviewers, external to the institution, and who may be appointed by the concerned institution or by an independent External Quality Assurance Agency where it exists.

External quality assurance:

a) Enables a higher education institution to assure itself, its stakeholders, the general public and the international community that its policies, systems and processes for the development, maintenance and enhancement of quality in all its educational offerings are functioning effectively

b) Provides critical information that enables the institution to acquire accreditation and to take responsibility for internal quality assurance

c) Enables providers of education to identify areas of strength and excellence as well as areas in need of improvement in the short medium and long terms

d) Provides for consistency in the adherence to established quality assurance guidelines and principles across the higher education sector and so provides a country's clear position about the role of quality assurance in the transformation and improvement of its higher education sub - sector.

2.3.3. Principles 3: Guiding External Quality Assessment and academic audits

EQA should provide guidance to assessment and audit practice as follows:

a) The primary responsibility for quality and quality assurance rests with individual higher education providers who are required to establish and sustain effective institutional quality assurance policies, systems and processes that will provide reliable information for internal planning, and improvement as well as external assessment, evaluation and academic audits.

b) The external evaluation and academic audits of institutions validate the effectiveness of internal operations and quality assurance arrangements, for the core functions of teaching and learning, research and community service and provide the institution and its stakeholders with reliable information about the validity and credibility of education processes undertaken.

c) External quality assessment and academic audits enable an institution to account, to relevant stakeholders, how effectively it is achieving its mission and objects quantitatively and qualitatively and to plan for further improvement in future.

d) Peer review is an effective way of conducting external evaluation of an institution using a group of external experts invited by an institution or sent by a QAA to conduct an

independent assessment, evaluation and validation of programme inputs, processes and outputs and the extent to which the entire institution is operating in line with the established vision, mission and objects.

2.3.4. Principle 4: Guidelines for institutional external quality audit and assurance

EQA should provide guidance to the practice of external quality audit and assurance:

a) An External Quality Assurance Agency, though autonomous, in its determination of the status of usually established and mandated by state laws, will create its own guiding and ethical principles to ensure its objectivity and fairness in all judgments made by expert reviewers appointed to visit and evaluate the status of quality in any institution.

b) Institutional external quality assurance mechanisms in the SADC Region shall:

   i. Determine in advance, the purposes and objectives of the assessment with a focus on how the procedures will be beneficial to the institution

   ii. Be dynamic, continuous and periodically renewed. It should, therefore, be undertaken in pre-determined and clearly defined and published cycles to enable institutions to prepare well for the assessment

   iii. Ensure the validity, reliability, usefulness and fitness for purpose of the defined external quality assurance objectives and mechanisms for the SADC Region

   iv. Ensure care in the selection of QA peer reviewers and specifically that the experts appointed represent different interests of the higher education sub-sector, e.g. interest of employers, professional associations, civil society, and alumni

   v. Peer reviewers selected to undertake the technical visitation, assessment and evaluation have appropriate skills and competences to perform the tasks assigned, namely academic and professional qualifications, oral and written communication skills, knowledge of and commitment to education quality

culture, freedom from conflict of interest in the assigned task and openness, objectivity and freedom from prejudices and preconceived ideas

vi. Ensure advance briefing of the selected peer reviewers, providing them with an opportunity to strategise their assignment

vii. Aim at validating the effectiveness of the institution's internal quality assurance policy and process and the findings of the internal self-study and assessment report

viii. Ensure that all judgments and decisions made by the peer review teams are based on explicit and published criteria applied consistently

ix. Recognize the importance of institutional reviews, transformation, improvement and enhancement policies and plans as fundamental and as part of the quality assurance policy

x. Ensure that the peer review reports are organised in structure, content, style and tone, are clear, and they meet the needs and expectations of the intended readership;

xi. Produce reports which clearly indicate the purpose of the review, methodology and procedures used, areas visited and persons consulted, key findings, commendations, recommendations and conclusions

xii. Be characterised by inbuilt follow–up procedures for actions taken by the institution to implement recommendations which are, normally, made in the interest of the institution and its owners

In contextualising these, NCHE will be guided by the following principles:

a) **Responsibility and accountability:** NCHE has the primary responsibility to enhance quality of higher education within its oversight role. As such it is accountable to the nation on the standards of the processes and output of the higher education system

b) **Sustainability and effectiveness:** NCHE is to propagate a sustainable and efficient system that will enable quality achievements, outcomes, and outputs within higher education

c) **International competitiveness:** NCHE has to domesticate, contextualise and share international protocols, and best practices that will enhance quality in Malawi and help the nation adopt what are considered best models that shall be internationally competitive and nationally practical

d) **Value:** NCHE is to ensure the maintenance and sustenance of value of education and its outcomes vis-à-vis the input and processes. There has to be a balance to maintain the relevance, level, and demand of education. This is what will measure its quality

e) **Fact-based decision-making:** NCHE is to ensure that policies, and decisions are based on verifiable evidence

f) **Continuous learning and improvement:** NCHE is to help higher education continuously improve and where possible inculcate a culture of self-assessment for improvement and not compliance

g) **Collaboration with partners:** NCHE is to spearhead collaboration among HEIs, regulators in higher education, and the international community for best practice sharing and continued adoption of contemporary quality enhancing

h) **Quality culture:** A quality culture should be built for self-development and not compliance

2.4 Understanding of External Quality Assurance

External Quality Assurance is generally and simply understood as assurance of quality from outside the HEI. However, the NCHE's understanding of quality is aligned with the minimum standards. So far, the assumption is the presence of expertise outside the HEI which is to support the implementation of quality assurance activities within the institution. Within the IQA, there is extensive use of external experts for review of internal processes, the use of external examiners in assessment, and the utilisation of external reviewers in accreditation,

among some. There is, therefore, need to recognise that a thin line exists between IQA and EQA.

The term EQA has, however, been largely associated with policy enforcement and regulatory aspects of quality assurance in higher education. It is associated with an existence of a regulator who oversees the implementation of IQA. To this effect, EQA is the monitoring and assessment of implementation of the IQA activities to establish whether they have been conducted in a consistent, fair, objective, and credible manner in meeting and satisfying stakeholder needs. It is, thus, both a support and a regulatory activity.

2.5 NCHE's Understanding of External Quality Assurance

NCHE understands EQA is a complementary service to IQA in ensuring the HEIs meet the set standards through implementation of procedures and mechanisms that are client relevant, desirable, nationally and internationally competitive, and professional enhancing in protecting intellectual standards and professionalism within defined parameters of the profession.

As stated earlier, NCHE's understanding is that it is a dynamic and agile concept, which implies an institutional quality assurance framework that brings about improvement, and helps the organisation engage in collective sense-making and reflection so that change can be undertaken continuously in a manner that respects the core values and role of the organisation.

The Council uses the stakeholder theory in EQA which assesses stakeholder lenses with the learner at the centre. The learner is, therefore, the ultimate beneficially of the EQA.

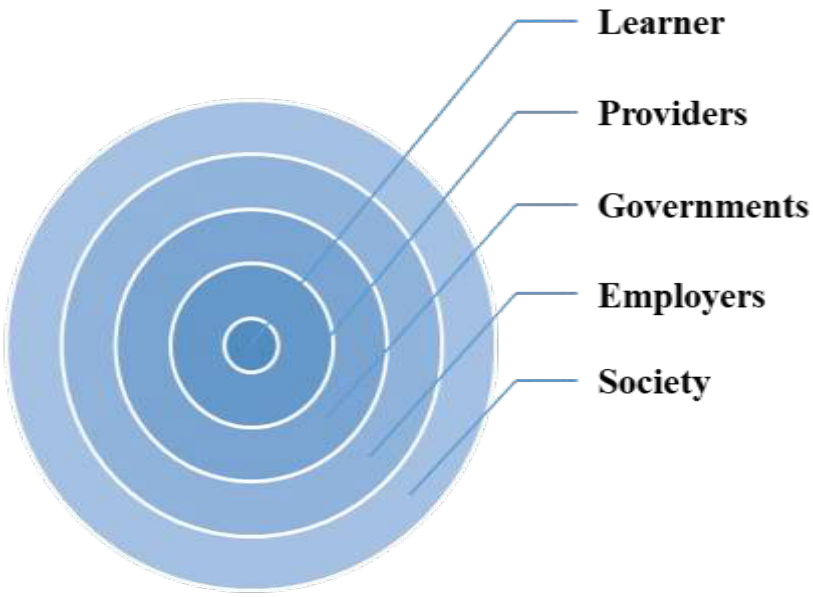

Figure 2: Stakeholder lenses

In the lenses, the provider is expected to provide quality service through IQA. The government provides the environment (both policy and regulatory) and benefits from the outcome of the system. Employers are demanders of the quality service and users of the quality product, while society, at large, benefits from improved citizenry. In other words all have a part to play and they benefit from their quality service provision.

2.6. EQA models

The most commonly used models include:

a) The international Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education(INQAAHE)
b) International Organisation for Standardization (ISO)
c) European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
d) The Common Assessment Framework
e) The European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education(ESG)
f) The OCED model

g) The Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

NCHE takes cognisance of existence of these models, however, it borrows best practices and principles only from them to building the EQA model in Malawi

The Most commonly used Good practice Guidelines (GGP) for External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA) were developed by:

a) International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE);
b) The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO)/ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development(OECD); and
c) European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

NCHE adopts the INQAAHE GGP guidelines as a benchmark for good practices. The INQAAHE's GGPs highlight the following as guidelines for good practice of QA agencies.

a) Having clarity in objective as a systematic approach to achieving them; and having an ownership and governance structure appropriate for the objectives. (GGP 1)
b) Having adequate resources, both human and financial (GGP 2)
c) Ensuring continuous quality assurance of the activities of the agency itself through internal self-review and external reviews at the regular intervals. (GGP 3)
d) Informing and responding to the public; demonstrating public accountability by reporting openly on review decisions; and reporting on its own performance. (GGP 4);
e) Respecting the autonomy, identity and integrity of the HEIs. (GGP 5)
f) Applying standards, which have been subject to consultation with stakeholders and contributing to both quality improvement and accountability. (GGP 5)
g) Documenting clearly what the agency expects of the institution. (GGP 6)
h) Documenting clearly guidelines for the self-evaluation process (GGP 7)
i) Constituting review committees in accordance with the guidelines of the agency, and including at least one external reviewer from another country or jurisdiction (GGP 8)

j) Evincing independent, impartial, rigorous practices through fair and consistent decision-making, and making consistent decisions (GGP 9)
k) Providing an appropriate method for appeals against its decision. (GGP 10)
l) Collaborating with other agencies (GGP 11)
m) Establishing policies relating to both imported and exported higher education that are the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision. (GGP 12)
n) Considering relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations on CBHE, consulting appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, where possible. (GGP 12).

With the 12 GGPs as presented above, specific goals will be used to benchmark the functions and role of NCHE. Therefore, the following are some of the activities NCHE will perform as part of EQA:

a) Sites visits to HEIs for institutional audits, registration and accreditation
b) Institutional reviews/evaluation
c) Holding workshops on strategic issues such as development of institutional effectiveness unit and operation, and insistence of adherence to quality measures
d) Disseminating information on registration and accreditation status of programmes and institutions to the public
e) Disseminating best practices to HEIs
f) Engaging of external Quality Assurance (QA) Agencies, and external reviewers
g) Building capacity for institutions in quality assurance.

2.7 EQA Processes

In implementation of EQA, NCHE adopts the standard processes for EQA, which include:

a) Spot checks
b) Institutional self-assessment
c) Site visits
d) Reports

e) Registration and Accreditation (stages inclusive)

f) Follow ups

2.8 Funding in External Quality Assurance Agency

Financial resources to run the agency are an important consideration. Any QAA has three main components of expenditure:

a) Expenses related to the administration of the processes, including all expenses related to the running of the agency, e.g. staff salaries, facilities, and development of materials

b) Expenses related to the external review. These may include fees for the external reviewers (although not all systems pay their reviewers), travel and living expenses, and other related items

c) Expenses related to the agency development; staff and studies.

When the QAA agency is a government initiative set up to serve government functions, funding will, generally, come from the government. If the agency is owned by the HEIs themselves, funding for the accrediting body and process might come from the institutions themselves. While QAA free is from government initiatives and HEIs, such as the many international quality assurance bodies that function as NGOs and professional accreditation bodies, funding will come from the fees they charge for the assessment services.

In the light of these different cases and the expenditures associated with running of an agency, there exists different funding schemes which can function separately or as a combination of two or all of them:

a) Government funding: In government-initiated systems, government will provide at least the initial funding. It will pay at least part of the expenses related to the running of the agency

a) Fees from HEIs: The institutions will pay for the services received. This payment shall cover all expenses related to the external review, plus the cost of training activities where applicable

b) Service payment: Income received by the agency for services rendered to institutions or organisations other than those applying for accreditation. These other sources of income may be conferences, workshops, consultancies, etc.

2.9 Standards for Establishment of Higher Education Institution

The standards criteria for establishment of HEI include the following:

a) Registration as a legal entity
b) Premises and availability of physical resources
c) Organization and governance
d) Administrative and academic staffing
e) Student body and student support services
f) Programmes of study and courses of study
g) Teaching and learning
h) Examination and assessment
i) Quality assurance mechanism, student supervision
j) Budget and finance

Each of the standards articulates a dimension of institutional quality. In applying the standards, NCHE assesses and makes a determination about the effectiveness of the institution as a whole. The institution that meets the standards:

a) Has clearly defined purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning
b) Has assembled and organized those resources necessary to achieve its purposes
c) Is achieving its purposes
d) Has the ability to continue to achieve its purposes

NCHE adopts and applies nine standard criteria for accreditation of institutions: mission and purposes, planning and evaluation; organization and governance; the academic programme; students; teaching, learning, and scholarship; institutional resources; standard eight education effectiveness; and integrity, transparency, and public disclosure, which are described below:

2.9.1. Standard 1: Mission and Purposes

The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of NCHE on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness

2.9.2. Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation to find ways of improving the accomplishment its mission and goals. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively. The institution demonstrates its success in strategic, academic, financial, and other resource planning and the evaluation of its educational effectiveness.

2.9.3. Standard 3: Organization and Governance

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organisational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate, research and creative activity. It demonstrates administrative capacity by assuring provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organisational component. The institution has sufficient independence from any other entity to enable it to be held accountable in its efforts to meet NCHE's Standards for Accreditation.

2.9.4. Standard 4: The Academic Programme

The institution's academic programs are consistent with its mission and purposes and endeavour to fulfil them. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution sets a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded and develops the systematic

means to understand how and what students are learning and to, in turn, use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

2.9.5. Standard 5: Students

Consistent with its mission, the institution sets and achieves realistic goals to enrol students who are broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve. The institution addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity among its students and provides a safe environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It endeavours to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their educational program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterised by integrity.

2.9.6. Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

The institution supports teaching and learning through well-qualified faculty and academic staff, who, through structures and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning. Scholarship, research, and creative activities receive support appropriate to the institution's mission. The institution's faculty has primary responsibility for advancing the institution's academic purposes through teaching, learning, and scholarship.

2.9.7. Standard 7: Institutional Resources

The institution has sufficient human, financial, information, physical and technological resources and capacity to support its mission. Through periodic evaluation, the institution demonstrates that its resources are sufficient to sustain the quality of its educational program and to support institutional improvement at present and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates, through verifiable internal and external evidence, its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its resources in an ethical

manner and assures effective systems of enterprise risk management, regulatory compliance, internal controls, and contingency management.

2.9.8. Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by ensuring satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes. Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful evidence about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and improvement, resource allocation, and to inform the public about the institution. Student achievement is at a level appropriate for the degree awarded.

2.9.9. Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

The institution subscribes to and advocates for high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. Through its policies and practices, the institution endeavours to exemplify the values it articulates in its mission and related statements. In presenting the institution to students, prospective students, and other members of the public, the institutional website provides information that is complete, accurate, timely, readily accessible, clear, and sufficient for intended audiences to make informed decisions about the institution.

2.10. Curriculum Development

Curriculum developed by HEI should be demand-driven and should follow professional standards given by the industry. In this case curriculum development should have evidence of demand for viability of the program, and safeguarding the employability of graduates of that program. This, therefore, calls for a thorough consultative process in development of any curriculum. The consultation can go in cycles depending on the satisfactory results of the outcome of consultative process.

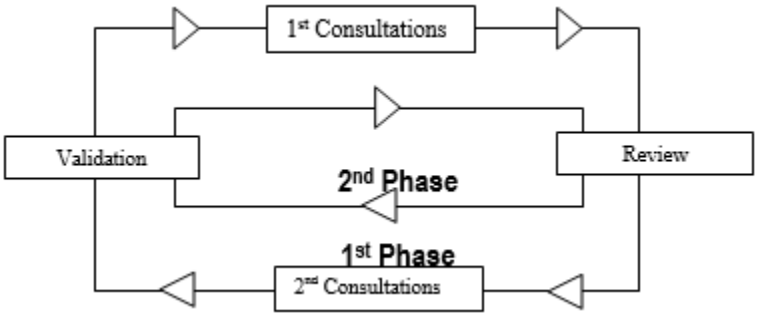

Figure 3: Curriculum Consultation Cycle

The curriculum being developed should, therefore, be validated by a group of those who have not been part of the developers. There are four standard stages for creation of academic programmes and curricula.

Step I: Developing statement of Expected Learning (programme) Outcomes (ELO) in an articulated manner

Step II: Designing Learning Experiences (LE) to provide opportunities to students to achieve Learning Outcomes developed during Step I

Step III: Implementing effective measures of student achievements of pre-defined Learning Outcomes through systematic Assessment of Student Learning

Step IV: Using the Student Assessment Results for continued teaching and learning improvement

NCHE has a provisional standard format for curriculum development which can be accessed and requested as part of guidelines for institutional curriculum development.

2.11. Community outreach and industry engagement

HEIs are encouraged to engage in community outreach programmes as part of their social responsibility, and to also have industrial engagement arrangements (institution-industry collaboration) in both professional and academic programmes which will both assist students and those involved in teaching and further benefit the industry.

A higher education institution should not only be responsible for teaching, learning and research, but also for serving society. The institution should ensure that community engagement activities are conducted within institutional policies and strategies that facilitate collaboration between the institution and its larger communities (local, national, regional, continental and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

For the benefit of the students, institution, and society, the institution incorporates community engagement in its activities, with the objective of:

a) Enriching scholarship, research, and creative activities
b) Enhancing teaching and learning
c) Facilitating preparation of educated and engaged citizens
d) Strengthening democratic values and civic responsibility in students
e) Addressing critical societal issues and contribute to public good

2.12. Review of EQA System

The EQA system being implemented by NCHE shall be subject to review when the Council feels it has to be reviewed, or when stakeholders widely express dissatisfaction with the system, or as a response to contemporary changes. The review shall cover quality assurance tools, systems, procedures, mechanisms, reporting and coordination structures developed and being implemented by NCHE.

2.13. Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions

2.13.1. Legal Framework

Section 19(1) of the Higher Education Act of 2011 provides that “no person other than a public higher education institution or organ of state shall provide higher education unless that person is registered or provisionally registered as a private higher education institution”. All private higher education institutions have due responsibility to apply for registration, and meet all the requirements of registration as per the requirements of the enabling Act.

2.13.2. Eligible Applicants

An application for registration by a private HEI shall be made to NCHE by submitting to the Chief Executive Officer a prescribed form accompanied by a prescribed fee and any documentation in support of the application as the NCHE may request. The Council shall evaluate an application and verify its suitability and, in turn, register the institution as a higher education institution once found to be meeting minimum quality standards. The Council shall register an institution as a private higher education institution if it is satisfied that:

a) The institution is a body corporate
b) The institution or the facilities to be provided by that institution are suitable and meet the minimum quality standards for higher education as set by NCHE
c) The institution is financially capable of satisfying its obligations to prospective students
d) The teaching staff to be employed by the institution is of quality that shall enable the it to provide standard education not less than the minimum standards set by NCHE
e) The institution shall ensure that no person is discriminated against on account of race, HIV, gender, physical; disability or other status in respect of:
    i. The admission of students;
    ii. The recruitment of staff
f) The establishment of a higher education institution is in the interest of higher education in Malawi

The NCHE may issue a provisional registration status if evaluation has identified some concerns until such a time an institution is fully registered in terms of subsection (8) of the enabling Act (Act No. 15 of 2011). A provisional; registration certificate (valid up to a period of one year cycle from the date of issue) will authorise a private higher education institution to:

a) Set up a governing body for the proposed institution;
b) Commence or continue to develop physical facilities and mobilize financial and human resources;
c) Commence or continue to assemble academic resources; and

d) Publicize the institution's programmes expected to be offered at the institution.

Students shall not be admitted to an HEI while the institution holds a provisional certificate. Before the expiry of a provisional registration certificate, a private higher education institution shall apply for final registration by submitting to the Chief Executive Officer the application in the prescribed form accompanied by the prescribed fee and any document as may be required.

If NCHE, after considering the application and upon carrying out an inspection of the institution, is satisfied that the provisionally registered institution has fulfilled the terms and conditions under the provisional certificate, it shall make recommendations to the Minister for approval of final registration and further that a Charter be granted to the institution concerned.

If, after receiving the recommendations, the Minister considers that the establishment of the institution will further the development of higher education in Malawi, he/she may approve the final registration and grants the institution a Charter and, thereafter, he/she shall publish a notice in the Gazette, the terms of the registration and the Charter. NCHE shall keep the register of all registered private higher education institutions in Malawi. Private HEIs may apply to NCHE for amendment of their Charters.

2.14. Institutional and Programme Accreditation

Both public and private HEIS shall apply for institutional accreditation with NCHE. An HEIs that is found to be meeting minimum quality standards, through evaluation, shall be granted accreditation status and shall be issued a certificate of accreditation.

Apart from institutional accreditation, all programmes offered by a public HEI or private HEI shall be accredited by NCHE. In the case of professional programmes, such programmes must also meet accreditation requirements of their relevant professional bodies.

2.15. Establishment of higher education institutions in Malawi

Public higher education institutions are established by their enabling Acts of Parliament while private higher education institutions are established by private individuals or organisations and duly register with NCHE.

Foreign higher education institutions seeking to establish campuses of branches in Malawi shall also seek registration with NCHE. All higher education institutions (public and private) shall be required to be accredited and obtain the accreditation of their programmes by NCHE. This process of establishment of higher education institutions in Malawi is illustrated in Figure 4.

2.16. Institutional Audit

NCHE shall, for purposes of ensuring compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, and verification of information provided by the applicant, conduct an Institutional Audit of the concerned HEI.

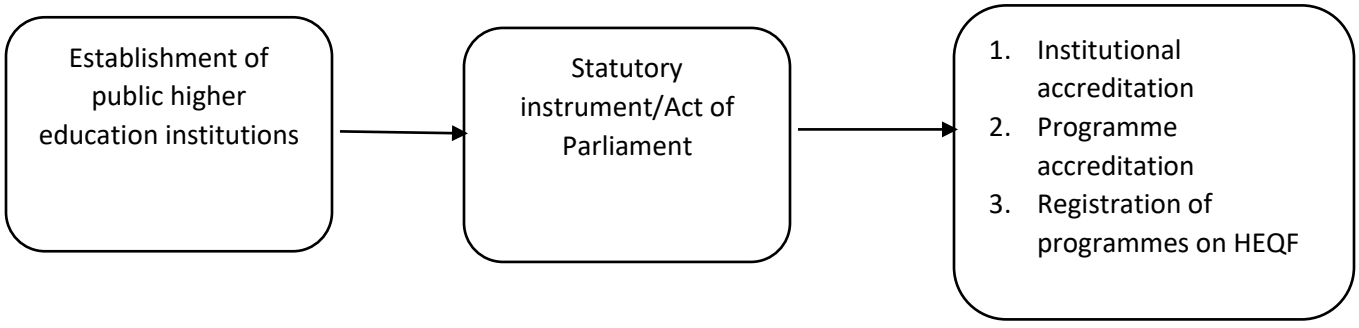

Figure 4: Establishment of Public Higher Education Institution

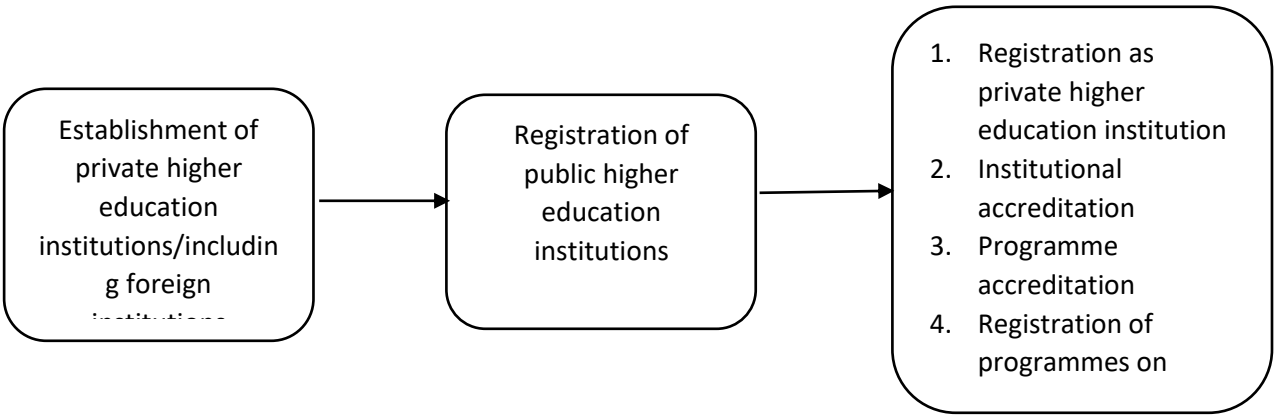

Figure 5: Establishment of Private Higher Education Institution

2.17. Registration of Qualifications on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework

Under NCHE, Malawi has established the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) which has 10 levels. The HEQF is an instrument for the development, classification and recognition of knowledge, skills and competencies along a continuous series of agreed levels. It is a comprehensive system for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications. It is a way of structuring existing and new qualifications, which are defined by learning outcomes. The scope of the HEQF comprehensively covers all learning achievements and pathways. The HEQF provides a basis for improving the quality, accessibility, linkages and public or labour market recognition of qualifications within Malawi and internationally.

