



KAMPALA
INTERNATIONALUNIVERSITY
QUALITY ASSURANCE
HANDBOOK

KIU QA HAND BOOK, 2024



OCTOBER 1, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of quality management is a growing concern on the agenda of higher education institutions (HEIs) in most countries. University education has shifted from being the preserve of the elite to a service. With increased accountability from stakeholders. There are also notable increased levels of competition within and across national borders with multiple demands from the consumers- students.

International concerns about how to maintain quality in such an environment increasingly puts pressure on the traditional modes of teaching, research, learning and management have forced some universities to adopt a formal, transparent and credible system of quality assurance with internal verification of outcomes and processes.

The Ugandan Government through the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is an external auditor/reviewer of quality assurance. On the larger extent however, institutions of higher learning are the main actors in ensuring internal quality as well as enhancing external quality. The Quality Assurance Director at Kampala International University is mandated to assess, monitor and evaluate academic and non-academic services provided by the institution guided by guidelines/policies stipulated by regulatory bodies, institutions or professional bodies.

This is essential because of the increased demand for higher education which goes hand in hand with escalating competition in provision of University education.

This therefore justifies the need for the creation of Quality Assurance Units/ Directorates/Secretariat/ Directorate in tertiary Institutions that would holistically ensure the provision of quality services through the learning and the teaching conduct regular institutional assessments and prepare for periodical external assessments.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 RATIONALE FOR A QUALITY ASSURANCE HAND BOOK

The enormous importance of higher education in national socio-economic transformation creates a desire to ensure that the quality of the inputs, processes and outputs in higher education meet the changing needs of the contemporary world.

Governments, institutions, donors, students, parents, employers and the general public are concerned about the quality of graduates released into the labour market annually. With such a landscape, tertiary institutions and policymakers are challenged to set standards of their own that take care of the needs and expectations of their stakeholders who include students, sponsors, employers, governments, collaborators, donors and the community. The institutions themselves are bound to ensuring that procedures are established and maintained which allow them to respond in a systemic and transparent manner to the external requirements of the regulatory agencies. The implementation of best practices in quality assurance can be guided professionally and institutionally approved by policies and guidelines.

In its relentless efforts to advocate for quality education amidst the prevailing challenges, the Kampala International University Quality Assurance Directorate came up with The Quality Assurance Manual which provides a comprehensive discussion on concepts of quality and quality assurance with reference to higher education in Uganda.

The guidebook further delves on establishment of quality assurance units and their management. The Manual underlines precise and efficient processes and procedures of quality assurance that can play an important role in building capacity of all those who are directly or indirectly involved in quality assurance in higher education.

The guidelines and processes defined in the Manual not only aim to improve quality of teaching, learning and research but also to promote a “Quality Culture” in higher

education in the country. The Manual is developed to further strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of professionals engaged in Quality Assurance in Kampala International University.

This Manual is publicly available online to staff, students and all interested stakeholders. It is recommended that the members of the University familiarise themselves with the content, however it must be noted that the manual's contents are not static documents. As a part of continuous quality management, regular review of the policies and procedures are conceded and the manual is subject to occasional revision. Actual responsibility for the approval of the contents in practice falls principally to the Management Committee and Board of Governors, however new policies and procedures may circulate to potential users for comment.

The Vision of Kampala International University; to become a premier institution of international repute that prepares students for the world and for an inclusive society.

Mission of Kampala International University;

To respond to societal needs by designing and delivery of an education guided by the principles and values of respect for society, economy and environment and to provide and develop a supportive research environment in which scholars at every stage of their career can flourish.

Objectives of Kampala International University;

-To produce independent and competent graduates capable of making wise decisions which will enable them to become good members of society and contribute to their professions, the nation and the global community

-To become a premier international university in the greater lakes region, providing needs based, market-driven quality academic programmes.

-To supplement the government's efforts in the stimulation of higher education by providing university education to a higher section of society.

-To provide professional development and continued learning for practicing professionals.

-To undertake research projects in various fields that shall contribute to the political, economic, social and technological development of society

-To undertake partnerships with other institutions in order to enhance mutually beneficial objectives

-To recruit experienced, well trained academic staff who can provide an intellectual challenging learning environment and provide for their continued development

Core Functions of Kampala International University

- Teaching and learning
- Promote research and publications
- Promote Community Outreach

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN RELATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Scholars have endeavoured to describe and identify what quality really is with minimum success. Defining quality is like love! It is like beauty! Everybody talks about it and everybody knows what he/she is talking about. Everybody knows and feels when there is love. Everybody recognises it. But when we try to give a definition of it we are left standing empty-handed.

While the general concept of quality is already a difficult concept to define, quality in higher education is more sophisticated because of the multiple stakeholders (the government or the state, employers, the academic world and the students). Questions that are always likely pop up include; if the “graduate” is the “product” that education institutions offer to society and the labour market; who then is the client in this industry and what is the product? Is it the students or the programmes offered by institutions?

This therefore has created various definitions that understand quality of higher education from different perspectives.

Quality as value for money- Quality is perceived in terms of return on investment or expenditure- This notion focuses on efficiency and effectiveness, measuring outputs against inputs. Assuming that if the same outcome can be achieved at the same cost, then the ‘customer’ has a quality product or service. From this view point quality is linked with the notion of accountability to the stakeholders such as the government) as well as parents and students.

Quality as a transformation-From this perspective quality is seen as a qualitative change. Factories and industries are different from higher education institutions and mould a student and not an item. The definition therefore focuses on the transformation brought about to students through empowering them with knowledge and skills not just outcomes.

Quality as something that can be assessed-The quest for quality is not an easy one, especially since there is no absolute quality or objective quality. Nevertheless it can be assessed based on the core activities of the university: teaching/learning, research and/or the contribution to society and the community. Higher institutions therefore are expected to assure and to demonstrate their quality to have their quality assessed by outsiders. This is happening both regionally through national regulatory bodies and worldwide. National regulatory bodies have formulated criteria and standards, for an institution, as well as for the core activities of the institution of higher learning.

Quality to meet stakeholders’ satisfaction: Another way of perceiving quality in such a fuzzy environment calls for negotiations between the academic institution and

the stakeholders (student, academic world, labour market (employers) the society, and the