Malawi's HEQF has been designed to provide:

a) Quality assured, nationally recognized consistent training standards and qualifications
b) Recognition and credit for knowledge and skills acquired

This means that all qualifications (certificates, diplomas, degrees) which will be nationally recognised as having the necessary knowledge, skills and competence components will belong to the Qualifications Framework. These qualifications will be registered in the HEQF.

A credit is equal to ten (10) notional hours. Notional hours, for example, have been established for the post-secondary/further and higher education level and not for General Education. A minimum number of notional hours has been set for the qualification types to provide some flexibility in the design and implementation of programmes. Hours rather than days or weeks are used to take into consideration the different course implementation modalities. The shortest allowable length for the implementation of a qualification on the map is 1200 hours, amounting to 120 credits. In other words, the minimum number of credits for a qualification is one hundred and twenty (120).

2.18. Registration Process

Step 1: Submission of Application

An institution which is ready to apply for registration shall complete an application form that shall be accompanied by documents stipulated by this Criteria and Guidelines. Application documents shall be checked for completeness against a Registration & Accreditation Checklist, and a payment invoice prepared to enable the applicant to pay for the application.

Step 2: Acknowledgement of receipt of application

The Authority shall acknowledge receipt of complete application and capture it on its database.

Step 3: Desk Evaluation

The Authority shall conduct a desk evaluation of application documents to establish whether the application meets specific requirements, and may request for additional information from the applicant.

Step 4: Appointment of Validation Team

The Authority shall appoint a Validation Team to undertake validation at the institution. A validation report shall be produced for consideration by the NCHE.

Step 5: Consideration of the report

The recommendation shall be processed through the Authority's review and decision-making structures.

Step 6: Decision of registration and accreditation

Following consideration of recommendation, relevant structure within the NCHE shall make the decision, and the applicant shall be notified about the decision. Where registration, accreditation or provisional accreditation has been granted a certificate shall be issued to the applicant within prescribed time.

Step 7: Appeals (when deemed necessary)

An applicant may submit a letter of appeal within 14 days of receipt of the decision letter in line with NCHE Appeals Procedure. All appeals shall be submitted to the Council as a governance body for NCHE. In the event that an application is not successful the applicant shall be at liberty to seek the view of the court concerning the outcome.

Step 8: Post Registration and Accreditation Activities

To maintain its registration and accreditation, an institution must continue to comply with the Act and the Regulations. The primary responsibility for managing compliance lies with the institution itself as part of its on-going self-assessment.

2.19. Accreditation Process

2.19.1. Eligibility for Review

These standards will be used to review any existing or new higher education programme offered via the conventional face-to-face mode of learning, including professional programmes.

They will also be used to evaluate the capacity of an institution/provider to offer accredited franchise programmes.

2.19.2. Review Process

Step 1: An Institution writes a Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

This is a process whereby an institution/provider critically reviews the quality of its provisions against a set of Minimum Accreditation Standards. An institutions/tuition provider is required to provide candid and honest feedback. This process is expected to take up to 6 months.

Step 2: NCHE appoints a Review panel

To ensure objectivity, the panel members appointed by NCHE should be external to the programme to be reviewed so that there is no conflict of interest. The choice of the members of the review panel must be informed by merit. Candidates serving on the panel should be qualified by discipline and/or experience. Members should be identified from peers involved in tuition of similar programmes, professional bodies and the industry. The report submitted by the institution/provider should be accorded an appropriate level of confidentiality.

Step 3: Full Review

This entails the Review Panel undertaking the initial assessment of the institution/tuition provider's SER. There is a prior briefing of the Review panel concerning expectations and how to conduct the exercise. A panel of at least 4 reviewers evaluates the programme by reading the SER together with supporting documents. Following this, a site visit is conducted to meet with faculty, staff and students and to verify the contents on the SER. This review applies to existing programmes or proposed programmes to be offered by existing institutions/tuition providers.

Step 4: Desk Review

This entails the Review panel undertaking a desk-based analysis of documentation. A panel of at least 4 reviewers evaluates the programme by reading the SER together with supporting documents and, in turn, compiles a review report without having conducted a site visit. All new

programmes submitted by providers who have filed for registration will normally be subjected to a desk review.

Step 5: Site Visit

This entails the Review panel going to the institution/provider to meet with faculty, staff and students to verify the claims made in the SER. The size and complexity of the institution/provider will determine the length of the site visit which ranges from 1 to 3 days. During the visit, the team uses NCHE minimum standards as reference points to scrutinise the institution/tuition provider's ability to meet the requirements and to comparing the SER against the physical evidence observed during the site visit. A interviews with key stakeholders are also conducted to triangulate the data collected.

For re-accreditation or second review, the panel examines the extent to which the institution/provider has addressed recommendations made during the last review and whether the institution/provider continues to meet minimum standards.

Step 6: Production of Review Report

Moderation and finalisation of expert judgement of the review panel are contained in a report which is written within two weeks after the site visit. This judgement should be premised on evidence, highlighting the strengths of the programme or institution/tuition provider, and areas for improvement and enhancement. A draft report is sent to the institution or provider to enable identification and correction of factual errors before a final report is produced.

Step 7: Accreditation Decision

Accreditation is based on the following outcomes:

a) When all of the assessment areas are rated good: **Accredited**
b) When most of assessment areas are rated good and some satisfactory: **Accredited with conditions**
c) When one or more of the assessment areas is rated poor: **Not accredited**

2.19.3. Accreditation Cycle

Programme accreditation will follow periodic review cycles as determined by NCHE.

2.20. Procedures for institutional audits

2.20.1. Preparing for the institutional audit

An Institution should commit itself to developing a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance, and should strive for continuous quality enhancement. As far as possible, preparations for an institutional audit should be integrated into the life of the institution to foster the development of a self-critical, reflective institution.

When an institution receives confirmation from NCHE concerning the date of the audit it should share the information with all members and with its Council. In turn, the institution should articulate a critical path for the development of the institutional audit portfolio and the approval thereof by Senate and the Council.

2.20.2. Review Process

Step 1: The institutional portfolio

The compilation of a self-evaluation report, together with clearly referenced supporting documentation, is referred to as the institutional portfolio, and is the first step in the process of preparation for the audit. The self-evaluation report is an exhaustive critical appraisal of the institution's quality assurance mechanisms against the NCHE's audit criteria.

In order to facilitate the development of the report, it is necessary for the institution to appoint a team/committee that shall have oversight of the process and ensure that the critical path is adhered to. This oversight committee shall appoint individuals or groups of individuals who will have responsibility for addressing specific criteria and writing an evaluative report pertaining to these criteria. The committee shall also identify a small, two-person team that will be responsible for triangulating all the reports and supporting documents, and for writing the final self-evaluation report.

The oversight committee provides guidelines for the submission of reports and for the referencing of supporting documentation. On receiving all the reports from the various individuals and/or groups, the committee collates the information and the appointed team begins to write the self-evaluation report. The report and the relevant supporting documents (evidence) are bound into one portfolio. The portfolio should first be approved by the Senate (or similar body) of the institution and then the Council, before it is sent to NCHE.

Step 2: Appointment of the audit panel by the NCHE

The composition and size of the audit panel are critical to the process. The NCHE appoints an independent audit panel that comprises experts in higher education issues. Experts are drawn from other higher education institutions in Malawi, the SADC region, or elsewhere. The size of the panel should not be large so as not to overwhelm the institution. Panel members should be appointed on the basis of their expertise and experience in higher education nationally and internationally. Such expertise should include teaching and learning, quality management, research, governance and management, and community engagement. Audit panel members will be trained by NCHE to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the audit. NCHE shall develop a database of trained auditors who could serve on audit panels.

Step 3: The site visit by the audit panel

Prior to the site visit, the audit panel shall convene a meeting to discuss the institutional portfolio and evaluate it against the NCHE criteria for institutional audits. The panel will thus identify areas that it wishes to explore further and additional documentation that it requires from the institution.

During the site visit, the panel shall use the audit criteria to verify statements made by the institution in the self-evaluation report. The process shall employ the strategy of document analysis combined with analysis of feedback from stakeholder interviews. The panel shall triangulate the outcomes of these processes with the outcomes of the panel's initial discussion (prior to the site visit) and determine whether NCHE's criteria have been met.

Step 4: The audit panel's report

Upon concluding its deliberations, the panel shall write a comprehensive report about its findings reflecting international best practices for writing audit reports. The report should be clear and user-friendly, and should include the outcomes of evaluation reflecting relevant criteria. The report should clearly indicate the rationale for the conclusions and/or recommendations made in it and should document the evidence that was available or absent in support of the findings. This shall facilitate the identification of errors of fact and errors of interpretation by the institution. Panel reports contain a list of commendations and recommendations. In the case of serious issues, such recommendations could be linked to timeframes specified in the report.

2.20.3. Consequences of institutional audits

The focus of NCHE's institutional audit system is on quality improvement. Accordingly, institutional audits are not "passed" or "failed". The outcomes of an institutional audit are formulated as commendations and recommendations to the institution concerned.

2.21. Forms and templates

NCHE has developed standard forms and templates to be used in EQA. These include:

i. Assessment Form for Higher Education Institutions
ii. Evaluation Form for Accreditation of Institutions and Programmes
iii. Accreditation Evaluation Framework
iv. Evaluation Form for Accreditation of Programmes
v. Assessment Form for Higher Education Institutions (Satellite Campus)
vi. Assessment of New Programmes
vii. Assessment Form for Higher Education Institutions (Open and Distance Learning)
viii. Procedures for the Production And Issuing of Registration and Accreditation Certificates
ix. Information for Institutional/Programme Assessment
x. Template for the Charter
xi. The Registration and Accreditation Process

xii. Template for Annual Reports/Institutional Audits

PART III

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

3.1 Purpose

Internal quality assurance (IQA) systems shall be designed in line with the requirements of external quality assurance (EQA) system as stipulated in the Higher Education Act of 2011); and provisions for the Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Malawi.

The main purpose of this IQA framework is to:

a) Provide a common frame of reference that will assist and guide higher education institutions in Malawi when designing, establishing, evaluating, maintaining, renewing and reviewing their internal quality assurance system
b) Be used by higher education institutions in Malawi to harmonise their internal quality assurance systems by aligning them to the proposed framework
c) Provide for consistency in internal quality assurance systems across higher education institutions in Malawi, taking cognizance of institutional type, size, and context

The framework is **not** intended to:

a) Prescribe how HEI's are to carry out their work or run their organisations
b) Be a 'how to' manual for HEI's on the establishment of internal quality assurance procedures. Rather it is a guideline for IQA system development and implementation. Nevertheless, this system developed must be in line with the expectations of NCHE and relevant professional bodies.

The Framework for Internal Quality Assurance in Malawi's HEI's is underpinned by the following principles (ISO, 9000:2000):

a) **Responsibility and accountability:** The primary responsibility for programme and institutional quality rests with HEI's themselves and NCHE plays an oversight role

b) **Sustainability and effectiveness:** HEIs should seek to establish and sustain effective mechanisms to facilitate the offering of education of quality

c) **Process approach:** HEIs must adopt a process approach to the development and implementation of quality assurance system. Quality should be embedded in all processes; and these processes should be mapped so that it is clear how quality is implemented

d) **Customer focus:** All institutional processes should focus on delivering quality products and services to meet customer expectation, both internally and externally

e) **Total optimisation:** Systems approach to quality assurance should enable each operational process to achieve its objectives

f) **Leadership commitment:** When leaders are actively involved and support quality initiatives, the chances are better that high quality will be observed. Senior leadership at all levels should provide visionary leadership by establishing the vision, creating policy to realize the vision, and leading higher education institutions in responding promptly to change in the education environment

g) **Evidence-based decision-making:** HEIs should ensure that decisions affecting learning are taken based on an analysis of using statistical data and scientific evidence, and not convenient speculation

h) **Stakeholder involvement:** All stakeholders should be empowered and developed to play an active role in delivering quality educational services. This is the most effective and efficient way for HEIs to achieve their objectives by involving everybody and making maximum use of people's competencies, wisdom, skills, and creativity

i) **Continuous improvement:** HEIs' management and all staff should be open to identify opportunities for improving the quality of educational services

j) **Collaboration with partners:** This is important for mutual benefit and obtaining optimal wisdom, skills, and creativity to achieve learner value

k) **Quality culture:** This emerges from the commitment to the principles of quality by all stakeholders through teamwork and interdepartmental cooperation

3.2. The understanding of quality in higher education

Quality is a contested and complex concept. The concept quality assurance is used to describe the enhancement of education and training provision and the standards attained by students. It is a term, generally, used to describe the processes that seek to ensure that the learning environment (including teaching and research) reaches an acceptable threshold.

Typically, Quality Assurance System is an all-embracing term referring to a continuous process to preserve set standards of the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. In the Malawian context, quality assurance refers to all those planned and systematic actions that have been put in place (policies, procedures, processes, mechanisms and approaches) necessary to provide adequate confidence that quality is being maintained and enhanced.

3.3. The relationship between internal and external quality assurance

Despite the fact that internal quality assurance and external quality assurance seem to be separate entities a thin line exists between activities that exclusively pertain to internal quality assurance and to external quality assurance respectively. Therefore, the two systems overlap a lot to the extent that each one of them may be considered an aspect of the other. This relationship can be diagrammatically summarised as follows:

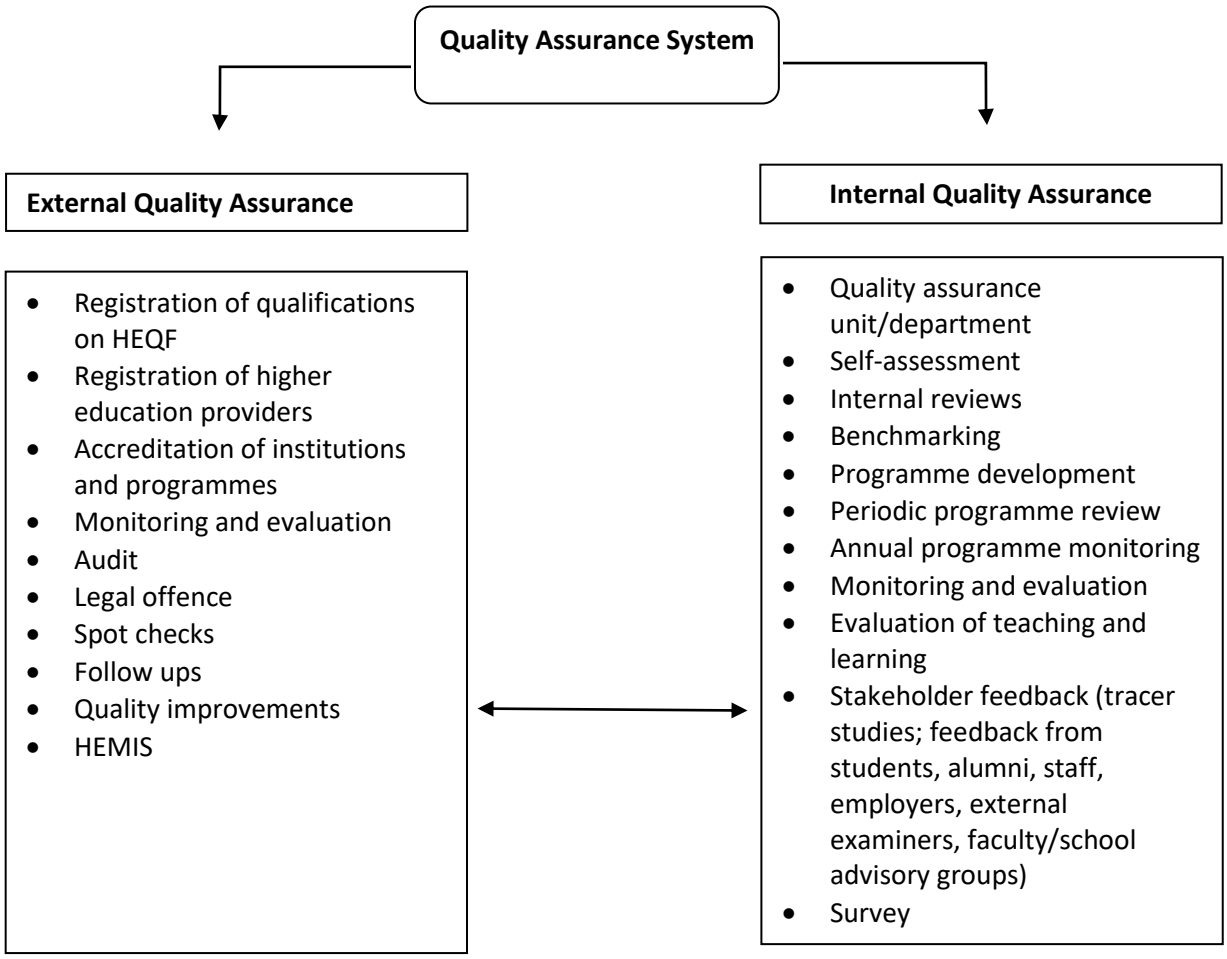

Figure 6: Quality Assurance Mechanisms

Internal and external quality assurance should be seen as complementary approaches rather than conflicting ones. Therefore, to ensure seamless and harmonised systems, higher education institutions need to assure and enhance their core activities of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement through effective alignment of internal and external quality assurance. The rationale for aligning internal and external quality assurance is to increase the overall effectiveness of the quality assurance and to provide a clearer focus on the purpose of constituent parts in question.

3.4. The NCHE's understanding of quality assurance in higher education

NCHE's conceptualisation of quality is an adaptation of some of the concepts that are widely used in quality assurance literature internationally. Harvey and Green (1993) identified five different conceptions of educational quality which are still relevant to date: quality as exceptional, quality as perfection, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value for money and quality as transformation. Some of these are absolute, while others are relative. NCHE's conceptualisation of quality is informed by three of these; fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation.

While Harvey and Green (1993) had conceptualised quality as the transformation of the student as an individual, the NCHE's extrapolated the term to mean the transformation of an institution in a particular social context. In such a view, a quality institution would be one that; taking inequality HEIs in Malawi into account, transforms itself in such a way that it adds great value to the learning of individuals, enhances greatly the present knowledge, skills and abilities in the country, and develops an identity and a purpose that fulfils social justice imperatives and is fully appropriate to the Malawi context. Furthermore, a quality institution would itself be empowered through taking on the responsibility for the kind of education it offers, becoming self-aware of its goals and purposes, and monitoring its own quality. Particularly important would be for it to define its own purpose, with reference not to uncritically accepted notions of purpose, but to existing social realities, identifying where value needs to be added.

The NCHE's concept of quality, in light of the above, is a multi-faceted one: fitness for purpose focuses on how well an institution conducts its functions determined by the outcomes of that institution. This will result into value for value for client. Therefore, in the Malawi context, value for money relates to the efficiency and effectiveness of an institution's functioning, while transformation relates to the appropriateness of purpose, identity and role of an institution. Quality is, therefore, a dynamic concept. In its implementation it focuses not only on the

means, but an institutional quality assurance system that brings about improvement, and "helps the organisation engage in collective sense-making. The improvement should, however, not end with a single achievement, rather the quality improvement should be undertaken continuously in a manner that respects the core values and role of the organisation. To this effect, therefore, elements of the framework need to ensure that the organisation has the information needed to manage its resources and activities effectively. However, the focus needs to be on the qualities of the outcomes being achieved and far less on the change mechanisms being used, as is the case in the transformation notion of quality.

3.5. Purpose of quality assurance in higher education

When planning and designing internal quality assurance systems, it is important for higher education institutions to identify the function and purpose of such systems. There are various purposes of internal quality assurance such as:

a) Institutional performance assessment
b) Institutional learning
c) Improvement of academic activities
d) Improvement of management
e) Equitable resource allocation
f) Compliance with external standards
g) Accountability to government and society.

According to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) of South Africa, understanding the purpose of quality assurance influences the way institutions set up their internal quality assurance practices. Although there are many purposes of internal quality assurance, accountability and improvement are the two main ones (CHE, 2017).

a) **Quality assurance for accountability**

   In this view, the purpose of quality assurance is linked to the need to provide the public with information and certify that the expectations, required minimum thresholds/standards or goals in higher education have been met. Government through

NCHE or professional bodies may use quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate the quality and as an instrument to demonstrate efficiency in spending to both public and private HIEs. A quality assurance system also serves to reassure internal and external stakeholders of maintaining acceptable standards of quality. Accreditation focuses more on this purpose of quality assurance (CHE, 2017).

b) **Quality assurance for improvement**

The improvement or enhancement purpose of quality assurance focuses more on institutional internal audience. Instead of relying on the once-off certificate confirming that the quality standards have been met through accreditation, the quality assurance process serves as a more forward thinking cycle for continuous improvement. In this view, the quality assurance system acknowledges both strengths and weaknesses and recommend paths leading to quality improvement. Internal and external evaluations in this quality assurance approach are often in the form of recommendations rather than a pass or fail result (CHE, 2017).

If quality assurance is understood as the means to ensure compliance and accountability to external quality assurance agencies, HEI's should to take a managerial approach intended to satisfy external agency. If it is understood as a tool for enhancement and continuous improvement, internal quality assurance is more likely to take a collegial and facilitative approach intended for improvement.

3.6. The difference between external and internal quality assurance

In Malawi's context, the quality assurance system is characterized by external and internal quality assurance systems.

a) **External quality assurance:** External quality assurance concerns regulations, policies and practices that take place at the national higher education system level to assure quality of higher education programmes and institutions. In the Malawi context, is a dedicated

regulatory authority, namely NCHE responsible for assuring quality of higher education institutions and/or programmes

b) **Internal quality assurance:** Internal quality assurance encompasses all the activities that an HEI should carry out internally in order to maintain and improve their quality. In other words, internal quality assurance refers to the internal policies and mechanisms that an HEI has put in place for ensuring that it is fulfilling its purposes as well as meeting the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline. Internal quality assurance is based on the principle that HEI's have a primary responsibility for quality provision and assurance.

Internal quality assurance is built on an understanding that:

a) **Internal:** Full responsibility to the institutions
b) **Institutional:** Related to strategy and capacity for change
c) **Programmatic:** Relevance and meeting of stakeholder needs and demands
d) For **enhancement** purposes (and not for judgement or ranking
e) Emphasis on building a **quality culture** within the institution community

3.7. Approaches to internal quality assurance

The cornerstone for internal quality assurance systems is self-review or self-assessment (self-assessment, self-study or self-evaluation). Self-reviews are carried out by higher education institutions as part of their internal quality assurance but it is also closely linked with, and forms a foundation for the external quality assurance process. Self-assessment enables the institution to check how it is achieving its strategic mission and goals, and it allows it to prepare an action plan for further development. This is done at institutional, divisional and programme levels, hence its being a fundamental element in quality assurance systems.

It is expected that all higher education institutions conduct self-assessment (typically known as self-review). This has a long tradition and is widely practised at institutional, divisional and programme levels.

d) Higher education institutions, through their internal quality assurance structures, should:

   i. Conduct periodic reviews of the quality management system, according to their needs, to assess the effectiveness of the quality management system in fulfilling objectives and satisfying requirements
   ii. The review of the quality management system should include the scheduled periodic review of the institutional and support systems, student satisfaction, assessment criteria, evaluation results, documented improvements and design and development review when new curriculum is instituted
   iii. Outputs from reviews should provide data for strategic planning to promote performance improvement of the quality management system
   iv. Recommendations from quality reviews should be converted to quality improvement plans, and these should be implemented;
   v. Outputs from the review of the quality management system should be recorded and communicated to all members of institutions including students; and
   vi. The complexity and criticality of institutional services and associated structure or support services are significant factors that should be considered in determining the frequency of a quality management system's review.

b) Higher education institutions should:

   i. Implement corrective and preventive actions from internal review feedback to ensure, maintain and continuously improve the quality of educational service
   ii. Monitor and evaluate the effective implementation of improvement action plans derived from internal reviews. These should also include improvement actions drawn from external reviews and accreditation audits
   iii. Document methods used to monitor and evaluate the implementation plans developed from the internal and external reviews

3.8. Setting up structures for internal quality assurance

Notwithstanding NCHE's overall responsibility for ensuring quality at national level, quality and its assurance is the primary responsibility of every HEI. Against this background, every higher education institution, public or private, is expected to establish a robust and adequately resourced internal quality assurance system.

Every institution is expected to have an office for quality assurance. The basic structure for setting up a quality assurance system consists of what may seem right, feasible, and appropriate for the institution; directorate, department or a unit of quality assurance whose officer shall be a senior personnel with an overall responsibility for quality assurance in the institution. The holder of the office shall be at the level of management and should be conversant with quality assurance procedures. The quality assurance personnel in liaison with management shall set up a coordinating committee in which the key players are member representative of the defined set by the institution to better carry out the quality assurance function. In this committee, all matters concerning the quality issues should be discussed and a systematic approach of addressing them should be developed.

Apart from the quality assurance director or coordinator, higher education institutions must put in place all necessary quality assurance practitioners and administrative/support staff. These quality assurance practitioners must receive training in matters pertaining to quality assurance in higher education to be able to effectively perform their duties. In addition, in order to ensure that as much as possible quality is entrenched as best practice, higher education institutions may consider assigning faculty advisors who will monitor and follow up on quality related issues raised during departmental reviews, represent the faculty at quality assurance unit meetings and workshops, and report back and facilitate implementation of such issues at the faculty. Their reporting line of such advisors would still be to the faculty as they will merely be attending to faculty specific issues and not general quality assurance unit's matters to ensure that the faculty is continuously apprised about developments and changes in quality.

The desired level of quality and complexity of related procedures will be influenced by institutional context as well as its external obligations to all stakeholders e.g. to regulators and to statutory and professional bodies and other national requirements. Internal quality assurance systems and procedures, ordinarily, also have an external dimension for example, external review panels or examiners.

The quality assurance system should be designed to look into the quality of the institution's educational provision and to inform stakeholders on the effectiveness of the system that has been put in place towards ensuring and improving quality. Such a system should be developed collectively through the participation of key players of the institution. Ideally, they should work towards identifying the relevant areas that need addressing by the system as the needs would vary with size and complexity of the institution in consideration.

The cornerstone of a sound quality assurance system is an institution's mission statement. HEI's should articulate the direction they should take while ensuring that the mission is in keeping with the socio-economic needs of Malawi. The mission together with the vision should present its strategic intent in the provision of quality higher education. In line with that, the goals and objectives should also be compatible with the mission. In practice, it means that HEI's have to demonstrate that the programmes they intend to offer are needed by industry and that they add value to the higher education system *i.e.* there should be relevance, currency, and value addition from the programmes being offered.

Quality assurance policies, procedures and systems should be designed as part of the comprehensive quality assurance system. Quality assurance should be embedded in the institution's activities at all levels. Quality assurance spans both the academic domain, and the corporate domain e.g. governance, finance and human resources. Having the policies, procedures and the system is a necessary but not sufficient condition to ensure quality output. Constituents of the system should be aware and embrace the elements of the system. Therefore, policy and procedures should be transformed into practice through a variety of internal quality assurance processes that allow participation by all staff within the institution. This is what will ensure the building of a quality culture.

Key components of approaching appropriate internal quality assurance can be summarized as follows:

a) A well developed and clearly articulated strategic plan;
b) Clear policies with associated procedures for the assurance of quality of performance;
c) Well defined quality assurance and enhancement procedures with clear ownership of the process;
d) A clear implementation strategy for continuous enhancement, taking into consideration the role of students and other stakeholders;
e) Quality culture and awareness;
f) Academic staff who are encouraged in on-going academic development;
g) On-going processes of review, audit and enhancement; and
h) An increasing emphasis on consistency of evaluation and monitoring of performance indicators.

3.9. Ten steps for setting up an internal quality assurance system

The following basic steps could be used to set up an internal quality assurance system:

Step 1: Define the purpose of your quality assurance

The institution should be able to state the reason why it has to develop the system. For example, is the system meant for compliance, is it for self-continuous development, what is it for?

Step 2: State the quality goals

Pick carefully the elements on which you want information considering the quality you are offering.

Step 3: Pick carefully the performance indicators

Pick carefully the performance indicators which “hard facts” and “satisfaction statements” that you think are necessary in order to get information on the quality.

Step 4: Add externally formulated quality goals and performance indicators

What is necessary to do because of possible demands from outside the institution concerning your system of internal quality assurance? Consider the regulatory aspect, the demands from industry, and the labour market, just to mention a few. The indicators should be measurable. All this necessitates the utilisation of the SMART Framework.

Stage 5: Instrument development

Develop, adopt and adapt the instruments with which will be used to gather information and define your measuring units/ values.

Stage 6: Targeting

Formulate target results. The results should mirror the set goals/ objectives and be measurable within the indicators.

Stage 7: Implementation plan development

Make an implementation plan for your system. The plan should stipulate the objectives, activities to be taken, the period, the indicator for successful achievement of the objective, responsible office, the review period, and best tools to be used for the assessment. It is advisable to ensure consultative approach is used for awareness and also ensure ownership and commitment.

Stage 8: Implement your plan

The plan that has been developed should be implemented. The implementation starts with the capacitating of all identified offices. Therefore, requirements for

operationalisation of the plan should be gathered and proper development of the responsible offices be done to ensure efficiencies.

Stage 9: Measurement (Monitoring, evaluation, auditing, checking)

Start your measurements, analyse the results and suggest adaptations if necessary, implement the adaptations, measure again. This enforces the Deming's circle in quality assurance (Plan, Do, Check, Act/Improve).

Figure 7: Deming Quality Assurance Cycle

The Deming Cycle stipulates that the planning stage is where the measurement parameters are defined. Focus is on what data to measure and how to measure it. This is where also indicators for monitoring, evaluation, auditing, and checking are developed. The measuring and checking is done in two; implementation and adaption. Measurement in monitoring starts at the point of implementation, auditing and checking when other milestones are achieved, and lastly evaluation when impact measurement is needed. Acting occurs when lessons are gathered from measurement. This is what calls for review based in evidence.

Stage 10: Review

Based on evidence, review your internal quality assurance system regularly.

3.10. Ownership of internal quality assurance system

The internal quality assurance system has to be designed with all stakeholders in mind. It should be able to guide staff and students alike in the way quality is managed at the institution. Therefore, it is necessary to involve stakeholders at all levels, i.e. management, administration, teaching staff and students as well as student representatives. All parties involved should be conversant with the procedures and they should own the system. The required and necessary document to respective parties should be available at all times and should be accessible by all stakeholders. In the interest of transparency, it is recommended that it is put on the institution's web site.

It is required that the designated senior institutional management take the lead in identifying the educational services which satisfy the needs and expectations of the students and all relevant stakeholders.

Commitment from management is critical for an efficient quality management system. As such senior management should identify and show its commitment to continuous improvement of the educational services and the quality management system. Some of the strategies that the senior leadership should consider include:

a) Communicating the quality management system plan within the institution
b) Strategic planning considering institutional goals and strategic direction
c) Using quality assurance as a tool for strategic planning
d) Encouraging the identification and use of best practices
e) Establishing a quality policy ensuring all institutional members know the vision and mission and its relation to the members' work
f) Establishing quality objectives to realize aims and intentions that are expressed in the quality policy be realized in operating actions
g) Ensuring availability of human and material resources, necessary for achieving the objectives

h) Measuring institutional performance to monitor the fulfilment of the established policies and objectives

Some of the basic requirements for facilitating establishment and maintenance of a sustainable and effective internal quality assurance system are that it should be:

a) As simple as possible but effective
b) Flexible and firm
c) Supported by management and all staff
d) Balanced between centralisation and decentralisation
e) Effective instruments and tools; and
f) Taking into consideration that 'no one-size-fits all'.

3.11. Management of internal quality assurance

Quality assurance systems must include procedures that ensure fit-for-context and purpose. Quality assurance procedures should form part of a coherent system, which is central to the promotion of a quality assurance culture within the provider. The institution should have in place a document describing the quality assurance system. Some of the areas to focus on are policy, manuals, procedures and responsibility.

Figure 8: Quality Assurance Hierarchy

These should covers areas such as:

a) Quality assurance in the provision/delivery of programmes of study
b) Review of courses/programmes
c) Quality assurance in teaching, learning and communications
d) Quality assurance in relation to academic staff – staff appointment procedures, staff development and training, staff appraisal, promotion, evaluation of teaching quality by staff, analysis and responding to evaluation of teaching quality, etc
e) Quality assurance in assessments: internal and external moderation, external examiners, appointment of external examiners, feedback of external examiners on student performance and on programmes
f) Student evaluation of teaching programmes etc. Views of professional bodies and student and staff liaison committees
g) Strengths and weaknesses identified and plans for dealing with the problems

The basic activities captured in the policies and procedures of the quality management system should ensure continuity, sustainability, and feasibility to institutional needs. These activities may include, but are not limited to the following:

a) *A description of processes:* The institution should be able to define what is involved in each mechanism for consistency and suitability of purpose
b) *Identification of roles and positions responsible for the implementation of quality assurance policies and procedures:* The roles to carry out the possible function in quality assurance should be clearly described and designated. There should not be doubt nor conflict of roles
c) *Self-monitoring processes:* Indicators should be developed and data collection methodologies stipulated. This will be used to measure the effectiveness of policies and procedures
d) *Systematic analysis of quality assurance findings following self-evaluation involving stakeholders:* Layers of moderating and supervisory processes, as appropriate, are in place to enable strategic and coordinated analysis of information at appropriate levels. Tools that have been developed should be put to use and should enable decision making towards improvement and compliance
e) *Clear decision-making and follow-up*: Systematic formal decision-making procedures are built into a provider's various evaluative mechanisms, including the procedures for oversight of such mechanisms by the governance system or equivalent. Management acts on the self-evaluation findings.
f) *Building of a resource base which is sufficient to ensure sustainability:* The corporate infrastructure, including financial solvency of the business, supports the sustainability of the teaching and learning environment and underpinning quality assurance system. The provider is adequately resourced to undertake and complete the quality assurance procedures and to maintain quality assurance mechanisms for the training or research programmes proposed. Continuity planning procedures are developed to understand and anticipate events that could threaten the provider and to ensure that the provider remains viable.
g) *Continued aligning to strategic purpose:* The institution should ensure the system where objectives are aligned with mission and strategy. The quality

assurance system focuses on whether and how the provider achieves its objectives and (periodically) on the suitability of the objectives in light of the provider's own mission and other criteria. Operational objectives are specified at various levels and are aligned with the provider's mission, strategy and obligations to external stakeholders such as statutory, regulatory, professional ones.

h) *Continued ownership of the quality assurance system:* The quality assurance system should be owned by the provider and be embedded and maintained on a cross organisational basis with involvement of all provider staff. This includes all levels of management, administration, teaching staff, and learners.

i) *Protected integrity of academic processes and standards:* Academic decision-making reflects the interests of learners and the maintenance of standards. It is independent of commercial considerations. Overall corporate decision-makers within the provider, be it trustees, owners or shareholders or others, do not exercise exclusive authority or undue influence over academic decision-making. Academic decision-makers are appropriately qualified and experienced; they are aware of available resources for programme delivery and ensure that standards are maintained.

3.12. Requirements for effective internal quality assurance system

The institutional quality assurance system must meet the following set of quality requirements in order to be effective:

a) *General requirement:* The quality assurance and management system should be planned and be designed accordingly

b) *Specific Requirements:* Internal quality assurance policies and procedures should be:

   i. Informed by NCHE quality assurance guidelines

   ii. Fully documented and available publicly (published); necessary information is available to staff and the public as required in usable formats

iii. Fit-for-purpose and appropriate to the provider's context
iv. Have a formal standing within the institution and form part of strategic management
v. Include the roles of students and other stakeholders
vi. Promote a culture of quality
vii. Facilitate diversity and support innovation
viii. Cover any elements of institutional activities that are sub-contracted to, or carried out by, other parties both at home and abroad
ix. Demonstrate accountability as a given, but always aim for continuous improvement
x. Are reviewed periodically to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and remain effective
xi. Are consistent with the requirements of relevant legislation

c) *Documented quality assurance system:* One major drawback of a quality assurance system is lack of documentation. The quality assurance system should be fully documented, and there must be robust, documented policies, associated procedures, tools and mechanisms for the assurance of the quality and standards of provision. This documented quality assurance system sets out the provider's commitment to quality in terms of programme provision, research and related activities as appropriate. It also refers to arrangements for the internal evaluation or review and continuous improvement of the effectiveness of the policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are effective and fit-for-purpose. Quality assurance procedures must be regularly self-monitored to ensure on-going effectiveness as provider circumstances change. Policies and procedures found to be ineffective must be amended or replaced, and the action taken should be documented accordingly.

d) *A comprehensive system:*

Quality assurance policies, procedures and systems should be designed as a comprehensive system. Quality assurance must be embedded in the HEI's activities

at all levels. Quality assurance should embrace both the corporate domain (e.g. governance, finance, human resources) and the academic domain.

e) *Integrate internal quality assurance with overall strategic planning:* Strategic planning forms the core in corporate management; it sets both the future and the path to that future. Strategic planning, therefore, is therefore critical to stakeholder and internal processes in quality assurance. To university stakeholders, strategic planning provides a framework of values and objectives that guides internal quality assurance in its goals, missions, tools, and processes. Internal quality assurance tools generate data and provide evidence for multi-year planning and resource allocation. Linking performance evaluation with target agreements provides an incentive for goal achievement and a better basis for future planning. When internal quality assurance is connected to strategic planning, it has greater potential to influence decision-making and create change.

f) *Connect internal quality assurance results with other management areas:* Quality assurance should never stand on its own or hinge only on strategic planning. In addition to connecting internal quality assurance and strategic planning, it is important to envisage links between internal quality assurance and human resource development, curriculum design, data management, and organisational development. There is, therefore, no comprehensive quality assurance system without this relationship.

g) Establish a balance of central and decentralized responsibilities for internal quality assurance: Decentralization helps in ensuring ownership and effectiveness from lower levels to higher levels in quality assurance. It ensures that no one is left behind in building a culture of quality. It is with decentralisation that significant improvement occurs in internal quality assurance. This however, has to be in areas of competence that can be handled at such a lower level with authority for setting a university-wide internal quality assurance policy retained by the central administration, in order to guide the process, and provide support to units implementing and using the tools. The central level can also disseminate internal

quality assurance good practices to different units at the higher education institution. In order to generate effective change, internal quality assurance needs authority to be decentralised considerably at department and faculty levels,

h) *Provide leadership support for effective guidance of internal quality assurance*: Leadership support is crucial for effective internal quality assurance to facilitate the integration of centralised and decentralised management of internal quality assurance. This can help central management to ensure that internal quality assurance tools and processes are visibly implemented across various structures and units, and promote accountability in decentralised units. Thus, HEIs can achieve balance between centralisation and decentralisation in their internal quality assurance systems. Leadership support includes designing a clear structure of responsibilities for internal quality assurance, establishing policies and procedures, determining a timeline for internal quality assurance operations, and also providing training to decentralised units to promote decision-making at programme and institutional levels, and ensuring implementation and follow-up

i) *Management responsibility:* There must be evidence of institutional senior management commitment support; customer focus; quality policy, quality planning; responsibility, authority and communication; management of the quality management system; and of regular reviews. Failure of management commitment towards quality will fail the whole quality assurance system. There will be no support towards responsible offices, there will be no execution of recommendation form the quality assurance office, there will be no follow up activities to any issue concerning quality, hence paralysis of the quality assurance system management, and everyone bearing the cost of lack of quality

j) *Resource management:* Institutional management must provide leadership in quality resources provision such as appointment of quality personnel, provision of quality facilities, and provision of a conducive work environment for quality

k) *Monitoring and evaluation requirements:* There must be a plan for measuring and monitoring quality, analysis of quality data, and making quality improvements. This

should not follow compliance initiatives; it should be part of the inbuilt mechanism and culture of the HEI

l) *Periodic reviews:* Once the quality assurance system is in place, the institution's Quality Assurance Officer should ensure that it is implemented on an on-going basis. Institutions are expected to carry out periodic internal audits to assess the effectiveness of the system and seek ways to improve on it to better meet the needs of learners and other stakeholders. Continuous improvement should be built into the system. The processes and outcomes of the internal audits should be documented and made available when required by the appointed quality assurance agency

m) *Internal communication:* Senior management should:

Establish and implement effective processes for communicating all issues related to the performance of the quality management system, such as the quality policy, quality requirements, objectives, and achievements. Providing such information should aid in the improvement of the quality management system's performance, directly involving all staff in these achievements

i. Actively encourage communication feedback from staff as a means of involving them
ii. Ensure that communication takes place among different organisational levels, as well as across different areas and departments

3.13. Embedding a quality culture

A positive, quality culture should be embedded in all aspects of institutional operations. This implies that the totality of a HEI's teaching and learning community must be working in a coherent and cohesive way towards implementing the quality agenda. The higher education institution must be committed to the active development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, quality assurance, quality improvement and enhancement.

To support the development of a quality culture, the higher education institution must develop a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality in all activities and measure the achievement of the objectives set. Some features of such quality strategies are:

a) An internal quality assurance system in which all institutional staff and students are actively involved in quality assurance, and in which quality is accepted as a responsibility for all to achieve. There must be willingness amongst staff to improve quality, and acceptance that all staff have a part to play in that improvement. From students side they must feel obliged to contribute towards quality enhancement
b) The assignment of specific quality assurance responsibilities based on the subsidiarity principle. Policy and procedures are designed in consultation with all those involved in their implementation, as well as with key stakeholders
c) Procedures that include illustrations describing and explaining the quality assurance feed-back and feed-forward paths
d) A holistic approach towards quality assurance where continuous improvement is important. Procedures are integrated into the normal activities of the provider, thereby minimising unnecessary administrative requirements
e) A commitment to provision of adequate resources to enable and facilitate the implementation of the quality assurance procedures, the consistent application of these and quality improvement plans
f) A balanced, organisation-wide approach to the implementation of quality assurance procedures to ensure that:
    i. The burden of procedures does not obscure the purpose of establishing a quality culture
    ii. A standardised approach does not obscure the ownership and primary focus on quality improvement.

3.14. Closing the quality loop

Linking internal quality assurance results with decision-making should close the loop at three levels; individual teaching performance, academic programmes, and strategic planning for the entire institution. Information that is generated from evaluations from internal quality assurance tools should help in quality enhancement especially at the individual level. There must, therefore, be a deliberate effort to utilise the output from such evaluations. Among such tools are student course evaluations. It follows that the results from internal quality assurance tools should feed into annual performance evaluations of individual staff and should be linked to opportunities for staff development, with a view to remedying shortcomings in teaching performance.

At the academic programme level there is need for triangulation of feedback for program development. Data generated from internal quality assurance tools and university statistics on student progression both within the institution (e.g. student evaluations) and at industry level (from tracer studies); enrolment, retention, completion, labour market entry, and work experience can support evidence-based dialogue when an academic programme is evaluated.

Information from internal quality assurance tools and processes should feed into a discussion about quality between internal and external stakeholders to generate suggestions for necessary programme changes and quality enhancement in all the three dimensions. Written reports containing results of the stakeholder dialogue on quality should be disseminated to the university's hierarchy e.g. the dean of faculty, university president, and quality management office, to ensure follow-up and resource allocation, in line with identified requirements for improvement.

At the institutional strategy level, results from internal and external evaluations of goal achievement and management effectiveness can help enhance efficiency in administrative decision-making at the central university level:

a) This helps establish consensus between university leadership and academic or administrative units (or both) on future strategic plan priorities, in the form of performance target/goal agreements.
b) This also helps achieve a close integration of the internal quality assurance process within the HEI's management system, and supports the development of a quality culture in the institution.

These instruments may include:

a) Guidelines for self-assessment
b) Guidelines for student evaluation of teaching
c) Guidelines for peer evaluation of teaching
d) Guidelines for conducting graduate tracer studies
e) Guidelines for employer satisfaction surveys

3.15. Conclusion

Quality management is not an event but rather a process of continuous improvement and reflection. It is, actually, not an individual process but rather a collaborative one. Therefore, building relationships with all stakeholders is critical. Quality management must be part and parcel of all planning activities and not an afterthought. In line with this, all HEIs in Malawi must create adequately resourced structures to implement robust quality management systems to ensure that they deliver and enhance the quality of all programmes, policies and processes accordingly, and is in full compliance with the national quality requirements. Similarly, internal quality assurance is evidence-based. It is, therefore, necessary for all HEIs to collect evidence of their quality assurance activities. Evidence may include the following documents: stakeholder surveys i.e. students, alumni and employers, and vital statistics i.e. retention, progress, success, attrition/drop-out, completion, and graduate rates. The next chapter concerns itself with External Quality Assurance (EQA) System.

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Glossary of terms

External Quality Assurance: Processes, procedures, and mechanisms that support and enforce compliance to quality standards.

Fitness for purpose: How well an institution carries out its core functions of teaching and learning, research and community engagement, determined by the outcomes of that institution.

Internal Quality Assurance: Processes, procedures, and mechanism that guarantee and assure quality within an HEI.

Learner: **A** person who is enrolled, pursuing, acquiring knowledge, skill or competence at a higher education institution.

Quality Assurance: **P**rovision of verifiable and tangible evidence that exhibits compliance to established standards of an education system.

Quality Assurance System: An all-embracing term referring to an on-going, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes.

Transformation:	The appropriateness of purpose, identity and role of an institution in the Malawi context.
Value for money:	The efficiency and effectiveness of an institution's functioning.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

APPENDIX EA: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Area of assessment	Criteria
1. Legal Status and Name ***Standard:*** *The institution represents a body corporate legally constituted in Malawi. A body corporate can be a limited liability company, an incorporated society or a charitable trust. It cannot be a family trust, nor can the ultimate shareholder of the corporate entity be a family trust.*	1.1. The applicant: a) Produces verifiable proof of the legal status in Malawi , i.e. Certificate of Incorporation as a company, or deed of trust b) Provides the full name and the company registration number of the entity applying for registration and accreditation as a higher education institution c) Provides the trading name of the institution where applicable d) Uses 'University', 'College of Education', 'Polytechnic', or 'Institute of Technology' only e) Ensures the name does not offend, demean, defame, or discriminate against particular persons, groups, or organisations.
2. Ownership ***Standard:*** *The owner of the institution has the capacity to achieve the objectives stated in the application.*	2.1. The applicant shall: a) Provides the name(s) of person(s) legally and financially responsible for the proposed institution and shall ensure that the name(s) is/are the same as and/or partly include(s) the one or those listed in relevant

	Articles of Association (or similar) required for the registration of a company, society or trust b) Shows that the person(s) initiating the project is also (in whole or in part) the one with legal and financial responsibility for the proposed institution c) Produces affidavits to show that the named person(s) has not individually or collectively within a period of ten years preceding the date of application been convicted, without pardon, whether within or outside Malawi, of a criminal offence d) Produces affidavit to show that the named person(s), being the holder of professional qualifications, has not been disqualified or suspended from practicing the trade or skill in Malawi or any other country, by order of a competent authority e) Produces affidavit to show that the named person(s) has not been adjudged or otherwise become insolvent or bankrupt under any law in any country; or provide affidavit to show that the named person (s) have been rehabilitated or discharged on account of insolvency or bankruptcy where applicable f) Produces affidavits to show that the named director(s) have not served as director(s) for an institution which has had its registration and accreditation revoked by the Authority in the last three years g) Produces evidence to show that the named person(s) has not made an assignment to, or arrangement or composition with creditors that has not been rescinded or set aside h) Produces certified copies of identity documents.
3. Vision, Mission And Strategic	3.1. The applicant shall:

Planning ***Standard:*** *The institution has a clearly stated mission and vision with goals and priorities which are responsive to its local, national and international contexts and that there are strategies in place for the realization and monitoring of these goals and priorities.*	a) Provides a clear vision mission and purpose with goals and priorities, which are responsive to its local, national and international contexts; b) Shows that there are strategies in place for the realization and monitoring of these goals and priorities c) Ensures there is clarity of processes for translating vision into a strategic plan, for risk management and a plan for procurement of resources for implementation d) Shows there is clarity of responsibilities and levels of accountability for strategy implementation and monitoring e) Provides a policy for regular review of the institutional performance and strategic plan f) Ensures it has specific values that form the basis for implementation of the institution's strategy.
4. Governance and Management ***Standard:*** *The institution has sound guidance and direction of its day to day and long term affairs and that the members of the governing body have the right experience and competencies to govern a provider of quality education and training.*	4.1. The applicant: a) Provides information on the proposed governance of the institution, which includes persons of credibility and expertise across the fields of education and training, business management, and financial management b) Shows that the governing board is enabled by the organisation's structures, responsibilities and accountabilities to act decisively to protect and enhance the provision of quality education and training services c) Provides CVs of board members d) Shows that the proposed governance of the institution is inclusive of a representative(s) of the student body (where applicable) e) A statutory declaration that each member of the

	governing body has no conflict of interest. 4.2. The applicant: a) Provides an organogram showing the proposed organisational structure b) Makes available an organisational chart and associated duty statements or terms of reference showing lines of authority, responsibilities and allocations of functions and accountabilities for every proposed management position within the proposed organisation c) Shows that at least one position is assigned to a person capable of providing educational leadership d) Shows that the position that is assigned responsibility of educational leadership is enabled by the organisational structures, responsibilities and accountabilities to act decisively to protect and enhance the provision of quality educational services; e) Shows that senior management role descriptions include provisions requiring the establishment and maintenance of educational quality f) Provides summary of the management team's roles, qualifications and experience (cvs and/or job descriptions).
5. Scope of Accreditation and Registration ***Standard:*** *The rationale for the establishment of the new institution and provision of the proposed services are responsive to government policies; that the*	5.1. The applicant: a) Defines the scope of accreditation in terms of fields and/or sub-fields, and/or domains and to what HEQF level b) Shows that the mode of delivery is consistent with the stated aims, goals and objectives of the institution c) Provides feasibility study or needs assessment/market survey report and business plan with realistic growth

establishment of the institution is clearly aligned with the development needs of Malawi and its people. In this context, the applicant shall define the scope of the accreditation in terms of fields, subfields, domains, and HEQF levels applied for.	projections that take into account, national population projections and current trends in relation to existing provision within the education and training sector considered d) Provides documented evidence of support from identified stakeholders.
6. Quality Management ***Standard:*** *The institution endeavours to ensure that effective quality management is the overarching principle in the business of education and training.*	6.1. The applicant ensure that: a) There is a policy on Quality Management System b) The objectives and functions of the quality system are clearly defined and documented c) Objectives and mechanisms for quality management are integrated into institutional planning d) The institutional quality management policy adequately provides for all key areas of operation e) Roles and responsibilities and levels of accountability for quality management system implementation are clearly defined and documented f) There is provision for ensuring that the objectives and mechanisms for quality management within each functional area of the institution are consistent with the institutional vision and strategic priorities g) There is a system or process for monitoring and evaluation of the internal quality management system; h) There are mechanisms and procedures for the collection and analysis of data and dissemination of information on quality management matters to relevant stakeholders i) There is provision for involvement of learners, staff and external partners in the quality management system

	implementation, monitoring and evaluation
7. Records Management System ***Standard:*** The applicant has a system in place to maintain accurate documents, records and data.	The applicant: a) Ensures that there is a records management policy which clearly indicates provision for access, security, confidentiality, retention, disposal, etc. b) Ensures that the records management system provides for the nature and scope of operation of the institution c) Ensures that the proposed records management system is consistent with quality standards and principles characteristic of systems used in education and training institutions d) Has off-site documents backup arrangements e) Ensures that there is a document control system and all key documents are to be centrally controlled and version numbers and revision status indicated f) Ensures that there is a process and procedure for amendment of controlled documents
8. Financial Viability And Management ***Standard:*** *The applicant is able to verify financial viability and proof of engagement in fiscal planning and budgeting. The plans should promote intended goals and objectives.*	The applicant: a) Has a local bank account (does not apply to public institutions whose finances are controlled by Malawi Government) b) Ensures that the financial plan presented spans a minimum of five years c) Ensures that the financial plan and projections are realistic, given the stated goals and objects of the institution d) Provides a financial statement or letter of guarantor signed off by a registered accountant e) Shows that student fee structures are realistic in terms of the financial model presented and informed by market trends

	f) Shows readiness to pay a refundable security deposit to an endowment fund established by NCHE upon registration; have a policy, regulations and procedures for financial management and control g) Has a policy and clear processes for procurement planning, budgeting and expenditure monitoring and control with clarity of roles and responsibilities as well as levels of accountability h) Provides clarity of how different functional areas of the institution will be financially catered for and managed i) Has a refund policy for protecting the financial interests of students j) Ensures that the funding arrangements and associated revenue generation activities are consistent with the vision, mission and values of the institution k) Ensures that there are arrangements for annual internal and external financial audits to keep track of the institution's financial condition and control over its finances
9. Human Resources ***Standard:*** *The institution must have adequate human resource capacity to conduct its core business and achieve its mission and goals.*	9.1. The applicant shall show that: a) There is a clear policy on recruitment and selection of academic and ancillary staff which provides for equality of opportunities and inclusive practice and is in line with international best practice b) The policy provides adequately for recruitment of teaching staff with relevant qualifications required for the scope of services proposed c) There is provision for compliance with relevant legislation regarding the recruitment, selection and appointment of academic and ancillary staff as well as welfare, occupational health and safety

	d) There is a staff performance appraisal system which is consistent with labour laws and is in line with international best practice e) There is a training and development policy which is realistic and provides for inclusive practice and is in line with best international practice f) The institution has documented conditions of service which are consistent with relevant legislation and are in line with international best practice g) There is a clear organisational structure with clear roles and responsibilities and well defined levels of accountability across all functional areas of the institution h) There is provision for regular review of the effectiveness of the implementation of the human resource recruitment, development and management policies of the institution i) There is commitment to use assessors and moderators registered and accredited with NCHE j) Proposed teaching staff is qualified at a minimum, at least one level higher than they would be teaching; k) Proposed administrative staff is relevant and appropriate to the size of the institution l) Staff to learner ratios are appropriate for the proposed programme
10. Physical Resources ***Standard:*** *The institution must have adequate and appropriate, physical resources. The learning conditions at the satellite campuses*	The applicant shall show that: (a) There is a clear policy on planning for, procurement, utilisation and maintenance of physical resources which is in line with international best practice principles (b) There is evidence of adequate financial provision for

should be comparable to those at the main campus.	the acquisition and maintenance of resources required for the proposed scope of accreditation and co-curricular activities (c) The proposed resource centre meets the library standards as per NCHE Norms and Standards (d) The planned staff and learner amenities are consistent with proposed learner enrolment and staff numbers and that their composition is fair in terms of gender and special needs (e) The institution has appropriate structures and mechanisms, with clarity of roles and responsibilities as well as levels of accountability, for coordination and monitoring of resource utilisation across all units, departments or functional areas of the institution (f) There is evidence of or policy provision for inclusive practice regarding availability and access to facilities and resources to cater for learners and staff with special needs (g) There is monitoring and evaluation system to establish the effectiveness of the maintenance provision (h) The proposed site(s) is justified in relation to strategic positioning, accessibility to learners and compliance with relevant legislation and statutory requirements (i) The proposed site(s) or buildings meets requirements associated with the Local Authority zoning for the nature of education and training services proposed (j) Buildings or premises, if any, meet building, health and safety regulations set by the appropriate Local Authority (k) Certified copies of land or property ownership certificates or certified or true copy of any

	land/property lease or title deed are present (l) The size of land or premises available is sufficient for the proposed project (m) There are copies of development plans approved by the appropriate local authority, showing infrastructure that is sufficient for the proposed project and consistent with the financial plan submitted
11. Safety, Health And The Environment ***Standard:*** *The institution operates within an environment that has the capacity to cater for and adhere to safety, health and the environmental standards. The safety of learners, staff and guests is the primary responsibility of the institution.*	11.1. The applicant proves that: a) There is a safety, health and the environment policy that is consistent with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements b) There is a structure for coordinating the implementation of the policy on safety, health and the environment c) They have complied with the minimum safety, health and environment quality standards; d) There is provision for adherence to legislative requirements related to medical examination requirement for kitchen staff and general environmental hygiene including handling and disposal of waste e) The institution has clear evacuation procedures to be displayed in strategic areas for all to see f) There is provision for signage within the institution including location of emergency exit and assembly points g) Clearance is given by fire services to operate building as higher education institution h) There is adequate fire-fighting equipment, in good working condition and placed strategically within the institution and opportunity to train personnel on first-

	aid i) There is provision for internal and external health and safety inspection j) The institution has provision for processes for identification of defects or potential hazards and for prompt mitigation action to ensure consistent compliance with institutional policy and relevant legislation
12. Admissions, Access And Equity ***Standard:*** *The institution has policies on admissions, access and equity in order to uphold the fundamental entitlements of all learners.*	12.1. The applicant: a) Ensures that there is a policy on admission and enrolment of learners which: i. Provides information on entry and selection criteria ii. Shall ensure that there are no barriers for prospective learners in their admission regarding disability, disadvantaged backgrounds, gender, ethnic, racial, or religious groups etc. b) Has a system in place to enable timely and accurate registration of enrolled students on the National Learner Record Database c) Provide written information on total course costs and other financial commitments to the learner prior to enrolment d) Provide information on details of course structure, and duration, and level and credit value e) Ensure equity through fair and appropriate allocation of resources
13. Protection of Enrolled Students	13.1. The applicant should: a) Provide the arrangements for protection of enrolled learners which must be in accordance with NCHE

Standard: *The institution should have in place policy on learner withdrawal and refund of fees to ensure that all learners are fairly reimbursed if a course fails to commence or fails to meet programme delivery requirements.* *The institution should put in place arrangements to ensure that if a programme of education and training ceases prematurely learners will be able to complete a similar programme with another provider or be refunded.*	protection of enrolled learners' guidelines. b) Provide information on how these arrangements will be made accessible to prospective learners prior to enrolling them or accepting payment.
14. Programme Development, Delivery And Evaluation ***Standard:*** *The institution has in place a systems for programme development, delivery and evaluation. There are policies that ensure a sound foundation for attaining high standards and quality in delivery of learning programmes.*	14.1. The applicant shall ensure that there is a policy which at the minimum should cater for the following: a) Programme design and review which detail the following: i. Needs assessment ii. Engagement with industry and relevant key stakeholder groups iii. Job/task analysis iv. Outcomes-based approach v. Comparability and articulation of programmes and qualifications vi. Alignment to prescribed HEQF level descriptors vii. Quality assurance processes viii. Equity and access ix. Resources for learning programme delivery x. Programme implementation and monitoring

	xi. Frequency of learning programmes review and evaluation b) Learning programme development approval structures c) Provision of academic support, inclusive of the use of technologies d) Provision for promoting application of knowledge and skills and relevant learning experiences including; work-based and work-place learning, internship, study tours and other learning opportunities.
15. Work-Placement /Internship ***Standard:*** *The institution has in place policies and systems for coordination of workplace learning, internship and other work experience programmes.*	The applicant: a) Shows how quality standards, policies, and procedures will continue to apply at the place of the learners' work experience b) Ensures clarity of roles and responsibilities of key players (workplace supervisors and mentors, academic staff, learners, etc.), health and safety issues and regular monitoring c) Shows how assessment and moderation are integrated into the workplace learning experience d) Has a provision for a documented risk management plan for work placement e) Has a provision for an agreement between the learner and work place stipulating identified procedures and expected outcomes of the placement.
16. Assessment And Moderation ***Standard:*** *The institution has made a provision for ensuring assessment and moderation requirements are met for all learning programmes that they plan to deliver.*	16.1. The applicant: a) Has a comprehensive policy on assessment and moderation which provides adequately for the implementation of outcomes-based assessment system. The policy should include, at least, the following: i. Assessment design with emphasis on standard

	based assessment, detailing the inclusion and involvement of relevant industry or professional stakeholders ii. Provision for re-assessment and associated support services for learners iii. Mechanisms to inform learners on assessment, re-assessment procedures, and appeals process iv. Pre-assessment moderation (to ensure the validity of its assessment tools and activities) v. Post assessment moderation (to ensure its assessment decisions are accurate and consistent; vi. Internal moderation requirements vii. External moderation requirements viii. A structure for coordination of assessment and moderation with clear roles and responsibilities and levels of accountabilities ix. Clear and appropriate procedures on the security of assessments, for handling and securing confidential assessment materials. b) Has a process for ensuring that assessment and moderation reports as well as feedback from learners, assessors and moderators are used to inform staff development and improvement of learning and assessment practice c) Has a system for monitoring the implementation of recommendations made by moderators, quality assurance entities and other stakeholders towards improvement of assessment practice. d) Ensures that assessment and moderation are undertaken according to NCHE assessment and moderation guidelines.

	e) Ensures there is provision for fair and regular feedback to learners on progress and final achievement f) Has a system in place to enable the efficient and confidential reporting of credit to NCHE national learner record database (electronic) g) Relating to the off-site back up of all learner records.
17. Student Support Services ***Standard:*** *The institution should have policies concerning learner support services to ensure that all learners have appropriate support and guidance in order to meet their learning needs and goals.*	17.1. The applicant should: a) Have a disciplinary policy outlining rules, regulations and grievance procedures that promote harmony and instil good conduct, and respect the rights of individuals to complain and seek redress b) Have a policy on 'whistle blowing' c) Ensure proposed welfare services include career guidance, counselling, health and safety services and other amenities d) Have clear documented processes for communication and consultation with learners on matters pertaining to provision of welfare services e) Have mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of structures, processes and procedures for learner welfare, communication, and consultation. f) Ensure that information on learning programmes and other educational services shall be made accessible to stakeholders g) Where applicable, have a policy for enrolment of international students and their care
18. Research ***Standard:*** *The institution should have policies that ensure that research is conducted to the*	18.1. The applicant should: a) Have clear policies and regulations that include the role and nature of research conducted at the institution and are effectively implemented and adequately resourced b) Have policies about ethical standards, and clear

highest levels of integrity, including appropriate research design and frameworks, to ensure that findings are robust and defensible. Researchers should also adhere to the highest level of research ethics, in line with requirements set out by national and international regulatory bodies, professional and regulatory research guidance and research ethics frameworks issued in appropriate areas.	procedures for obtaining ethical approval for research, and for dealing with allegations of unacceptable research practice c) Ensure there is managerial arrangements for the normal supervision and management of research conduct d) Have mechanisms for the quality assurance of research which includes clear criteria for the evaluation and approval of research proposals and establishment of research programs e) Have a research information system to capture information on research capacity, funding and output f) Have strategies for implementation for the support and development of research including capacity development for new researchers and new opportunities and incentive for research g) Ensure that there is provision for research geared towards improvement of practice and/or supporting the socio-economic development initiatives of the country h) Ensure that there is provision for monitoring and evaluation of the research function and its impact on the operations of the institution and /or socio-economic development of the country or for establishing how the research output influences national, regional and international recognition of the institution.
19. Internationalisation ***Standard:*** *The institution must have a process of integrating an*	19.1. The applicant will show that: a) The institituion has policies and procedures for: i. Recruitment of international students ii. Development of international branch campuses

international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of their education and training.	iii. Students, staff and scholars exchange programs iv. Internationalisation of the curriculum, v. Research and education partnerships between institutions regionally and internationally b) The institution has mechanisms which allow it to assess and improve its internationalisation activities.
20. Corporate Social Responsibility ***Standard:*** *The institutions needs to incorporate Corporate Social Responsibility into its business operations through its interaction with their stakeholders, communities and industry by formulating strategies that will build strong relationships with such stakeholders.*	20.1. The applicant shall show that: a) There is a clear policy and clear procedures for the management of programmes and activities pertaining to social responsibility b) The policy clearly defines the nature of projects and programmes to be considered and such are feasible and sustainable and have no potential for deflecting the institution's attention away from its core business or mission c) Adequate resources allocated to facilitate quality delivery in community engagement d) There is provision for review of the effectiveness of corporate social responsibility and for informing improvement initiatives

APPENDIX EB: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Area of assessment	Criteria
1. Governance	1.1. The tuition provider/institution is either registered

Standard: *The tuition provider/institution is a properly-constituted entity whose governance structures and functions are well-defined, relevant to its mandate and functions, well-understood by those delivering the programmes, in line with the stated goals and objectives of the provider/institution, and are able to create a conducive environment for the delivery of a high-quality programme.*		under the Companies Act and under the Ministry of Education or founded under an Act of Parliament
	1.2.	In collaborative arrangements, the tuition provider/institution has a formal permission to run the programme whether it is a franchise or run in collaboration with a relevant institution or professional body
	1.3.	There is a robust quality assurance process to monitor the standard and quality of collaborative arrangements where ownership rests with a parent institution rather than the local provider/ institution
	1.4.	The tuition provider/institution has high calibre, experienced and competent management teams with clearly-defined roles and responsibilities reflecting strategic vision and leadership as evidenced by their resumes, nature of operational plans, and appropriateness of the institution's policy documents
	1.5.	The tuition provider/institution has a formally-constituted governing board/council that plays an oversight role in the provision of tuition, in line with best practices
	1.6.	The governance structure (board/council) has a schedule of meetings that focus on substantive issues which are articulated and prioritized in an agenda
	1.7.	The tuition provider/institution has a board, committee or similar structure that provides academic oversight by developing, monitoring, and reviewing policies and programmes to ensure high standards of delivery and adherence to national standards and professional requirements
	1.8.	The governing structures of the tuition

		provider/institution show potential to enable timely and effective decision-making that ensures effective delivery of the programme
	1.9.	The governance structures have set out for each committee, the composition, terms of reference, delegation, powers and reporting relationships
	1.10.	The tuition provider/institution has adopted a strategic plan that is guiding institutional decisions and allocation of resources
	1.11.	The tuition provider/institution's internal structures give priority to its educational role in comparison to other activities
	1.12.	In its running of the programme, the provider/institution shows sound corporate and academic governance practices that are consistent with best practices
	1.13.	The tuition provider/institution has autonomy to direct resources in order to achieve its purpose and the objectives of its programme
	1.14.	The tuition provider/institution reviews and updates structures, functions and policies that relate to education, training and continuation of professional development in order to rectify deficiencies and meet changing needs
	1.15.	The students are represented in the relevant governance structures of the tuition provider/institution
	1.16.	The tuition provider/institution has adopted clear provisions for ethics, academic integrity and management of conflict of interest.
2. Goals and Objectives of the	2.1.	The goals and objectives of the programme are

Programme ***Standard:*** *The goals and objectives of the programme form part of the strategic plan to achieve a stated mandate of the institution, are aligned with the institution's mission and vision, are relevant, appropriate, and address national, regional and international priorities.*	aligned with the mission and vision of the institution 2.2. The goals and objectives of the programme are well-articulated, relevant and consistent with the priorities of the country and the profession 2.3. The goals and objectives of the programme are relevant to employment, and further education opportunities 2.4. The goals and objectives of the programme focus on the development of problem-solving, independent thinking, critical thinking, and communication skills 2.5. The goals and objectives of the programme align with staff qualifications and experience, the learning outcomes, as well as instructional and assessment strategies 2.6. The tuition provider/institution has a strategic plan to enhance students' learning opportunities with measurable objectives and realistic timeframes 2.7. The tuition provider/institution has put measures in place to monitor implementation of the programme strategic plan
3. Finances ***Standard:*** *The tuition provider/ institution has enough financial resources to run the programme, and there are sound policies and procedures to effectively manage the resources needed to run the programme in a sustainable way.*	3.1. Given the projected student enrolment, the tuition provider/institution has sufficient financial resources to run the programme and ensure its sustainability as well as the academic and support staff complement needed to run the programme effectively 3.2. There is evidence of upfront investment in ensuring quality management of the programme, including provision of course materials, student portals, and learner support systems 3.3. The institution/tuition provider has a well-developed

	business plan showing projected student enrolments, recurrent expenditure, and the details of how tuition provision will be financed 3.4. The budget for the activities of the institution/tuition provider will follow a defined process and procedure 3.5. The tuition provider/institution has a transparent system for the distribution of resources needed to support the programme 3.6. The tuition provider/institution has a risk management policy for responding to, and managing financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences 3.7. The tuition provider/institution demonstrates sound financial management practices as evidenced by the existence of unqualified audit reports produced on a regular basis 3.8. Attention is paid to costs of library and course materials for students so that the cost of instructional materials is effectively balanced with that of on-line access
4. Physical Resources and Infrastructure ***Standard:*** *The infrastructure and physical resources used or to be used in the delivery of the programme are suitable for the intended purpose and have the potential to enable the programme to achieve its stated objectives.*	4.1. Depending on the type of programme and student enrolment, adequate space and buildings exist to accommodate teaching staff, management staff, support staff, and the processes of teaching and learning 4.2. The available infrastructure and teaching facilities enable use of a variety of innovative teaching and learning methods 4.3. All students have access to suitable and sufficient library resources, including the provision of Open Educational Resources (OERs), and where these resources belong to other institutions, there are

		formal agreements (or Memoranda of Understanding [MOU]) signed between tuition providers/institutions and owners of learning facilities
	4.4.	Both on-campus and off-campus students have secure access to libraries, ICT facilities and other learning facilities during the day and after hours, and are supported by competent staff dedicated to serve a wide variety of learners
	4.5.	The information technology system provides access to appropriate electronic information, as evidenced by the ratio of students to computers of 1:6 or better, including situations where students have own computers
	4.6.	In line with the nature of the programme, suitable and sufficient Information Technology (IT) infrastructure are available at all sites of learning
	4.7.	A system is in place for the proper maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure
	4.8.	Depending on the type of programme and projected student enrolments, the available teaching materials and related equipment enable use of the most effective delivery methods
	4.9.	Structures, policies, plans and processes exist to ensure that the management and maintenance of infrastructure and resources continuously create an enabling environment for attaining high standards of content delivery
	4.10.	All buildings meet the health and safety requirements of a competent and relevant authority
	4.11.	All buildings available for students' accommodation enable a safe and conducive living and learning

		environment
	4.12.	Arrangements have been made to ensure that all students living with physical disabilities (special needs) have unfettered access to learning facilities and are adequately supported.
5. Staffing ***Standard:*** *The calibre of staff recruited in the programme/tuition provider, working conditions in place, and the professional development mechanisms in place or proposed, and the level of productivity enable the programme to meet its stated objectives*	5.1.	The tuition provider/institution has a clear procedure for recruitment of teaching and support staff, and this procedure is applied consistently
	5.2.	There is an adequate number of teaching and administrative staff to address the educational, academic and social needs of the students enrolled in the programme
	5.3.	Selection and recruitment policies ensure that the most highly qualified and experienced academic and support staff members are recruited in an objective, transparent and non-discriminatory manner
	5.4.	Except for those teaching in a programme leading to the highest qualification in a discipline (e.g. PhD. or special programmes), at least 90% of teaching staff hold a qualification higher than the programme's exit level
	5.5.	A transparent and equitable performance appraisal system is in place to enhance the performance of academic and support staff
	5.6.	The tuition provider/institution ensures that adequately-qualified academic, technical and support staff are employed to meet the institution's objectives for student learning, and that this is the case at all sites of delivery
	5.7.	Staff development policies and plans exist, and are implemented fairly and consistently to ensure that all

		staff continually get professional support in order to sharpen and update their skills
	5.8.	A staff development system is in place, as a proactive measure to ensure that staff stay abreast with latest trends in the use of relevant technology and other innovative methods of delivery
	5.9.	At least 60% of the teaching staff is employed on a full-time basis
	5.10.	Part-time staff are sufficiently inducted to familiarise them with the teaching and learning requirements of the programme/tuition provider, and their roles are clearly articulated
	5.11.	The promotion criteria linked to a performance appraisal system are fairly implemented and focused on a wide range of factors, including impact assessment of teaching, research, publications and community outreach activities
	5.12.	New staff members are taken through an induction programme that covers staff rights, responsibilities, institutional expectations, performance appraisals, promotion criteria, and tips on how to manage the challenges of working in the institution or tuition provider
	5.13.	Staff members are monitored and supported for the specialised roles and tasks they perform, including the design, management and delivery of technology-supported programmes
	5.14.	The roles, responsibilities and job descriptions of staff are clearly specified, and respond to the learning needs of students enrolled in the programme
	5.15.	Where current staff do not have the required

	expertise, there is evidence that the institution can contract a specialist on flexible and effective terms; 5.16. There are clear commitments and corresponding structures to provide continuing professional development of staff
6. Admissions ***Standard:*** *The process of admitting students into the programme is appropriate, well-documented, transparent, efficient, and ensures that the most deserving candidates are admitted into the programme*	6.1. The admission policy is documented, well-articulated, and effectively communicated to the public 6.2. Admission strictly adheres to enrolment plans or admission quotas, in line with regulatory requirements 6.3. Subject to availability of infrastructure, human resources and regulatory requirements, all qualifying local students have an equal opportunity to access the programme irrespective of race, nationality, gender, physical ability, religious or political affiliation, and geographical location 6.4. Depending on the admission quota for foreign students, all qualifying foreign students have an equal chance of being admitted irrespective of race, nationality, gender, physical ability, religion or political affiliation 6.5. The admission criteria accommodate arrangements for credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. They also adhere to the requirements of the sending country, where applicable 6.6. Admission and registration processes can be executed effectively and within timeframes that enable uninterrupted teaching to commence on a set date 6.7. The admission criteria are adequately benchmarked with those for similar programmes offered by leading higher education providers/institutions in the

	international world 6.8. The number of students enrolled in the programme does not exceed the capacity of the staff, or the administrative infrastructure available to provide support for student learning and assessment 6.9. Upon orientation into technology-driven programmes, students are provided with accurate information about what they have to supply in addition to the materials supplied to them by the programme.
7. Student Support Services ***Standard:*** *Medical, recreational, pastoral, career and academic student support services enable a conducive teaching and learning environment enable employability and attainment of the stated objectives of the programme*	7.1. The library has appropriate up-to-date materials to support the programme, and an appropriate library management system that enables easy access to materials 7.2. The students have secure access to electronic information appropriate for the programme and its purpose, as evidenced by the required ratio of the number of computers to the number of students 7.3. Students' support staff include tutors and counsellors to provide initial orientation to students, including the use of IT for learning, and access to the latest developments that enhance students' learning and well-being 7.4. The provider/institution has a student advisor and a personal tutorship system set up to ensure that students have access to expert advice at each crucial stage of the programme; 7.5. There are opportunities for students' individual academic support, either by telephone, or through face to face interaction or through online interaction 7.6. The student representative body, or part thereof,

		represents the students at key decision-making structures of the provider/institution
	7.7.	The students have access to counselling, career and employability services provided by qualified staff to ensure eligibility for future career prospects, equity, and where needed, support for those with learning difficulties or disadvantaged socio-economic and cultural backgrounds
	7.8.	Students have access to counselling for personal difficulties and for academic problems
	7.9.	Where support is online, students know who to contact for support, and the best time to establish contact
	7.10.	The students have access to a clinic or medical facility that provides basic medical services
	7.11.	The students have access to spiritual, sporting and recreational facilities
	7.12.	A clear students' grievance handling procedure exists. It is well known to the students and staff, and is being implemented accordingly
	7.13.	Where appropriate, the development of competence in the use of ICT is built into the learning outcomes of the programme
	7.14.	Obligations and responsibilities of students in the programme are clear at registration. It is clear what resources and equipment the provider/institution will supply, and what each student will have to supply
	7.15.	Library support includes access to wider electronic knowledge resources, as well as the information literacy skills required to handle these resources appropriately. Particular attention is given to provide

	access to students working from workplaces or homes; 7.16. Adequate provisions are also made for students with one or more disabilities 7.17. Where a programme makes extensive use of educational technologies, staff members are assisted to design courses that facilitate synchronous or asynchronous electronic communication, so that they can build different forms of mediated learning into the designed learning materials, and thereby provide opportunities for peer support and peer teaching in an electronic environment 7.18. Care is taken that students admitted into a programme that requires the use of technology have sufficient access to that technology which enables them to succeed in the programme
8. Programme Design, Approval and Review ***Standard:*** *Programme design procedures ensure the maintenance of academic standards, authenticity of awards and ensure that students attain learning outcomes. The programme design meets requirements of professional and regulatory bodies and is in line with the requirements of the work place and industry*	8.1. Principles and guidelines needed for the process of programme development are in place and well-known to staff 8.2. The intended purpose and expected exit level outcomes are clearly stipulated 8.3. There is evidence of sufficient investment in quality programme development, course design and materials development 8.4. Systems are in place for the regular review of programmes and relevant educational technologies to ensure that they are kept abreast with changes in consultation with stakeholders including the relevant industry partners and professional associations 8.5. The process of development and approval of the programme was rigorous and thorough as evidenced by the documentation showing the extent of

		consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including benchmarking
	8.6.	The programme has been formally approved by the relevant and appropriate internal governance structures
	8.7.	The programme design shows a good balance in the development of theoretical, practical, problem solving and experiential skills, and is in line with the requirements of specific disciplines and the purpose of the programme
	8.8.	Where relevant, the programme is closely aligned with current professional practices and shows potential to develop the required professional competencies in line with the national needs and the needs of the regional and international labour market where appropriate
	8.9.	The programme and its proposed activities show explicit links with the worlds of work, business, industry and community
	8.10.	Where a programme is offered across national borders, the curriculum is appropriate for the host context and the rigour of the programme is not diluted irrespective of the mode of delivery
	8.11.	Where cross-border programmes are offered, as much as possible, the programme adheres to internationally accepted guidelines and procedures for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education;
	8.12.	A clear internal and external audit/ review schedule for the programme is available and the institution has capacity to implement it
	8.13.	The intended exit level competencies of those who

		complete the programme are clearly articulated, are appropriate for the purpose of the programme, and are aligned with the programme design and the assessment criteria
	8.14.	The content is based on the latest theories and findings obtained from related research literature, promote critical thinking and effectively integrate relevant examples and applications.
9. Teaching and Learning Strategy ***Standard:*** *The teaching and learning strategy is adequately benchmarked against best practices, appropriate for the type of programme offered, and is in line with the context for teaching, types of students served, and available resources. The teaching and learning processes are adequately monitored and evaluated, and the teaching staff have access to continual professional development and support.*	9.1.	Class size enables effective utilisation of the teaching and learning resources available at the study site, and is appropriate for the programme purposes
	9.2.	Depending on the type of programme, appropriate student-tutor ratios or workloads are maintained and rationalised to enable continuous material development and other forms of support to student learning
	9.3.	The teaching and learning strategies employ a variety of innovative pedagogical approaches, including approaches suited to learners of different learning styles, abilities and ages (andragogy)
	9.4.	The teaching strategy is consistent with the content to be taught, current knowledge, emerging concepts, as well as practical and fundamental theoretical/conceptual aspects of the discipline or profession
	9.5.	Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is effectively built into the teaching strategy, where appropriate
	9.6.	The teaching and learning strategy is clearly articulated and appropriate for the programme's purpose
	9.7.	A variety of appropriate teaching and learning

		resources are available, including timely access to Information Technology (IT) facilities for teaching staff and the students
	9.8.	Where appropriate and relevant, laboratory experiments, workshops and seminars are hands-on and investigatory, and are adequately resourced for the number of students being taught
	9.9.	There is a system for monitoring and evaluating the process of teaching, that is linked to a professional development strategy
	9.10.	Feedback on tutors is regularly solicited from students, and gathered information is analysed for use in mounting systematic staff development initiatives
	9.11.	A system exists for ensuring that students fulfil their academic obligations, and this system is adequately linked to a right to sit for examinations
	9.12.	Where appropriate and relevant, the provider/institution demonstrates that the workplace experience is included as soon as it is practically possible to facilitate early engagement with the professional context
	9.13.	The teaching and learning strategy support the development of professional skills, time management, analysis, synthesis of issues, and peer support
	9.14.	Where the e-learning strategy involves inputs from several agencies, the tuition provider/institution takes full responsibility for the delivery, assessment and support of students
	9.15.	To minimise the dropout rate, a system is in place to track and support students who are not progressing as expected

	9.16.	There are policies that promote sufficient input into the teaching strategy from teaching staff, students, professional bodies, and relevant external stakeholders
	9.17.	Teaching resources, research facilities and other favourable working conditions enable teaching staff to meet their performance targets.
10. Internal Quality Assurance System ***Standard:*** *The tuition provider/institution of the programme takes responsibility for its quality and academic standards. There is a sound and well-articulated internal quality assurance policy, system, procedures and tools that indicate that the provider/institution is capable of acting in full compliance with the requirements of External Quality Assurance (EQA) to enhance its programme offering.*	10.1.	The qualification resulting from the programme is either registered or is comparable to a registered qualification in the (HEQF), where relevant and appropriate
	10.2.	The programme has been accredited by the relevant authority in its country of origin, the National Quality Assurance Agency (NQAA), and/or a relevant local professional body, where appropriate and relevant
	10.3.	The tuition provider/institution offering the programme is regulated by relevant legislation and other statutes that apply to professional programmes where appropriate and relevant
	10.4.	The programme delivery is guided by a comprehensive institutional quality assurance policy that clearly defines the main goals, procedures and tools that should be used to monitor its quality
	10.5.	The quality assurance policy is consistent with the general institutional policies, values, ethos and practices
	10.6.	A quality management mechanism is in place to ensure that the tuition provider/institution delivers and enhances the quality of all programmes, policies and processes accordingly, and is in full compliance with the national quality requirements

	10.7. A formal self-appraisal system exists for monitoring the performance of administrative, teaching and support staff, including line manager evaluation, peer reviews, classroom observations and student feedback 10.8. Internal quality assurance unit is constructive, focused on compliance, and regularly improves the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, including employability 10.9. A process is in place to ensure provision of constructive feedback on academic standards, academic progression and grievance procedures 10.10. Data gathered from the monitoring of teaching and learning meaningfully feeds back into programme planning and development processes to ensure continuous improvement 10.11. Where programmes are offered across borders, there is adherence to meeting local quality assurance requirements in line with internationally accepted guidelines and good practices 10.12. Quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure that the programmes from sending countries to receiving countries are not lower in quality but are a catalyst for innovation and improvement on parallel programmes offered, and that there is full compliance with the national quality criteria of the receiving country 10.13. If the programme is supported online, mechanisms for monitoring student participation and performance are integrated in the programme design and online learning platforms, making it possible to track indicators such as:

	a) Time spent by different students on components of materials b) Student participation in online discussions c) Nature of tutor feedback given online 10.14. Academic standards and regulations of conduct are implemented, including those relating to intellectual property, copyrighted materials, and the avoidance of sexual misconduct and other forms of harassment and violence 10.15. Technological support is efficiently managed by qualified staff to ensure the smooth running of technical equipment 10.16. Staff and students at all sites of delivery are fully aware of the quality assurance requirements of the provider, owner of the programme, and the national quality assurance agency 10.17. Staff and students at all sites of delivery take part in the review and revision of quality assurance tools; 10.18. Strategic partnerships are developed with other tertiary institutions, professional organisations, research collaborators, and the industry to enhance the quality of the programme 10.19. To ensure that provisions of the programme remain current and valid, there are continuous reviews of research findings in professional practice, technological progression, teaching pedagogy, and assessment 10.20. There is proper alignment between what is advertised about the programme and the actual policies and practices
11. Assessment and Certification	11.1. Appropriate assessment policies and procedures exist

Standard: *Assessment for the programme is guided by a policy, system and tools to ensure that it is valid, efficient, fair, secure, and employs appropriate quality control mechanisms designed to protect the intellectual credibility of the programme.*		to ensure high attainment levels that are transparent to staff, students and the general public
	11.2.	Assessment items are consistent with the expected exit level outcomes of the programme
	11.3.	Mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment of students is rigorous, credible, and uniform across all sites of delivery, and internal policies and processes exist to ensure that students' performance is closely monitored, regularly updated, and the students are accordingly advised on the progress they are making in their studies
	11.4.	The necessary internal moderation system and peer review mechanisms exist and enable refinement of examination systems and tools prior to externalisation, where applicable
	11.5.	There is sufficient evidence of attention to improving retention and completion rates
	11.6.	Close monitoring of each student's progress is accompanied by evidence of communication of constructive comments that are communicated on time and professionally
	11.7.	An appropriate external examination system exists and the selection of the external examiner follows clear guidelines supported by an institutional policy to ensure that action is taken on the basis of feedback from external examiners
	11.8.	The institution/tuition provider offering the programme has policies and enforcement systems that ensure zero tolerance for cheating, copying or any form of examination malpractice that threatens the integrity and authenticity of the examination process

	11.9. Where online assessment is used to support the programme, it is rigorous and covers high level cognitive skills relating to analysis, synthesis and evaluation, and mechanisms are in place to ensure that students with correct credentials seamlessly go through the assessment tasks 11.10. Mechanisms for appealing examination results are in place, and are being judiciously implemented 11.11. End of year assessment and grading processes are efficiently executed and within timeframes that enable the next academic year to commence smoothly, and assessment timeframes are communicated in time, and flexible enough to accommodate a range of circumstances for learners 11.12. A system is in place to ensure safe storage and timely retrieval of students' results, as well as the issuing of valid and secure certificates 11.13. Marking procedures for both formative and summative assessment promote consistency and accuracy of the examination system 11.14. There are plagiarism checks for student assessments; 11.15. The relative weightings used for continuous assessment of students are well-rationalised 11.16. The institution/tuition provider clearly documents its assessment and progression requirements/regulations, and these documents are accessible to all staff and students 11.17. By using validated instruments to track the progress of students who are attached to a workplace, the institution measures experience based on knowledge, skills, attitudes and other applicable competences

	11.18. The institution/tuition provider has processes and mechanisms for timely identification of underperforming or at-risk students, and has the capacity to implement appropriate remedial strategies 11.19. For the institution with multiple teaching sites/campuses, the scope and standards of assessment practices and processes are applied consistently across all campuses 11.20. The certification offered by the tuition provider/institution offering the programme is secure, unambiguous, authenticable, replaceable and protected against fraudulent use.
12. Research and Innovation ***Standard:*** *A research and innovation component of the programme keeps teaching staff on the cutting edge of knowledge creation, addresses industry and community needs, and supports the attainment of the objectives of the programme.*	12.1. Policies, systems, and structures are in place to ensure the high quality of research conducted in the institution, and to build the capacity of those working in the programme 12.2. Staff and students prioritise research in order to inform their teaching and learning experience 12.3. The research infrastructure, including equipment, ICT resources and other resources enable a desirable research output of the institution/tuition provider 12.4. From inception all programmes have a system put in place to ensure that a human subject research ethics training and assessment is undertaken by students and staff carrying out field research locally or internationally 12.5. The contents and methods of delivery of new programmes that are research-based, have an innovation component that meets or surpasses the current standards of research and knowledge development in the region and globally

	12.6. New programmes have a suitable method of teaching and learning that nurtures ability to think and deliver ingeniously in contexts where research, development and innovation are needed 12.7. The amount of research funding available to staff and students for already existing and new programmes is proportionate to the institutional budget 12.8. Research funding is enough to enable general institutional research 12.9. The institution/tuition provider gets enough research grants and commissioned studies to supplement the departmental budget 12.10. The institution/tuition provider, teaching staff and students are members of professional organisations through which their research can be published in reputable journals where appropriate and relevant 12.11. The research output of the institution/provider is commensurate with the academic credentials of those populating the institution/tuition provider 12.12. The programme makes significant impact on development in the community, industry and private sector, as evidenced by patents, membership of research networks, and the number of post-graduate students 12.13. There is a plan in place to regularly evaluate research goals of the institution/tuition provider; 12.14. The staff utilise their research findings to inform teaching.
13. Community/Industry Engagement	13.1. The programme has a community engagement component and at least one educational project serving the community

Standard: *The programme is adequately linked to community, industry and the private sector in terms of educational projects and research activities, and these working relationships enable the programme to attain its stated learning outcomes.*	13.2. The institution/tuition provider has built partnerships with the government, community, industries and private organisations to advance its educational agenda 13.3. Old and new programmes, especially in the social sciences, have a civic engagement component in their curriculum and departmental pedagogy, where relevant and appropriate 13.4. There is evidence to show that research, consultancy and extension services are actively promoted to build linkages with industries, relevant development partners, professional associations, and other related institutions 13.5. There is evidence that the institution/tuition provider learns from its stakeholders and uses this knowledge to improve its capacity to serve the needs of stakeholders 13.6. The institution/tuition provider regularly engages in a publicity campaign to inform stakeholders of its educational programmes 13.7. The programme has attained or has potential to attain its community engagement goals as articulated in the strategic plan 13.8. There are appropriate plans and procedures to facilitate and encourage consultancy services to the wider community
14. Internationalisation ***Standard:*** *Programme content and activities are adequately globalized, and the students and staff*	14.1. There is evidence that the institution/tuition provider has effected significant changes in the programme, which are designed to increase the international content of the curriculum where appropriate and relevant

frequently engage in various forms of international engagements to enrich their learning experiences.	14.2. The institution/tuition provider aims to or already has learning and research partnerships with international institutions for the purpose of student study abroad and knowledge sharing 14.3. The students have a range of opportunities to interact with international scholars and learners 14.4. Groups of learners and staff have undertaken or are able to undertake exchange visits to regional and international institutions/tuition providers 14.5. The institution/ tuition provider has a system in place to ensure that their efforts towards internationalisation do not discriminate on the basis of racial, tribal, economic & social class, or national identity 14.6. The institution/ tuition provider has engaged international teaching staff 14.7. The institution/tuition provider has established a process to support culture diversity 14.8. Where relevant and appropriate, art and social science programmes have a curriculum track that entails the option of taking language classes as a requirement for graduation 14.9. The staff and students are supported to conduct collaborative research with students and staff from other institutions/providers 14.10. There is evidence of existing partnerships with regional and international institutions/tuition providers, and these partnerships have impacted or carry potential to impact positively on teaching and research in the institution 14.11. The institution/tuition provider has put in place

		processes, procedures, and policies to ensure mobility of students, credit accumulation and transfer
15. Student Satisfaction ***Standard:*** *There is a clear system to monitor and improve the welfare of students, and the students are generally satisfied with their experiences in the programme. As a benchmarking tool, the student survey results are used to improve the well-being of current and prospective students*	15.1.	There is a system to assess the quality of instruction, accessibility of instructors and the knowledge and preparation of courses by instructors
	15.2.	There's a periodic assessment to ascertain if students are satisfied with the institution's method of decision making
	15.3.	Students are satisfied with the process of student recruitment, provision of scholarship and general on-campus job recruitment
	15.4.	The institution/tuition provider works closely with the student representatives to address issues pertaining student welfare
	15.5.	Student concerns are attended to with utmost priority
	15.6.	There's a streamlined process of documenting and archiving the report of all forms of student concerns and the efforts made to address them
	15.7.	Students are satisfied with security measures put in place by the institution/tuition provider
	15.8.	Students are satisfied with the career development structures that have been made available to them by the institution/tuition provider
	15.9.	A student's survey used at course completion stage is designed appropriately, and ethical standards of privacy and confidentiality are observed
	15.10.	Action is taken by the institution/tuition provider on the basis of survey feedback obtained
	15.11.	Students, individually and collectively, have easy access to the governing body
	15.12.	A clear student grievance handling procedure exists, it

		is well known to students and staff, and there is evidence of implementation
16. Graduate Employability ***Standard:*** *The promotion of employability is the strategic direction that the institution/provider has adopted, and programme activities are geared towards promotion of self-employment and a greater engagement of students with their career pursuits*	16.1. 16.2. 16.3. 16.4. 16.5. 16.6. 16.7. 16.8. 16.9.	Employability is addressed in the rationale for offering the programme The pedagogy is designed in such a way that students have the capacity to develop self-employment or employment There is alignment of programme's exit level outcomes with relevant qualification descriptors and core competencies Potential employers and career prospects are linked to students' experiences in the programme Employability development opportunities are available to students Tracer studies are conducted and used to maintain the relevance of the curriculum Students are provided with opportunities for entrepreneurial development in the local, social and regional clusters Mechanisms are in place to foster working relationships among internal and external stakeholders Institution/tuition provider recognises and awards external stakeholders that bring additional skills and employability opportunities for students.
17. Social Development ***Standards:*** *Programme activities, exit level outcomes, procedures and systems are geared towards attainment of social development in*	17.1. 17.2. 17.3.	Programme objectives address the current social development priorities as articulated in the national, regional and global strategic documents Social development is recognised as a critical outcome of the programme Strategic and operational documents of the

line with current national, regional and global strategic priorities		programme reflect the social development focus of the programme
	17.4.	Policies, systems and procedures ensure that programme activities lead to social development
	17.5.	Research and consultancies services of those providing the programme have generated ideas that can be used to drive the social development agenda
	17.6.	Research innovations/patents arising from the activities of those running the programme have led to social development
	17.7.	Community engagement initiatives have led to or have potential to lead to positive changes in the development of the society
	17.8.	The projects developed by students carry potential to contribute to social development
	17.9.	Milestones attained by those working in the programme in their quest to contribute to social development are well documented.
18. Personal Development ***Standard:*** *The programme is geared towards development of personal skills, including positive attitudes, ethical conduct, emotional intelligence, leadership skills, conflict resolution and responsible citizenship.*	18.1.	Some exit level outcomes of the programme are explicitly focused on the personal development of those enrolled in the programme
	18.2.	Learning activities/experiences promote ability to competently communicate the concepts learned in written and spoken English or vernacular in both formal and informal contexts
	18.3.	Programme activities prepare students for life-long learning, continuing research and innovation;
	18.4.	Programme activities empower the learner with the skills needed to make progress in their professional career
	18.5.	The programme equips the students with the skills,

	attitudes and professional ethics that enable them to work in multicultural and global environments 18.6. The programme equips the learner with the skills needed to work with others as a team 18.7. The programme enables the learners to perform effectively in technical and non-technical environments 18.8. Some objectives of the programme are designed to nurture the values of academic integrity and avoidance of examinations fraud and other forms of academic malpractices 18.9. Life-long learning skills are integrated into the exit level outcomes of the programme, including leadership and conflict resolution skills applied in various contexts

APPENDIX EC: STANDARDS AND CRITERIA FOR INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT

Standard	Criteria
1. Institutional Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives ***Standard:*** *The institution's vision and mission are responsive to the Malawi and international context and geared towards assurance of the quality of the academic outcomes.*	1.1. The institution has a clear, widely consulted and formally approved strategic vision statement as the guiding concept of what it would like to be in the future and the role it intends to play in the longer term 1.2. The institution has a clear and formally approved mission statement that articulates the strategic vision, and expresses in a concise way the purpose and character of the institution 1.3. The vision and mission statements are shaped by relevant legislation and national policies, as well as by other relevant contextual forces and realities at local, national and international levels 1.4. The institution's vision and mission, as well as its governance and management processes, are geared towards assurance of the quality of the academic outcomes 1.5. Progress towards achievement of the vision, mission and goals of the institution is monitored and evaluated in terms of agreed-upon performance indicators, and the institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified
2. Institutional quality assurance management system	2.1. An institutional quality management system is formally established, functions efficiently in the framework of approved policies, procedures and mechanisms, and is adequately resourced

Standard: *An efficient institutional quality assurance management system is in place and it is continuously monitored and improved*	2.2. Continuous as well as periodic internal and external evaluations of the institution's academic and support functions by means of peer evaluation are an integral part of the institutional quality management system 2.3. The institution has adopted a working definition of quality assurance which is compatible with its mission 2.4. A systematic and comprehensive approach to quality assurance affecting all the essential services of the institution is being implemented 2.5. A quality assurance handbook addressing all the affected activities is available 2.6. The quality assurance handbook is available to all departments for consultation by all staff members
3. Human resource management system ***Standard:*** *The management of human resources is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements for acquiring, deploying and utilising sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced academic and support staff in order to meet the human resource needs of the institution in such a way that the quality of academic outcome is ensured*	3.1. The human resources management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for recruitment, appointments, record-keeping, labour relations, employment equity, performance management, compensation and benefits, and training and development 3.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the human resources management system with reference to international best practices 3.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the human resources management system
4. Financial resource management system	4.1. The financial management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for budgeting, resource

Standard: *The management of financial resources is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its financial needs in such a manner that the quality of the academic outcomes can be assured*	allocation, asset management, debt management and financial reporting 4.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the financial management system with reference to international best practices 4.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the financial management system
5. Facilities management System ***Standard:*** *The management of facilities is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its facilities needs in such a manner that the quality of the academic outcomes can be assured*	5.1. The facilities management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for facilities planning and acquisitions, the direction of design and construction activities, maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment, space assignments and utilisation, and real estate management 5.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the facilities management system with reference to international best practices 5.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the facilities management system.
6. *Planning and approval of academic offerings* ***Standard:*** *There is an efficient system for the planning and approval of new programmes and changes to existing programmes,*	6.1. This system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: a) Development and institutional approval of new qualifications and programmes in order to set appropriate academic standards, and to ensure that all the relevant legal requirements (including accreditation requirements set by relevant authorities) are met.

courses and curricula. The system is geared towards aligning academic offerings with the institution's vision, mission and goals, and ensuring the quality of academic outcomes	b) Continuous curriculum renewal to ensure the academic offering's academic integrity, alignment with new knowledge and skills, and responsiveness and relevance to the needs of the students and the country c) Development and institutional approval of academic partnerships with institutions within and outside Malawi. This includes joint offerings, external moderation and examination, joint/ double degrees, recognition of credits, etc. d) Development and institutional approval of short courses e) Effective and reliable central management of information on the institution's academic offerings (qualifications, programmes, courses, modules, short courses, partnerships, etc.) 6.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the system for planning and approval of academic offerings with reference to international best practices 6.3. The institution acts appropriately to address risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes, in order to continuously improve the system for planning and approval of academic offerings
7. Enrolment planning ***Standard:*** *There is an efficient system for planning the number of students to be enrolled in the different programmes/courses. The system is geared towards aligning the institution's size and*	7.1. The enrolment planning system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for; a) The gathering and interpretation of accurate and up-to date information on institutional capacity and historical trends to inform the planning process b) Internal and external approval of enrolment targets by the relevant authorities c) Tracking and reporting of enrolment

shape with its vision, mission, goals and capacity, and ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes.	7.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the enrolment planning system with reference to international best practices 7.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve enrolment planning
8. Student enrolment management system ***Standard:*** *There is an efficient student enrolment management system that is geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes.*	8.1. The student enrolment management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for - a) Marketing (information on the institution, the programmes / courses on offer, financial support, housing, etc.), recruitment (including outreach to schools and other target markets) b) Admissions c) Selection (where appropriate) d) Registration e) The effective and trustworthy central management of student information 8.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the student enrolment management system with reference to international best practices 8.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the student enrolment management system
9. Academic support services ***Standard:*** *The institution provides*	9.1. Student support services include strategies, policies and arrangements for: a) Academic development services geared towards the

efficient academic support services geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes and enhancing student success	enhancement of academic skills b) Student counselling services c) Access to academic information and learning materials through efficient library services and ITC, enabling students to meet their learning objectives 9.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the student support services with reference to international best practices 9.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the student support services
10. Facilitation of learning ***Standard:*** *The institution has efficient systems in place to ensure that teaching and learning leads to quality academic outcomes and student success*	10.1. The institution's activities to facilitate learning include strategies, policies and arrangements for: a) Ensuring that a range of learning opportunities appropriate to the learning outcomes are deployed, including, for example, formal lectures, group work, service learning, etc. b) Ensuring that staff is competent to teach the programmes/courses allocated to them and offering staff development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and competences in learning facilitation c) Ensuring that the quality of the learning experience on satellite campuses and tuition centres is comparable to that on the main campus 10.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the learning facilitation activities with reference to international best practices 10.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks,

	gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes, in order to continuously improve its learning facilitation activities
11. Assessment and certification of student learning ***Standard:*** *The institution has an efficient system to assess student learning that is geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes and enhancing student success*	11.1. The system for assessment of student learning includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: a) Regulations and procedures related to student assessment, including, for example, the security of test and examination papers, composition and calculation of marks, supplementary/special assessment opportunities, disciplinary and appeals procedures, internal and external moderation and examinations, etc. b) Ensuring that staff are competent to conduct student assessment in the programmes/courses allocated to them and offering staff development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and competencies in student assessment c) Ensuring that the assessment events on satellite campuses and tuition centres meet the same requirements as those on the main campus d) The effective and reliable central management of students' marks and learner records that guarantees the security of the data. 11.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the assessment system with reference to international best practices 11.3. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the system for the assessment of student learning 11.4. The certification system includes strategies, policies and

	arrangements: a) Accurate and secure data capturing and management b) Regular internal software control procedures c) Security measures to avoid fraud 11.5. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the certification system with reference to international best practices 11.6. The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the certification system
12. Tracking, review and feedback systems ***Standard:*** *There are effective systems to track student performance, gather student feedback, review programmes and courses, gather feedback from stakeholders and provide feedback on learning and teaching matters to students, staff and other stakeholders*	12.1. The tracking, review and feedback systems include strategies, policies and arrangements for - a) The tracking of student performance (including success rates, throughput rates, graduation rates), with regular reports enabling appropriate interventions by all the parties concerned b) Regular opportunities for student feedback on the quality of their programmes and courses, learning opportunities, teaching, and the total student learning experience. c) Internal and external review of programmes/courses with a view to continuous quality enhancement. d) Surveys of stakeholders (graduates, employers, etc.) Aimed at the enhancement of institutional insight with a view to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching. 12.2. It is a standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the tracking, review and feedback systems with reference to

	international best practices; 12.3. The institution acts appropriately to address risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the tracking, review and feedback systems
13. Management of postgraduate studies ***Standard:*** *The management of postgraduate studies is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of postgraduate studies can be assured*	13.1. The postgraduate studies management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: a) The design, approval, offering, evaluation and continuous improvement of postgraduate programmes contributing to the high level human capacity and skills required by the development needs of Malawi b) Criteria and processes for the approval of research proposals for masters and doctoral studies, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of postgraduate research projects with the needs of Malawi c) The support and development of postgraduate students, including support in the development of research projects, research methodology, etc. d) Requirements and codes of conduct for supervisors and postgraduate students e) The assessment of postgraduate study projects (including assignments, theses, dissertations, etc.) f) The effective and trustworthy central management of postgraduate student information 13.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the postgraduate management system with reference to international best practices

	13.3. The institution acts appropriately on risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the post-graduate management system
14. The research management system ***Standard:*** *The management of the institution's research is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of the research activities can be assured*	14.1. The research management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for: a) A shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of research at the institution b) Criteria and processes for the approval of research proposals, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of research projects with the needs of Malawi c) The support and development of the capacity of new and established researchers d) The management of research partnerships and research contracts e) The handling of intellectual property and the commercialisation of research f) The effective and trustworthy central management of research information 14.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the research management system with reference to international best practices 14.3. The institution acts appropriately on risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the research management system.
15. The community engagement planning and management system	15.1. The research management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for: a) A shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of

Standard: *The management of the institution's community engagement activities is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of the community engagement activities can be assured*	community engagement by the institution b) Criteria and processes for the approval of community engagement projects, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of community engagement projects with the needs of the students and communities, and the needs of Malawi c) The support and development of community engagement activities conducted by staff and students d) The management of partnerships with communities e) The effective and trustworthy central management of information related to community engagement activities 15.2. It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the community engagement management system with reference to international best practices 15.3. The institution acts appropriately to address risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the community engagement management system

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

APPENDIX IA: STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

Introduction

Quality and its assurance is the primary responsibility of the higher education institution. Therefore, the system of internal quality assurance should aim at setting up, maintaining and improving the quality standards of academic, research, and community engagement. The following standards and guidelines will help higher education institutions to establish and maintain robust internal quality assurance systems; adapted from the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA), developed by the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative (2017):

Standard 1: Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives

The higher education institutions should have published vision and mission statements that reflect its commitment to continuous quality enhancement; and strategic objectives and clear policies and procedures that are consistent with its vision and mission.

Guidelines

The institutional vision, mission and strategic objectives:

a) Are publicly disclosed; reflect the aspirations and needs of stakeholders, and indicate strategic development plans and targets.
b) Concerning quality assurance, are translated into clear policies and strategic plans, which are operationalised into achievable goals.

The institution ensures that there is a robust and well-functioning quality assurance system for its entire activities (academic, research and community engagement), and that facilitates the coordination of the approval of policies, procedures and mechanisms. The institution, therefore, ensures that:

a) The vision and mission statements and strategic objectives reflect commitment to quality enhancement
b) Various forms of planning (for example, institutional strategic, academic, and financial) are coordinated to ensure the quality of academic outcomes
c) Medium- and long-term plans reflect the programmes being offered, as well as its research focus to ensure sustainability and continuous improvement
d) The formulation of the plans is collegial, they promote a high degree of institutional integrity and responsiveness to change, and they are known to stakeholders
e) There is monitoring and evaluation, and benchmarking of processes, including self-assessment of academic programmes and institutional self-assessment for purposes of continual improvement.

Standard 2: Internal Quality Assurance

Each institution should have its own quality assurance office/unit which is adequately resourced.

Guidelines

The institution:

a) Has internal quality assurance structure (i.e. office/unit) and system (i.e. policies, procedures and guidelines)
b) Internal quality assurance policies, procedures and guidelines are formally approved, widely disseminated and used effectively
c) The quality management system is periodically reviewed to ensure continuous improvement of such a system

d) The quality assurance system includes the scheduled periodic review of the institutional and support systems, student satisfaction, assessment criteria, evaluation results, documented improvements and design and development review when new curriculum is instituted
e) Recommendations from quality reviews are converted to quality improvement plans, and these are implemented effectively

Standard 3:. Governance and Management

The institution should have clearly stated governance and management structures. This should ensure effective and ethical governance and management, including robust quality assurance practices that support the achievement of its mission and legal mandate.

Guidelines

The institution:

a) Has qualified, competent and experienced leadership to oversee the development and management of a quality culture within the institution
b) Has relevant governance and management bodies; and various committees, each with a clear mandate, duties, responsibilities, powers, privileges and tenure; and these bodies are properly coordinated to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and quality
c) Has an internal quality assurance policy and structure, which flow down through all levels
d) Has clear communication systems and networks for the promotion of internal and external information dissemination for public accountability
e) Makes responsible use of its autonomy
f) Has policies and procedures for the delegation of authority, whenever needed
g) Enables students to participate in decision-making in relevant governance bodies

h) Ensures regular consultation with stakeholders, and reports and follows up actions on key issues of policy and operations to promote quality, cohesion, harmony and identity within the institution

i) Emphasises ethics, transparency, and academic integrity throughout its teaching, learning and research activities

j) Promotes a high degree of institutional integrity by advocating and demonstrating honesty and non-discrimination in its treatment of staff, students and members of the public and in the management of institutional affairs

k) Publishes and disseminates on a regular basis, impartial and objective qualitative and quantitative information about courses offered, research undertaken and community services

l) Has developed and implemented effective processes for deterring, detecting and dealing with misconduct by students and staff

m) Has policies and activated procedures to manage conflict of interest

n) Has effective, systematic, timely and fair processes for the investigation of complaints, grievances and appeals by students, staff and other stakeholders

o) Where applicable, external bodies (i.e. the church in faith-based organisations or professional bodies in the case of professional programmes) to the school effectively play a governing role.

Standard 4: Human Resources

The institution should have policies on human resources that are inclusive and that ensure recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of qualified and competent staff to achieve its mission and carry out its legal mandate.

Guidelines

The quality of staff is the key to the quality of the higher education institution and, therefore, it:

a) Has clear policies and procedures, including consistent and fair remuneration policy, that ensure equal opportunities and actual gender equality in human resources for

recruitment, retention, and promotion of staff that is based on qualification, competence and skills

b) Has a core of full-time staff and keeps up-to-date records of staff numbers, qualifications and employment turnover rates
c) Has clear policies and procedures for continuous staff development
d) Has clear contractual agreements with staff that outline the conditions of employment and are aligned with any legislative requirements of the country of the institution
e) Provides adequate staff support facilities and services
f) Undertakes monitoring and evaluation, and appraisal of staff
g) Student-lecturers ratios are justifiable in relation to norms internal to the school to promote student-centred learning

Standard 5: Financial Resource Management

The institution should have sufficient financial resources and prudent financial management that are aligned to its mission, objectives and mandate to ensure quality education.

Guidelines

Financial sustainability is the backbone of any institution, and adequate financial resources and prudent financial management should be conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and procedures, which enable the institution to meet its financial needs to ensure quality academic outcomes. The institution has:

a) Adequate financial resources to carry out its mandate and objectives effectively and efficiently
b) A diversified financial and sustainable resource base, and ensures a balanced allocation of resources to core functions of academic, research, and community engagement
c) A prudent financial management system, which includes strategies, policies and procedures for budgeting, resource allocation, repairs and maintenance of infrastructure, asset management, debt management and financial reporting

d) A system to identify and address the risks, gaps and challenges identified for continuous improvement
e) Monitoring, evaluation (through financial audits) and benchmarking processes for the financial management system using international best practices or some other basis of accounting appropriate for the institution

Standard 6: Infrastructure and Facilities

The institution should have adequate and appropriate infrastructure, facilities and resources to support teaching, learning and research.

Guidelines

For a good higher education experience, institutions must provide a range of resources to assist students' learning.

Infrastructure and facilities must be in line with the goals and aims of the higher education institution, the programmes on offer, the teaching and learning strategy, as well as research.

The institution has:

a) Academic, administrative and recreational facilities (lecture theatres, seminar rooms, staff offices, laboratories, studios, workshops, etc.) adequate for the number of students and staff
b) A properly organised library, benchmarked on international standards, equipped with physical facilities and resources (including electronic resources); adequate for the number of students and staff
c) Adequate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, including affordable, dedicated and reliable connectivity
d) Facilities that conform to appropriate international health and safety provisions
e) Facilities accessible for persons with disabilities

f) In the case of e-learning, the institution has in place mechanisms for quality assurance in online programme/course development, material development and distribution, online facilitation, learner support, student assessment, and adequate e-learning infrastructure.

a) That it has an ICT plan for purposes of:
   i. Maintaining and upgrading of technologies
   ii. Ensuring reliability, privacy, safety and security.

b) That there is consistency and coherence of the technical framework for students and academic staff, which ensures that any change in technology is introduced in a way that minimises its impact on students and academic staff. Therefore, the institution has:
   i. A system for monitoring and supporting a range of hardware /software
   ii. Clearly stated technical expectations,
   iii. A system for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), which should be assessed and feedback given to students.

Standard 7: Student Recruitment, Admission, Certification and Support Services

The institution should have pre-defined, published and consistently applied policies and procedures that ensure fair and equitable recruitment and admission, progression, certification and support services through all phases of the student's lifecycle, and in issues concerning students' future employability.

The institution should have documented policies and strategies that promote students' welfare and guidance in curricular, vocational and personal areas.

Guidelines

Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interests of the individual students, programmes and institutions. It is vital to have fit-for-purpose admission, recognition and completion procedures. Therefore, the institution has clear policies, guidelines and strategies:

a) For recruitment, admission, selection and registration
b) That promote diversity in admission, including gender mainstreaming and consideration of disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities
c) That ensure that students admitted meet institutional general and programme specific entry requirements
d) That ensure monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking for improvement of enrolment management
e) That guarantee continual collection and compilation of data on students' admission, progress and performance, and graduation rates;
f) That promote student retention and progression, and address issues concerning drop-out rates
g) That ensure rigorous processes for issuance and storage of certificates; and
h) That ensure storage of detailed records and transcripts, indicating the list of courses, units and grades

The needs of a diverse student population such as mature, part-time, employed and international students as well as students with disabilities, and the shift towards student-centred learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing learning resources and student support.

Support services may be organised in a variety of ways depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are fit-for-purpose, accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

Students need guidance, and appropriate provision is made to advise and assist them in curricular, vocational and personal domains. Adequate provision is made for information and advice to potential students during the application and enrolment phases.

The institution has guidelines for the promotion of students' learning by:

a) Advising them on academic issues
b) Advising them on financial matters
c) Providing health, social, spiritual, and personal counselling services
d) Providing career guidance

The institution supports and develops appropriate strategies for the creation and functioning of cultural, artistic and sports facilities and associations.

Standard 8: Programmes Design, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation

The institution should have policies and systems that ensure the design and development, monitoring and evaluation of quality, relevant study programmes that are outcomes-based and aligned with the needs of stakeholders, and that contribute to the achievement of its mission and are commensurate with Malawian, regional and international standards.

In the case of open and distance learning (ODL), the provider must have in place mechanisms for pre-testing or piloting the learning materials to ensure that they are at the learners' level and that the learners will be able to use them without difficulty.

Guidelines

The institution:

a) Has policies, procedures and processes for introducing new programmes with learning outcomes and that are competence-based, and for amending or phasing out standing programmes, and programmes are subject to continuous monitoring and evaluation,

including periodic external review, and development to ensure currency, quality and relevance

b) Has academic programmes that are in line with its mission and objectives and address the expectations and needs of stakeholders; therefore, the programmes show range, depth, coherence, quality and relevance; are up to date and adequate in content and scope, promoting core content, ideas, values and the acquisition of employability skills, such as work-related learning/attachment/ internship/traineeship
c) Ensures that programme structures and credit hours/units are in accord with international norms for the amount of study required for each qualification it offers (or for the level of the qualifications awarded); and that programmes are approved by the NCHE and professional bodies, where applicable
d) Has effective mechanisms for stakeholder participation in curriculum design, review and validation, including feedback from students, alumni and employers
e) Has policies requiring formulated learning outcomes to be defined and documented for all programmes and courses, alignment of outcome-activity-assessment, and ensures that the programme specifications are accessible to learners (or stakeholders)
f) Has in place and regularly update graduate profiles for each discipline
g) Has structures and procedures for the approval of programmes by relevant bodies, such as the Senate or equivalence, and authorities such as professional bodies, if applicable
h) Has programmes that are delivered by adequate, qualified and competent staff with pedagogical skills
i) Has appropriate formal agreements for all programmes offered in partnership with other institutions, specifying in detail the roles and responsibilities of both partners, including teaching commitments and quality assurance arrangements
j) Ensures that the formulated learning outcomes are benchmarked against level descriptors of Malawian Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)

In the case of ODL, the pre-testing of learning materials is essential for ensuring that the students will be able to achieve the objectives or intended learning outcomes. The broad requirement of pretesting should be made available. For example:

a) Students' understanding of the learning outcomes
b) Language of presentation
c) Explanation of concepts, ideas and theories
d) Use of examples for illustration
e) Activities and practice exercises given, and feedback provided;
f) Use of symbols or icons
g) Navigational devices for online materials
h) Motivate and sustain learners' interests
i) Use didactic concepts in writing modules

Standard 9: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The institution should, in a way that is consistent with its vision and mission, put in place policies and procedures that promote learning and acquisition of appropriate knowledge, competencies and skills; and assure fair and transparent student assessment based on student-centred assessment.

Guidelines

Teaching and learning is one of the core activities of a higher education institution, and it is important that the academic staff and facilitators ensure effective teaching and learning to enable the students to acquire appropriate knowledge, competences and skills.

The institution must ensure that:

a) The teaching, learning and assessment strategies are learning-centred and flexible; they motivate students' self-reflection and engagement in the learning process
b) The environment and resources are appropriate and adequate to support each student

c) The assessment of students principles, standards and procedures must be explicit and made available publicly to both students and staff
d) There are systems in place for periodic monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the teaching and learning approaches for quality improvement
e) There are mechanisms for students to provide feedback on their learning experience.
f) External and internal examination moderation is applied according to approved policies and procedures

In the case of open and distance learning (ODL):

g) The decision on the medium or media of delivery should take into account the following:
    i. Accessibility to the learners
    ii. Cost of using it, both by the institution at installation and maintenance, as well as learner cost
    iii. Teaching strengths in relation to specific content
    iv. Its capacity in creating inter-activity
    v. Organisational requirements for development
    vi. Its novelty
    vii. Speed within which it can be set up
h) There are face-to-face sessions to provide general orientation and introduction to the course materials at the commencement of the course
i) There are special face-to-face sessions for difficult aspects of the course during the programme/course
j) There are face-to-face sessions to provide some revision work to learners before examinations

Standard 10: Research and Innovation

The institution should encourage, promote, and engage in innovative research consistent with

its policies and strategic plans, and address national, regional, continental, and international needs. The institution must encourage innovation in its teaching, learning and research.

The institution should ensure that the management of postgraduate studies is conducted within an approved framework of institutional policies and plans that ensure quality ethical research.

Guidelines

Research is one of the core activities of a higher education institution, therefore, the institution requires an institution-wide research policy that sets the direction of its research. The policy is at both institutional and research-programme level (postgraduate studies) to ensure proper engagement in research. The institution ensures that:

a) There is a shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of research
b) Research policy include how the same is linked to teaching to improve teaching and student learning outcomes
c) There are standards, procedures and processes for the approval of research proposals, and theses, and the conduct and supervision of research studies
d) There are policies, research management systems and strategies, adequate infrastructure and resources that facilitate all staff to undertake innovative research, and publish research results
e) There are standards and processes for the approval of research proposals and theses, in line with the research needs of the national or regional context, and capacity building possibilities for researchers, management of research partnerships and research contracts, handling of intellectual property and commercialisation of research, and effective and trustworthy management of research information
f) There is adequate academic integrity through the establishment and use of appropriate research committees and boards to ensure academic integrity
g) The research undertaken is relevant and responsive to the needs for academic advancement and community development expectations

h) There is effective monitoring and evaluation of the research system

i) There are mechanisms in place for knowledge transfer and the interaction between industry and research

j) A reasonable percentage of the institutional budget goes to research and development

Standard 11: Community Engagement

The institution should encourage engagement in community outreach programmes as part of its social responsibility.

Guidelines

A higher education institution is not only responsible for teaching, learning and research, but also for serving society. The institution has clear policies and guidelines in place clearly elaborating how community engagement for promotion and budgeting.

a) The institution ensures that community engagement activities are conducted within institutional policies and strategies that facilitate collaboration between the institution and its larger communities (local, national, regional, continental and global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity

b) For the benefit of the students, institution, and society, the institution incorporates community engagement in its activities, with the objective of:

    i. Enriching scholarship, research, and creative activities

    ii. Enhancing teaching and learning through service learning and community-based projects

    iii. Facilitating preparation of educated and engaged citizens

    iv. Strengthening democratic values and civic responsibility in students

    v. Addressing critical societal issues and contributing to public good

The institution should ensure that there exist mechanisms for partnering with other stakeholders in the community for sustainable development.

Standard 12: Information Management System

The institution should ensure that it collects, analyses, and makes use of relevant information for the effective management of its programmes of study and other activities.

Guidelines

Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making and for understanding what is working and what challenges need to be addressed. Effective processes for collecting and analysing information about academic programmes and other activities of the institution feed into the internal quality assurance system.

The information gathered will depend on the vision and mission add goals of the institution. However, the following points are important to address:

a) Key performance indicators
b) Profile of student population including gender
c) Learning resources and available student services
d) Student progression, drop-out rates, and graduation rates
e) Satisfaction of students and alumni with programmes and teaching provided include industry or other stakeholders
f) Career paths and employability for students
g) Adequate financial provision
h) Automated student management system
i) Guidelines for ensuring confidentiality and security processes

It is important that both students and staff are involved in analysis and follow-up activities to address the shortcomings.

Standard 13: Public Communication

The institution should publish and widely disseminate information about its activities,

including programmes, in a clear, accurate and objective manner; and ensure that the information is up-to-date and accessible.

The institution should ensure that promotion of its programmes is carried out in a fair and ethical manner, following acceptable best practices, and comply with all relevant legislation.

Guidelines

Information about the institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, alumni and other stakeholders, and the public. The information includes programmes offered, selection criteria, expected learning outcomes, qualifications they award, teaching and learning procedures, graduation rates, learning opportunities, and information about the employment of its graduates. The institution and departments ensure that:

a) Promotional materials give a clear and accurate view of the programme, its provision, objectives and outcomes, including:

i. Identification of the programme
ii. The body awarding the qualification and its accreditation status
iii. Mode of delivery
iv. Level of the programme on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)
v. Charges involved
vi. Terms and conditions relevant to the programme
vii. Conditions for withdrawal from the programme
viii. Financial agreements with the provider
ix. Rights, obligations and commitments expected of the student

b) Students are fully informed about issues that affect them with respect to the management of the programme, such as:

i. Language of communication
ii. Required access to technologies, in the case of ODL

iii. Technical competencies of students required to enroll in the programme, in the case of ODL
iv. Timeframe in which the programmes are offered and nature of learning outcomes,
v. Required texts and access to reference materials
vi. Understanding of independent learning expectations
vii. Schedule for face-to-face interactions, in the case of ODL
viii. Schedule for examinations
ix. Schedule for submission of assignments
x. Results publication
xi. Collection of certificates

Standard 14: Collaboration, Staff and Student Mobility

The institution must have mechanisms that promote collaboration with other higher education institutions, professional bodies, research institutions and relevant social actors at national, regional, continental and international levels and to facilitate mobility of students and staff.

Guidelines

The institution has policies that promote the mobility of academic staff, researchers and students in the programme, internationally. The degree-awarding institution ensures appropriate and high quality delivery of programmes at the partner institution.

The collaborating institutions:

a) Ensure that programmes under collaboration are of the required standard and rigour as those of the parent institution
b) Ensure that students benefit from the same standard of resources as those for the regular students of the awarding institution

c) Take the responsibility to assure the quality of the educational provision under collaboration
d) Ensure that the collaborating institutions are approved by the relevant quality assurance agency/professional body and are subject to periodic quality audits
e) Ensure that students are fully informed of the nature of the collaboration between the institutions concerned
f) Transfer credit from partner or other organizations
g) Include MOU; what is the instrument of agreement (MOE, partnership agreement, etc.)

If the programme is offered via collaborative arrangements, the institution clearly defines the rights and responsibilities of parties, legal ownership, accreditation status of the programme, and resources available for the programme.

APPENDIX IB: GUIDELINES FOR SELF-REVIEW

1. Purpose of self-review

Self-evaluation can take place at:

a) Course/module level
b) Programme level
c) Departmental (academic & non-academic) level
d) Faculty
e) Institutional

On-going self-review can have beneficial institutional quality maintenance and enhancement effects. Self-review ensures that higher education institutions examine their quality in a structured manner within a well-defined framework. It allows the institution/department to check how far it is achieving its strategic mission and goals, and prepare an improvement/action plan for further development.

Ideally, self-review serves two purposes: to provide the information necessary for institutional portfolio as an initial stage for external audits; and to encourage departmental continuous improvement. The University-wide quality assurance policy should require that each department formally examine itself, assess its strengths and concerns, and plan how to capitalize on those strengths and eliminate or alleviate those concerns. In doing so, an institution documents its present effectiveness and its strategies to continue to improve that effectiveness. Through a self-review process, the institution brings together all stakeholders to:

a) Collect and review data about the institution/department and its programmes and/or activities
b) Analyse the data about the departmental strengths, areas of concern and opportunities
c) Develop strategies to ensure that the strengths are maintained and problems are addressed

d) Make specific recommendations for further quality enhancement

When undertaking self-review, the institution/department should ask the following six basic quality assurance questions:

a) What are you trying to do?
b) Why are you doing it?
c) How are you trying to do it?
d) Why is that the best way to do it?
e) How do you know it works?
f) How will you change in order to improve?

2. Appointing the self-review panel

The self-review requires time and effort. To indicate the importance of the self-review to the department, the quality assurance unit should coordinate and appoint the self-review panels. The panel members should formally be charged with their task, and should be provided with the necessary support to carry out their duties. The dean/director/manager/head of department is usually the chairperson of the panel. The panel should have a balanced representation and the sentence should come first before the dean. It may be wise to include on the panel, or, at least, to provide an opportunity for reactions from, persons who are not directly engaged in the area under study e.g., student services should not be studied by student service personnel alone. It is helpful to involve those whose interests might be affected by the area (e.g., a student on the student services committee). The panel conducting a self-review should at least have five (5) members, two senior staff members from the department under review (one of whom will chair the review), and three external members, one of whom may be possibly from outside the institution. Where appropriate, a representative from a related professional group, business or significant client group can be added to the panel.

3. Developing a self-review plan

A self-review's first major task is to plan a self-review process that both fits the needs of the institution/department/programme and satisfies the requirements of external audits. The steps the panel should take to develop this self-review plan are straightforward. It should:

a) Identify existing review and planning process and determine how best to integrate these into the self-review process
b) Identify the objectives of the self-review process
c) Formulate and implement panel structures consistent with the objectives
d) Establish self-review criteria
e) Propose the review methodologies to be used to gather and analyze data and specify the data that must be gathered and analysed
f) Establish a timetable
g) Develop a preliminary outline of the self-review report
h) Establish the reporting mechanisms, i.e. writing responsibilities that will lead from data-gathering to the complete self-review report.

4. Conducting the self-review

The self-review process shall vary according to the scope, nature, and emphasis of the self-review plan. It shall also vary according to the size, complexity, and character of the institution. No single pattern is appropriate to all institutions/departments/programmes.

To ensure the effectiveness of the self-review panel, it is important to provide direction for adequate communication among the members. And, regardless of how the course, department, institution, etc. is organized for self-review, there should be some means for regular communication with the whole panel.

The self-review panel is responsible for conducting self-review and for writing a report. Students are expected to participate actively in the self-evaluation process.

The course, department, institution, etc. under review is responsible for undertaking analysis of the report with regards to the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report, and for developing and implementing an improvement plan.

Normally, the self-review process, involves the following four major steps:

Step 1: Self-review

i. Self-review of academic/administrative departments
ii. Assessment by students/stakeholders

Step 2: Feedback from the panel and internal feedback through site visits to validate the self-review report by:

i. National experts
ii. International experts
iii. Stakeholders

Step 3: Review report

i. Publication of findings

Step 4: Implementation of recommendations

i. Agree about a quality improvement plan of action with timescales and deliverables
ii. Report about the progress
iii. Follow-up

5. Writing the self-review report

When writing the report include the following:

5.1. The purpose of the report

A self-review report plays specific roles:

a) It summarises the purpose and findings of the self-review process
b) It demonstrates the department's ability to analyse its effectiveness and develop plans for its own improvement
c) It provides evidence that the department fulfils its mission and objectives
d) It summarizes information necessary for the external audit visit

The self-evaluation report should be a well-written, readable narrative in clear, simple language, not a collection of tables, charts, and graphs. It should be a coherent, self-contained analytical document as opposed to a descriptive list of responses to the individual topics or issues listed in the review criteria. It should be concise yet thorough and comprehensive.

5.2. The structure of the self-review report

There is no single way of organising the self-review report. Each institution/department is encouraged to present its report in the manner best suited to its own purposes and needs, flowing from its self-review plan and process. However, while there are various ways to structure the self-review report, for accreditation and audit purposes, NCHE requires that every report should cover all assessment criteria and should contain the following essential elements:

- Cover page
- Table of contents
- Executive summary
- An introduction: provides the overview of the department, purpose of the report, self-study process, and organisation of the report
- Self-review criteria
- The body of the report that, regardless of how it is organised, includes an evaluation of the department in terms of the evaluation criteria (findings concerning strength and areas for improvement)
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

- Appendices

6. Development of a quality improvement plan

After identifying service strengths and areas for improvement, the summary can be transferred directly into a quality improvement plan. The quality improvement plan specifies actions:

a) Identification for areas of improvement
b) Prioritisation of the areas
c) Development of the work plan:

Recommendations	**Tasks for implementation of recommendations**	**Responsible person(s)**	**Timeframe for completion**	**Resources required/ Available**	**Evidence for completion**
1.					
2.					
3.					
Etc.					

Improvement and enhancement planning and strategies need to be articulated with institutional structures and quality processes at different levels to ensure planned and strategically directed improvement.

APPENDIX IC: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR STUDENT EVALUATION OF COURSE/TEACHING

The student evaluation is part of our regular effort to maintain quality instruction. Our academics use your responses to these questions to become better lecturers. We take your answers seriously, and we hope you will also take them seriously. Please write comments to explain your scores. If you have questions about this form or the evaluation procedure, please ask the person giving this evaluation.

Your answers are anonymous. Completing this survey will in no way affect your course grade. Thank you for participating in this evaluation.

Teaching approaches	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
The lecturer stimulated my interest in the course					
The lecturer managed classroom time well					
The lecturer managed the pace of delivery well					
The lecturer was prepared and organized for every class					
The lecturer encouraged discussions					
The lecturer responded to questions					
The lecturer demonstrated in-depth knowledge of the content					
The lecturer appeared enthusiastic and interested					
The lecturer used a variety of learner centred instructional methods to achieve					

the course objectives (e.g. group discussions, student presentations, etc.)					
The lecturer challenged students to work hard.					
The lecturer was available for consultation outside of class					
The lecturer was approachable					
The lecturer actively attempts to prevent cheating in this course					
Lecturer gave guidance on where to find resources					

Comments (Teaching Approaches)

_____

_____

_____

Feedback and assessment	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
Information about the assessment was communicated clearly					
Feedback was provided within the stated time frame					
Feedback showed how to improve my work (e.g. corrections including comments)					
The course had an adequate number of assessments					

Comments (Feedback and Assessment)

_____

_____

_____

Resources and administration	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
The course was supported by adequate library resources (physical and electronic)					
Teaching equipment (whiteboard/LCD projector) were useful					

This section combines the assessment of two types of resources/lecturers

Comments (Resources and Administration)

_____

_____

_____

Additional questions	**Yes**	**No**
Was the syllabus made available to the students?		
Was the syllabus explained at the beginning of the course?		

Was the course delivered as outlined in the syllabus?		
Were the exams aligned to the course syllabus?		
Were the projects/ assignments aligned to the course learning outcomes?		
Would you recommend this course to a fellow student?		

Comments (Additional Questions)

_____

_____

_____

Resources and administration	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
The course was supported by adequate library resources					
Blackboard resources for the course were useful					
Lecturer gave guidance concerning where to find resources					

Comments (Resources and administration)

_____

_____

_____

Overall experience in the course	**Excellent**	**Very good**	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**
Overall, how do you rate your experience in this course?					

Comments (Overall Experience)

_____

_____

_____

Student self-evaluation **Please comment on your own work for this course.**	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Neutral**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
I contributed constructively during in-class activities					
I feel I have achieved the learning outcomes					

Comments (Comments (Student Self-evaluation)

_____

_____

_____

Comments on strengths and ways of improvement

- What changes would you recommend to improve this course?

- What did you like best about your lecturer's teaching?

- What did you like least about your lecturer's teaching?

- Any further comment:

Thank you for your time and for your valuable feedback!

APPENDIX ID: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING

PART A: Introduction:

Faculty/School:

Department:

LAB/Practical/Lecture:

Peer evaluator:

Lecturer:

Course:

Date:

Learning Goals:

_____

_____

_____

Learning Outcomes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

PART B:

d) Structure of the Lesson:

□ **Awkward** □	□ **Confusing**	□ **Coherent**	**Outstanding**
Ideas were hindered by recurring moments of minor confusion, a moment of major confusion that eventually passed, or digressions that were clearly off topic.	Ideas were impeded by significant confusion that was left unresolved or severe digressions that were obviously counterproductive.	Key ideas and many nuances were clear and easy to follow.	Key ideas and many nuances were very clear and revealed in ways that deftly anticipated or addressed students' questions and interests.

Possible factors to consider: Order of presentation, logical flow, clarity/quality of transitions/examples, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

e) Style of Delivery

Decaptivating □	**Low enthusiasm** □	**Clear** □	**Dynamic** □	**Captivating** □

Very low on energy, conveying the impression the instructor may be bored, severely fatigued or distracted, or indifferent to the audience.	Inconsistent or slightly low on energy, conveying the impression the instructor may be tired, distracted, ill, or unsure how to make the material interesting.	Alert and polished, but not necessarily enthusiastic; clear delivery but lacking in personality.	Obviously enthusiastic or engaged by the subject, conveying sufficient personality and interest to keep students alert and attentive.	Obviously passionate or fascinated by the subject, exuding personality and interest so effectively that students are visibly captivated or highly engaged.

Possible factors to consider: Volume and tone of voice; pace of delivery; integration of discussion questions, problems, etc.; use of eye contact, gestures, strategic movement around the classroom, etc.; use of narrative, humour, suspense, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

f) Professional Demeanor

Inappropriate □	**Lax** □	**Acceptable** □	**Committed** □	**Outstanding** □
Some aspects of demeanor raise serious concerns	Some aspects of demeanor may weaken	Demeanor is acceptable and does not detract	Demeanor conveys a positive sense of	Demeanor is of role model caliber and

about credibility and awareness of professional norms.	credibility or invite classroom management issues.	or distract.	professionalism, suggesting a serious commitment to serving students well.	seems to have elevated the professionalism displayed by students.

Possible factors to consider: Punctuality, tone of delivery, familiarity with students, methods of classroom management, attire (if relevant to course/departmental standards), substance abuse, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

g) Use of Appropriate Instructional Tools (audio/visual aids, chalkboard, handouts, etc.)

Specify tool(s) used: _____

Disruptive □	**Awkward** □	**Neutral** □	**Effective** □	**Outstanding** □
Creates substantial delays, distractions, or confusion, either because the tool	Creates minor delays, distractions, or confusion, either because the tool	Coherent and unobtrusive, but adds little value or may seem gimmicky.	Noticeably enhances the lesson.	Greatly enhances the lesson and the level of student engagement.

was used awkwardly or because a seemingly essential tool was excluded (e.g. extensive description of a special painting technique, but no visual illustration).	was used awkwardly or because a potentially helpful tool was excluded (e.g. comments about the importance of specific geographic factors, but no map).			

Possible factors to consider: Value added, clarity of format, skillfulness of integration, distractions/delays, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

5: Student Engagement/Participation

Negative □	**Reserved** □	**Comfortable** □	**Engaged** □	**Invigorated** □
Students participate very rarely or never. Class seems	Students participate very rarely or never. Class seems	Students participate sporadically, but class is	Students obviously feel comfortable participating	Students obviously feel excited to participate and

apathetic or tense, as if participation is unwelcome.	timid or hesitant, as if unsure whether or when participation is welcome.	attentive. There is no indication students feel unwelcome or unable to participate. At least 10% participated.	and trust their comments are valued.	trust their comments can shape the lesson.

Possible factors to consider: Participation levels, eye contact, posture, facial expressions, distractions, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

6. Attentiveness to Students' Active Learning

Rote □	**Passive** □	**Basic** □	**Engaging** □	**Masterful** □
Presents lesson with very few or no efforts to assess and adapt to students' level of comprehension or engagement.	Presents lesson with few or generic efforts to assess and adapt to students' level of	Presents lesson in ways that encourage students to think about its meaning or importance. Responds to	Presents lesson in ways that require students to actively explore the material in greater depth. Responds to	Presents lesson in ways that require students to actively explore the material in greater depth and practice

	comprehension or engagement (e.g. "Got it?", "Any questions?", "Get working", etc.). Seems aware of students' non-verbal feedback, but does not require or build on their active engagement.	students' verbal and non-verbal feedback by adjusting delivery, but not necessarily by adapting pedagogy. Student contributions have at least some effect on the lesson.	students' verbal and non-verbal feedback by adapting pedagogy in ways that are generally successful. Student contributions enrich the lesson.	applying it. Clearly attentive to students' verbal and non-verbal feedback, and adapts pedagogy in ways that are impressively effective. Student contributions consistently enrich the lesson.

Possible factors to consider: Use of lecture, discussion questions, in-class assignments, group activities, student presentations, story-telling, previously-assigned work, participation strategies, etc.

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

7. Cumulative Impressions

i. Based on what you observed, what are the instructor's top strengths?

_____

_____

_____

_____

ii. Based on what you observed, what are the instructor's weaknesses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

iii. Based on what you observed, what are the instructor's top opportunities for improvement?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX IE: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR CONDUCTING GRADUATE TRACER SURVEY

Kindly complete this questionnaire accurately and truthfully. Your responses will be used for research purposes to assess employability, academic progression, relevance and, eventually, contributing to the improvement of the curricula of programmes offered in the X University. Your answers to this survey will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Thank you very much!

A. Biographic information

1. First Name : _____
2. Surname: _____
3. Gender: Male □ Female □
4. Date of Birth: _____
5. Marital Status: Single □ Married □ Separated □ Widowed □

B. contact information

1. Address:
2. Email Address:
3. Mobile Number:
4. LinkedIn:
5. Skype:

C. Education background

a) Period of study: From: _____to_____
b) Qualification details:

Qualification	Awarding Institution	Year of graduation

D. Employment Information

1. Name of Organization/Employer: _____
2. Type of Organization: Private □ Public □ NGO □ Non-Profit □
3. Employment Type: Working Fulltime □ Working Part-time □ Working Part-time but seeking fulltime work □ Working part-time but not seeking fulltime work □ Other □ specify_____
4. Occupational Classification:

Manager	□
Professional	□
Technician or Associate Professional	□
Clerical support workers	□
Services and Sales Worker	□
skilled agricultural forestry worker	□
Craft and related trades or Related Worker	□
Plant and Machine Operator and Assembler	□
Elementary occupations	□
Armed Forces Occupation	□
Other	□ specify_____

5. Is your current job related to the programme you studied at the university?

Yes □ No □

6. Employment information

Place of work	**Local/abroad**	**Duration**	**Designation**	**Reasons for leaving**

7. Monthly Income Range

   Below 200,000 □

   200,000 but less than 500, 000 □

   500,000 but less than 1 million □

   1 million but less than 2 million □

   2 million but less than 3 million □

   Above3 million □

8. Were you working while pursuing your degree?

   Yes □ No □

9. If no to 8, how long did it take you to find a job after obtaining your degree?

   _____

10. Please provide reasons for any time gap between obtaining your degree and your first employment.

_____

_____

_____

C. In the case you are self-employed

2 Nature of business:_____

3 Number of Years:_____

4 Monthly turnover Range:_____

Below 200,000	□
200,000-500,000	□
500,000 but less than 1 million	□
1 million but less than 2 million	□
2 million but less than 3 million	□
Above 3 million	□

D. In the case that you are unemployed

1. Please state your reason(s) why you are unemployed

_____

_____

_____

How would you rate the contribution of your study programme to your personal and professional growth in terms of the following: (1-poorly 2-fairly 3-highly 4-very highly)

Academic Profession	1□	2□	3□	4□
Research Capability	1□	2□	3□	4□
Learning Efficiency	1□	2□	3□	4□

Communication Skills	1□	2□	3□	4□
People Skills	1□	2□	3□	4□
Problem Solving Skills	1□	2□	3□	4□
Information Technology Skills	1□	2□	3□	4□
Meeting Present and Future Professional Needs	1□	2□	3□	4□
Exposure to Local Community within Field of Specialization	1□	2□	3□	4□
Exposure to International Community within Field of Specialization	1□	2□	3□	4□
Critical Thinking Skills	1□	2□	3□	4□
Salary Improvement and Promotion	1□	2□	3□	4□
Opportunities Abroad	1□	2□	3□	4□
Personality Development	1□	2□	3□	4□
Advocacy	1□	2□	3□	4□
Facilitation skills				

E. How would you rate the degree programme you finished? (1-poorly 2-fairly 3-highly 4-very highly)

Range of Courses	1□	2□	3□	4□
Relevance to your Profession	1□	2□	3□	4□
Community engagement	1□	2□	3□	4□

Premium Given to Research	1□	2□	3□	4□
Interdisciplinary Learning	1□	2□	3□	4□
Teaching and Learning Environment	1□	2□	3□	4□
Quality of Instruction	1□	2□	3□	4□
Teacher-Student Relationships	1□	2□	3□	4□
Library Resources	1□	2□	3□	4□
Laboratory Resources	1□	2□	3□	4□
Class Size	1□	2□	3□	4□
Professor's Pedagogical Expertise	1□	2□	3□	4□
Professor's Knowledge of Subject Matter	1□	2□	3□	4□

F. If pursuing further studies please indicate:

1. Enrolment date_____

2. Programme of study _____

3. University/Institution_____

4. Institution address_____

5. Reasons for pursuing further studies:

_____

_____

_____

6. Was the program that you studied at X University a prerequisite for your current studies?

   Yes □ No □

G. Would you recommend to anyone the program that you studied at X University?

Yes □ No □

If no, please explain.

H. What areas would you recommend for inclusion in the program that you studied at X University?

APPENDIX IF: EXEMPLAR RUBRIC FOR EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEYS FOR GRADUATES

Thank you for sparing time to complete this questionnaire. All the information that you shall provide shalll be kept confidential and will be used only for statistical purposes. The survey is intended to assist the X institution for preparing students for the work environment and will better serve your company and industry needs.

1. Company Name:_____
2. Position of the Person Completing Form:_____
3. Address:_____
4. Company's Phone Number:_____
5. Graduate/ Employee Name:_____
6. Qualification of the Graduate_____
7. Date of Hire:_____
8. Is the Graduate still employed by your company?

   Yes: □ No: □
9. If the answer is no, explain why they left_____
10. Please tick the box which best indicates your level of satisfaction demonstrated by your employee's performance for each of the following:

Area	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Overall job performance	□	□	□
Job specific skills	□	□	□
Problem solving skills	□	□	□
Individual skills	□	□	□
Teamwork skills	□	□	□

Leadership skills	□	□	□
Communication skills	□	□	□
Relevant Technology Skills	□	□	□
Professionalism	□	□	□
Self-management	□	□	□

11. Are you willing to consider employing a graduate from X institution in the future?

    Very willing □ Willing □ Not willing □

12. Based on your experience, how can X institution improve the graduate's skills to meet your company's needs?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    Thank you for your assistance in helping X institution to improve its academic training.

APPENDIX IG: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATE PROFILES

1. Introduction

Knowledge, skills and attitudes, which a higher education institution intends its graduates to develop through their study to equip them for their future education or employment are written at institution and qualification levels, and are used to inform curriculum design as well as guide the development of learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment at paper or course level. Each institution must develop and regularly update graduate profiles for each discipline. Graduate profiles are descriptions of attributes.

2. Benefits of graduate profiles

Graduate profiles benefit all stakeholders in higher education. Students shall use them to inform their choice of courses and their future planning for study and employment. Staff engaged in creating graduate profiles can foster collegiality, increase efficiency and transform their thinking about teaching to take a more student outcome-oriented approach. Alumni, employers and external or accrediting agencies consulted in the process of creating graduate profiles can contribute to ensuring university learning experiences and qualification content are current, relevance, and are communicated in a format that is better understood outside the institutions.

3. Alignment of graduate profiles with institutional goals

Graduate profiles must be aligned with both institutional goals and the learning outcomes of individual programmes or courses. At course level, good teaching practice also demands “constructive alignment” of learning outcomes with teaching activities and assessment. Constructive alignment is achieved when the learning outcomes of a course are mirrored in teaching activities and assessment tasks. There should be a clear link between what students

should be able to do as a result of their learning (learning outcomes)and the teaching activities in which the students engage to facilitate the desired learning, on the one hand, and the assessment tasks that test the students' accomplishment of the learning outcomes, on the other.

4. Requirements for graduate profiles

Graduate profiles should:

- Articulate the educational aims of the qualification and/or specialisation and the capabilities and attributes expected of graduates
- Inform curriculum design and review, including the alignment of teaching, learning and assessment activities within the papers that contribute to the profile
- Be publicly available, via the institution's website and other publications as appropriate, to communicate the intended outcomes of the qualification and/or specialisation to current and potential students, staff, employers, industry, the professions, alumni, and the wider community.

5. How to write a graduate profiles

Graduate profiles are written at institutional and in the qualifications framework, and should reflect the perspectives of students, staff, employers, industry, the professions, alumni, and the wider community. Given that they are designed to communicate with all key stakeholders, graduate profiles are best written as a collaborative exercise. Such collaboration is particularly important for academic staff when developing new programs where learning outcomes must align with qualification-level graduate profiles, given the potential for the principle of academic freedom to be invoked. Tensions between graduate profiles and academic freedom are best resolved through robust debate at an early stage of qualification planning.

At institutional level a graduate profile may be a succinct statement, a statement followed by a list of attributes, or a set of institutional-level "goals for teaching and learning" that serves a similar purpose.

Examples of graduate profile at institutional level:

To produce graduates who are distinguished by their professionalism, commitment to on-going learning and personal development, confidence and adaptability, ability to communicate and cooperate, and their appreciation of the wider contexts in which they live and work.

At qualification level, graduate profiles are written as sets of attributes. Higher education institutions are advised to allow adequate time to develop graduate profiles in consultation with key stakeholders, and to pay careful attention to both content and style.

Writers of graduate attributes at qualification level must begin by thinking about what knowledge, skills and attitude someone with this qualification, at this level, should have. Think about these as a holistic set of attributes, perhaps in terms of role descriptions for jobs that someone with this qualification might be expected to perform. The attributes should be contextualised to the discipline, and should also:

a) Be consistent with institutional policy
b) Reflect the expected outcomes for the qualification type as expressed by HEQF
c) Address broad domains – increasingly these are expected to include literacy and numeracy, soft skills and green skills
d) Reflect consultation with stakeholders

Graduate profiles reflect the values and aspirations of the higher education institution for graduates who contribute to the development of Malawi and the world through their creative thinking, innovative approaches, and connection with disciplines, industry and professional bodies. Graduates of higher education institutions benefit from opportunities to solve problems and apply theory to a variety of real-world learning contexts during their study.

The broad domains that would normally be addressed in the graduate profile include:

a) Personal capabilities
b) Discipline-specific competencies
c) Professional attributes

d) Ethical and social attributes

6. Tips for writing graduate profiles

A graduate profile at qualification level typically begins with a statement that summarises generic attributes, and goes on to list attributes as they apply in a specific context. The following writing frame may be a useful guide to writing graduate profiles at qualification level.

Examples:

Opening phrase

Begin the profile with a phrase such as:

- On successful completion of the [name of qualification], graduates should be able to…
- Graduates of the [name of qualification] are distinguished by their ability to…
- Graduates of the [name of qualification] will possess the following attributes…
- A graduate of [name of major] will be well prepared to…

Graduate attributes

Descriptive statements of knowledge, skills and attitudes addressing four broad domains:

1. **Personal capabilities** – generic personal knowledge and skills contextualised to the discipline, e.g.:
   a) Understand, appreciate and work with creative people
2. **Discipline-specific competencies** – subject-specific skills and knowledge, e.g.:
   b) Understand the principles and processes of creative product design
3. **Professional attributes** – generic professional skills, e.g.:
   c) Be able to work within, and lead, an interdisciplinary team of … specialists in a creative design project to produce a viable product
4. **Ethical and social attributes** – generic and subject-specific attitudes and values, e.g.:

d) Be able to examine and understand the full breadth of issues surrounding the social, environmental, regulatory and ethical concerns associated with the area

Examples of verbs for writing graduate attributes in relation to learning outcomes:

Verbs for graduate attributes	Corresponding verbs for learning outcomes
Knowledge (cognitive skills)	
Know/ Demonstrate knowledge of…	Arrange, define, describe, label, list, memorise, recognise, relate, reproduce, select, state
Understand/ Demonstrate understanding of…	Explain, reiterate, reword, critique, classify, summarise, illustrate, translate, review, report, discuss, re-write, estimate, interpret, theorise, paraphrase, reference
Apply/ Use knowledge of…	Use, apply, discover, manage, execute, solve, produce, implement, construct, change, prepare, conduct, perform, react, respond, role-play
Analyse/ Employ analysis of…	Break down, catalogue, compare, quantify, measure, test, examine, experiment, relate, graph, diagram, plot, extrapolate, value, divide
Evaluate	Review, justify, assess, present a case for, defend, report on, investigate, direct, appraise, argue, project-manage
Create	Develop, plan, build, create, design, organise, revise, formulate, propose, establish,

	assemble, integrate, rearrange, modify
Skills (psychomotor or physical skills)	
Perform	Assemble, build, calibrate, construct, dismantle, display, dissect, fasten, fix, grind, heat, manipulate, measure, mend, mix, organise, sketch
Adapt	Solve, adapt, combine, coordinate, revise, integrate, adapt, develop, formulate, modify, master
Originate	Construct, compose, create, design, specify, manage, invent, project-manage, originate
Attitudes (affective skills)	
Demonstrate appreciation for…	Complete, describe, differentiate, explain, follow, form, initiate, invite, join, justify, propose, read, report, select, share, study
Show ability to develop..	Adhere, alter, arrange, combine, compare, complete, defend, explain, generalise, identify, integrate, modify, order, organise, prepare, relate, synthesise
Display consistent ability to…	Act, discriminate, display, influence, listen, modify, perform, practise, propose, qualify, question, revise, serve, solve, use, verify

APPENDIX IH: GUIDELINES FOR INTEGRATING RESEARCH WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Introduction

Integrating new knowledge created through research with teaching has become an important area that needs prompt attention with growing emphasis on student learning activities, quality assurance procedures and research funding mechanisms in higher education systems. The link between research and teaching is not automatic, hence the deliberate need to create it in higher education departments in order to achieve a productive relationship and manage research activities of higher education institution teaching staff. These guidelines set out the premise that the link between teaching and research is of great importance; and it provides examples of the ways in which higher education institutions in Malawi can link research and teaching.

Importance of integrating research and teaching

Teaching and learning and research in higher education should complement each other to exert a positive mutual influence. To students, the research component of higher education is essential in helping them develop skills for gathering, synthesising and creating knowledge, as well various other skills they need in the 21st century.

The knowledge and skills that research staff gain through their teaching further their academic research, and students contribute to configuring research. The link between teaching and research need not always take the same form.

Categories of research-teaching linkages

The integrating of research and teaching activities in universities has been informed by a growing demand from employers for problem-solvers with skills to undertake enquiry. In the face of rapid advances and innovation across many fields of knowledge, it is also increasingly

important to prepare students to be lifelong learners able to continue to learn after graduation. Drawing on literature of contemporary higher education curricula, a curriculum approach can be considered in relation to six different categories of research-teaching linkages:

1. Teaching can be *research-led* so that the curriculum is informed by the outcomes of research and the emphasis is on developing students' understanding of existing research findings
2. Teaching can be *research-oriented* where the focus is on the methodological processes of research in the discipline and students learn the practices of enquiry or how new knowledge is created and validated
3. Teaching can be *research-tutored* where students are engaged in discussions about existing research findings and practices
4. Teaching can be *research-based* where the curriculum is built almost entirely around students undertaking research activities
5. Teaching can be *research-informed* where teachers (potentially in collaboration with their students) undertake enquiry into their teaching that, like all scholarly work, ensures teaching is evidence-informed, public, and open to scrutiny by peers
6. Research can be *teaching-influenced* where engagement of students in on-going research can inform the direction, scope, methods and outcomes of a study. This can be particularly relevant when supervising research students where the experience of teaching and research is often blurred, but is also possible in undergraduate teaching context.

Suggestions for strengthening the connection between research and teaching

The following list provides suggestions for strengthening the connection between research and teaching in existing curricula:

1. ***Establish whether the link between teaching and research is productive and strengthen it where necessary***

Higher education institutions need to state explicitly for each programme type (researcher training, professional education), each discipline and each educational phase (Bachelor's, Master's) what research contributes to teaching, and which research (by students, lecturers) is needed.

2. ***Strengthen the link between teaching and research within the institution by striving for a better balance in the value attached to teaching and to research***

Higher education institutions should focus more on teaching quality and less on quantity, using resources released through the introduction of the student loan system. They should develop quality indicators for teaching.

3. ***Engage in cooperation to strengthen the link between teaching and research***

Higher education institutions must seek to offer programmes jointly in order to deploy teaching staff more efficiently and create shared research opportunities for groups of students. They should extend their scope to include research within the region thereby giving students access to research skills that will be of practical use in their later careers.

4. ***Invest in systematic research to determine the importance of research for higher education***

There is limited scientific insight into the importance of research for teaching in higher education. Worse still, the understanding of the significance of teaching for research is even rare. Strengthening the link between research and teaching, where this is beneficial, requires a more robust empirical basis.

5. ***Include up-to-date research data and debates in the curriculum***

Research-based elements of the curriculum can be developed by explicitly including the emerging outcomes of teacher's own or their colleagues' current research in the curriculum in lectures or seminars. Current research debates in the field can also be the focus for case studies or examples. Students can be directed to conference proceedings, abstracts or media reports on current research to engage with different positions and arguments at the cutting edge of the

discipline. This helps to illustrate the contextual and contested nature of knowledge creation in the field.

6. Engage students with the progress of research projects and outcomes

Regularly updated reading lists or course packs that include recent outputs such as conference papers, presentations or journal articles can also provide ways to support student engagement with new research outcomes. Encouraging students to follow your own or colleagues' research blogs and other social media dissemination activities by linking these to module learning resources will also enable students to access and follow current information on live research projects.

7. Explore the process of departmental research in practice

Student understanding of both their teachers' research topics and the 'messiness' of the real research process, as part of a research-oriented element of curriculum, can also be developed by getting students to explore their teachers' experiences of research. Students should be directed to read some examples of the range of different written outputs from the research of departmental colleagues such as journal articles, book chapters or grant reports before conducting an interview about the research with the researcher.

8. Initiate a student journal club

A journal club format, either integrated into teaching or as an optional complement to the curriculum, is one strategy for facilitating research-tutored elements. Journal clubs provide a space for students to read and evaluate research outputs, get exposed to different perspectives on the research of their teachers and peers and, in healthcare or other professional subjects, consider how they might use research as an evidence-base in practice. The literature suggest that utilizing prompt questions such as, for example, "Was the study well-designed and is it the best way to answer the research question?", "Can you identify whether the methodology is robust or are there any flaws?" and "Were ethical issues considered?" will support student critical appraisals of published research.

9. Introduce assessments that are aligned to research and enquiry

Conducting research or enquiry as part of learning is seen as fundamental to facilitating a research-based approach to the curriculum. Completing the research process by being assessed in ways that replicate the dissemination practices of original research such as mini-conference papers, project reports or posters can support the communication aspects of research work in research-like ways. Embedding peer review of students' work develops their capacity to appraise research. Further to these curriculum-based strategies, there are increasing opportunities for undergraduate students to disseminate their own research to a wider audience through conferences or publication in interdisciplinary undergraduate research journals. Research can include empirical research as well as literature reviews or conceptual papers.

APPENDIX IJ: GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions should have in place procedures for policy and guideline development. Policy development involves needs identification, information gathering, policy drafting, stakeholder consultation, and stakeholder input review.

2. Stages in policy development

The following steps summarise the key stages of policy development:

a) Identifying need(s)

Policies can be developed in:

(i) Anticipation of a need(s). Quality assurance policies should, for example, be in place once an institution institutionalises internal quality assurance.
(ii) Response to a need(s). A policy position on a government strategy may, for example, be developed in response to a consultation paper)

Higher education institutions need to constantly assess their activities, responsibilities and their external environment in order to identify the need for policies and procedures.

3. Identify who will take the lead responsibility

Delegate responsibility to an individual, working group, sub-committee or staff members, according to the expertise required.

4. Gather information

Do you have any legal responsibilities in this area? Is your understanding accurate and up-to- date? Have other institutions tackled the same issue? Are there existing templates or examples that you could draw on? Where will you go for guidance?

5. Draft the policy

Ensure that policy document language and length are appropriate to those who will be expected to implement it.

6. Consult with appropriate stakeholders

A policy is most effective if those who may be affected by it are consulted, if they are supportive, and if they have opportunity to consider and discuss potential implications of the policy. An institution may wish to consult internal and external stakeholders depending on whether it is developing policies to govern its internal work practices or external policy positions.

7. Finalise / approve the policy

Who will approve the policy? Is this a strategic issue that should be approved by the highest decision making body or is the highest decision making body confident that this can be dealt with effectively by staff? Bear in mind that, ultimately, the highest decision-making body is responsible for all policies and procedures within the institution.

8. Consider whether procedures are required

Procedures are more likely to be required to support internal policies. Consider whether there is need for clear guidance regarding how the policy will be implemented and by whom. A policy regarding receiving complaints may, for example, require a set of procedures detailing how complaints will be handled. Who will be responsible for

developing these procedures? When will this be done? What will be the processes for consultation, approval and implementation?

9. Communicate and Implement

How will the policy be communicated and to whom? Is training required to support the implementation among staff and volunteers? Should the institution produce a press release (for external policy positions)?

10. Monitor, review, revise

What monitoring and reporting systems are in place to ensure that the policy is implemented and to assess usage and responses? On what basis and when will the policy be reviewed and revised (if necessary)?

APPENDIX IK: GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION WITH OTHER HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

1. Introduction

Collaboration in higher education refers to the teaming up of two or more institutions of higher learning to work together towards sharing educational and research dreams, achieving common goals, and enhancing collective effort in meeting educational needs in focus. Modern-day students expect a more collaborative and interactive learning environment .Collaboration and team work among universities create an environment that allows the knowledge, resources and skills of each team member to flourish.

Higher education institutions must have in place policies and guidelines for the approval, monitoring and review of collaborative agreements. All collaborative activities must be in line with institutional mission, vision and strategic objectives.

2. The benefits of collaboration

There are various areas in which collaboration is of benefit to higher education institutions. International higher education partnerships promote shared learning and capacity building in a variety of ways and can have impact at both the institutional and community levels. Collaborative research studies that use cross-country and multidisciplinary partnerships can facilitate a more holistic view of a research question and can help find answers or solutions that respond to local needs. The research conducted under these types of partnerships plays an important role in improving policies, strengthening program implementation, and advancing innovative solutions in the field of development. These are human resources sharing and development, financial resources, university research, technological innovations, and development of academic programmes.

a) **Human Resources Sharing and Development:** Collaboration affords higher education institutions opportunities to provide an international curriculum and instructional expertise. It also enhances effectiveness and efficiency of institutions involved. Both the sending and receiving institutions of higher learning learn new approaches to university teaching, practice and evaluation. They also come up with new ways to develop industries by utilising students to research and report industrial products, their demand and availability.

b) **Financial resources:** collaboration done across borders and across institutions of higher learning increase institutional and national revenue collections when they work together with academic institutions that supply new ideas and technologies. The supply of money, materials and other assets assist institutions to function effectively. The essence of collaboration is resource sharing since organisational priorities and institutional pride are based in resource allocation and utilisation. Resource sharing requires development and enhancement of relationships and commitment to achieve something through that relationship, which may, otherwise, not be achieved by individual institutions.

c) **Research:** Through international mobility of academics and students, higher education institutions collaborate in research that shift from mere academic exercise to modernising industrial products needed in the world market. It also seeks for more markets for raw materials and finished products. Higher education institutions enrich Malawi industrial productivity through research done across borders and across higher education institutions. It also assists industries to increase their revenue collections and prestige.

d) **Technological innovations:** Collaboration in research assists to promote a shift from mere academic exercise to modernising industries and increasing products that are needed in market. It also enriches a country's industrial productivity through research

done across borders and across institutions of higher learning. Industries increase their revenue collections and prestige when they work together with academic institutions that supply new ideas and technologies.

c) Examples of collaborative partnerships

1. **Franchise:** This is an arrangement by which a higher education institution approves a partner to deliver part or all of one (or more) of its approved programmes. The institution retains responsibility for the programme content and assessment
2. **Dual award**: This is an arrangement under which two institutions partner to provide programmes leading to separate awards, which may be at different levels, issued by both. Each award has its own set of criteria and learning outcomes, therefore, the student, does not have to satisfy the requirements of both degree-awarding bodies. The student may receive only one qualification if they do not meet the separate criteria or learning outcomes for the second qualification
3. **Joint award:** This is an arrangement under which two or more awarding institutions jointly approve and deliver a programme leading to a single award granted by both or all institutions
4. **Jointly delivered programme:** This is an arrangement under which a programme is delivered or provided jointly by two or more institutions, irrespective of the award (whether single, joint, dual/double or multiple). It refers to the education provided rather than the nature of the award
5. **Articulation:** Is an arrangement where a higher education institution approves all or part of an external award from another institution as providing specific credits towards the approving institution's programme

d) Responsibilities of collaborative partners

1. An institution of higher education has the primary responsibility for the quality and standards of its programmes and awards. Good practice suggests that collaborative proposals are given due consideration and approval by the relevant institutional

authorities, having been subject to the prescribed institutional approval and quality assurance processes

2. The following issues (not an exhaustive list) should be considered by prospective partners when discharging their responsibilities:
    i. Each partner has a formal institutional strategy for collaborative and transnational provision which has been approved at senior management level and is periodically reviewed
    ii. There is 'in principle' support from the senior management of each prospective partner for the proposal, prior to the full proposal being developed
    iii. Explicit quality assurance mechanisms exist to ensure that the partners do not enter arrangements which may put academic standards or students at risk
    iv. There is clear and shared appreciation by the partners of the specific responsibilities and risks associated with collaborative and transnational provision, including, for example, the role of the awarding body, if not one of the partners, and that on-going monitoring and periodic review of provision is undertaken
    v. There is clarity and transparency regarding the programme approval processes which apply; they are formally documented and staff know where to access them
    vi. The nature of the collaboration is clearly defined and inter-institutional responsibilities are set out in the Agreement
    vii. There is a clear appreciation of each partner's own legislative context, the scope of its authority, awarding and validating powers, and how these might be limited or enhanced in another country or in a particular partnership.
    viii. Procedures for the approval of programme promotional/marketing material have clear and accurate information to enable prospective students to make informed decisions about the programmes, are, formally, agreed upon between the partners, and the information is accessible to all appropriate stakeholders.

ix. There is clear understanding of each partner institution's responsibilities in the event that the Agreement is terminated e.g. provision and support for current students enrolled on programmes.

APPENDIX IL: PROCEDURES FOR INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT

Introduction

Higher education institutions must have in place policies and procedures for industrial placement. Student placement opportunities are highly valued by students and placement providers for the benefits they offer. A student who has gone through industrial attachments acquires practical experience in the field of study and is, therefore, provided with opportunities for employment. Students attached to the industry are exposed to a network of contacts within the chosen industry, which is critical to tracking down a graduate job. Therefore, to achieve this, clear procedures, roles and responsibilities for the student, host and the university need to be clearly defined.

Examples of roles and responsibilities

Placement Provider

A Placement Provider is an employer who during the placement has direct supervision of the student. A Placement Provider shall be responsible for the following, among others:

1. Agreeing on the plan of work with the institution
2. Providing appropriate health and safety training, information and guidance, including information relating to relevant risk assessments.
3. Providing the student with full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices in line with the competences a student should acquire.
4. Assigning a supervisor who will conduct or make arrangements for the day to day work of the student in line with the competences a student should acquire.
5. Providing the placement tutor with policies on students' attachments
6. Allowing visits to the student by the visiting tutor

7. Providing updates and reports during and at the end of the attachment

Placement Institution

A Placement Institution is the higher education entity which enters into agreement with the Placement Provider on students' attachments. The placement institutions shall be responsible for the following, among others:

1. Assigning a coordinator (placement tutor) for the organisation of placements on behalf of students
2. Providing the student with information on placement arrangements
3. Ensuring that the student follows the institution's procedures and obtains suitable and sufficient information about the placement from the placement provider
4. Confirming with the student that they have ascertained that suitable insurance is in place to cover the liabilities arising from the placement
5. Reviewing the information provided by the placement provider. This information shall be used to evaluate the placement and identify a management procedure commensurate with the risk
6. Maintaining all records relating to the placement in an accessible filing system
7. Providing the means for a student who is out on placement to make contact with a suitable member of staff in the department in the event of an emergency
8. Reviewing the suitability of the placement with the returning student and updates the placement risk assessment before the vacancy is advertised
9. Facilitating visits to students on attachments
10. Drawing lessons from students experiences from attachments to inform curricula improvement
11. Providing the institution with a student attachment grade through the placement tutor

The placement student

Students are expected to contact their prospective employers to confirm that suitable health and safety arrangements are in place. The student must:

1. Abide by all rules regarding health and safety and other working practices and procedures of the placement provider
2. Carry out the work or study programme specified by the placement provider under the supervision of the specified supervisor(s)
3. Inform the placement provider of any health concerns or disability that may require adjustments
4. Report to their placement provider any concerns about health and safety at their placement
5. Attend briefing sessions and access all provided information
6. Inform the placement tutor of any health concerns or disability that may affect the level of risk or may require adjustments.
7. Consult with the placement tutor prior to seeking any changes in the terms and duration of the placement
8. Report any serious incidents in which they are involved and any health and safety concerns that are not addressed by their placement provider to their placement tutor

APPENDIX IM: GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Introduction

Higher education institutions offering open and distance learning (ODL) must have in place mechanisms for quality assurance in ODL covering areas such as:

a) Programme/course development
b) Material development and distribution
c) Teaching staff
d) Learner support
e) Student assessment
f) Infrastructure
g) Quality assurance and management system

Examples of criteria:

1. **Programme/Course design**
   a) Programmes and courses are aligned to the institution's vision and mission
   b) There is a sound rationale and justification for offering distance/ blended/eLearning programmes
   c) The aims and objectives of the distance/blended/eLearning programme are clearly articulate.
   d) Programme/course outcomes, objectives, activities and assignments are well aligned
   e) Programme outcomes are well stated and are in line with the NQF level of the qualification
   f) The distance/ blended/eLearning programme is sustainable and enhances access and success, including for learners with special needs

g) Programme regulations (admission requirements, progression, assessment etc.) are clearly outlined

h) Distance/blended/eLearning programmes promote entrepreneurship, help reduce human resource gaps and embrace emerging issues in a discipline

i) Distance/ blended/eLearning programmes are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they keep up-to-date with developments in the field and with latest technology

j) There is vertical and horizontal articulation of the programme/course with other programmes and qualifications

2. Learner support

a) Blended/eLearning provider has accurate profile of learners in order to decide on the appropriate support for the different learners

b) Students are informed through appropriate channels on the timetable to be followed at the beginning of the year/semester

c) Learner satisfaction surveys are conducted on a regular basis to determine the appropriateness of the support mechanisms that are provided

d) Learner support services are improved/increased with increasing numbers of students enrolled

e) Teaching staff provides comprehensive and timely feedback on assignments to students to enhance effective learning

f) Teaching staff (including part-time) receive adequate training in order to provide quality support to students

g) There is policy on turnaround time for students' queries and there is provision on the learning management system (LMS) for students to raise queries and receive responses from responsible people in the university

h) The institution conducts regular reviews of resource usage in order to establish which support services are used and which ones are not

i) Regular visits are made by support staff to remote centres to meet with students who study in adverse conditions

j) Where blended courses are provided, cognisance is taken of disadvantaged students who cannot access relevant technology

3. Materials Development

a) Planning for materials development allows enough lead in time for the various processes to take place, e.g. content review, language editing, type setting appropriateness, quality checks through peer reviews

b) Academics in open and distance learning (ODL) are trained in instructional materials design for print and online delivery

c) Academic programs are implemented only after all materials (print and online) have been developed for all years of study

d) An in-house materials development manual is developed for material developers to follow and adhere to

e) The development of learning materials is based on sound instructional design principles in order to promote active learning that engages learners

f) The content is accurate, up-to-date, in line with aims and objectives of the course, uses relevant examples, and reflects the multicultural diversity of the learners

g) All instructional materials in the form of guides including assignments are ready prior to registration of students

h) Materials development is a team exercise and involves people with disciplinary expertise

i) Materials are reviewed by subject specialists prior to using them on a course

j) There is active use of open educational resources (OER) in supporting academic learning

4. Student Assessment

a) The authenticity of assessment processes is maximised through the use of various anti-plagiarism mechanisms, like relevant software

3. A variety of assessment strategies is used in order to make assessment in blended/eLearning rigorous and authentic, e.g. onsite assessment and e-portfolios
4. Communication of information relating to assessment is clear and received by all students well in time
5. There is internal and external moderation of all forms of assessment
6. The goals of assessment are clearly mapped out and students are made aware of them right at the beginning
7. There is alignment between course outcomes, learning modules used, and the assessment
8. Where eLearning is used, assessment covers high cognitive level skills as well, and does not focus purely on low-level skills
9. There is appropriate weighting of terminal and continuous assessment.
10. Examination items are subjected to review by experts before they are taken by students
11. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that the right candidates take online examinations

5. Infrastructure and Facilities

a) The institution has adequate and appropriate infrastructure facilities to conduct quality academic programmes through open and distance learning

b) Investment in learning infrastructure takes into account the decentralised nature of distance education students

c) The institution uses appropriate technological innovations in educational transactions to enrich the learning experiences it provides to students

d) The institution uses appropriate technology for effective institutional functioning, like learner support, examination processing and student records

e) The institution has plans to ensure that the growth of the infrastructure keeps pace with enrolment growth of the institution

f) There are procedures and mechanisms in place for the provision, availability and maintenance of the infrastructural facilities of the institution

g) The institution has an effective system for the management and maintenance of equipment

h) The institution has mechanisms to regularly evaluate the adequacy and accessibility of resources and services for learners and takes appropriate remedial measures to address inadequacies

i) When libraries or laboratories or any other facilities of other institutions are used to meet the needs of the programme, the institution has written agreements to ensure that these services and facilities are available to learners

j) Where arrangements are made for students to use facilities belonging to other organisations, the providing institution remains accountable for the quality provision of services to students

6. Staffing

a) The recruitment and selection policy procedures ensure that the most qualified, experienced and high calibre academic and support staff members are recruited in an objective and transparent way for an open, flexible and distance mode of delivery

b) Staff recruitment is commensurate to enrolments and the wide range of programmes on offer

c) There is a balance of staff with subject specialisation, material development expertise and learner support services with 75% of the academic staff holding an appropriate and/or relevant qualification higher than the exit level of the programme, except for those teaching in a programme leading to the highest qualification in the discipline

d) Technical and support staff is adequately qualified for the job they are doing.

e) There is policy on continuous staff development in order to keep staff up to date with latest developments in their disciplines

f) Teaching resources, research facilities and other work conditions enable teaching staff to provide rich and coherent learning experiences through a variety of open, distance and flexible delivery modes

g) Promotion criteria for academic staff are based on a performance appraisal system, and are focused on a wide range of factors, including materials development to enhance independent learning, research that is linked to ODL practice as well as publications and community outreach activities relevant to the strategic vision

h) Staff is recruited, monitored, supported and coordinated for the specialised roles and tasks they perform, including the design, management and delivery of open and distance learning as well as technology-supported programmes

i) Appropriate workloads are maintained to allow for the development and re-development of open and distance education curricular materials, as well as orientation, tutoring and remedial services for all students

j) Staff is supported to utilise the latest resources, including learning management system, that enhance learning within open, flexible and distance educational contexts

7. Open and Distance Education Systems and Structures

a) An organogram clearly showing governance of ODL in the institution is in place

b) An appropriate institutional advocacy strategy to inform prospective students and parents of distance education offerings is in place

c) A fair and transparent system for student recruitment guided by policy is in place

d) A streamlined registration system that is fast, efficient and convenient for students in different geographical locations is in place

e) Policy and procedures for ensuring timely provision of learning materials, assignments, relevant tutorial letters and examination timetables to students are in place

f) Systems and appropriate facilities for ensuring the security of examinations are in place

g) Quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of programmes are in place
h) There are quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of learning materials
i) There are quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of marking of assignments and examinations
j) Quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of recording and security of marks
k) There are quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of handling of students' queries/appeals
l) Quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of assignments are present
m) Quality assurance policies and processes that ensure quality of processing of results & certification are in place.
n) System of tracking students in order to facilitate student retention and timely completion are in place
o) Efficient system of communication between decentralised centres and head office is in place
p) Relevant technological infrastructure is in place and is well-maintained to ensure optimum functionality
q) Appropriate distance education staff dedicated to distance education programmes are in place
r) Distance education centres have capacity to coordinate and monitor the rolling out of academic programmes
s) Distance education centres/units have enough office space and infrastructure to execute their duties effectively
t) Sufficient financial resources are deployed to facilitate the deployment of quality distance education

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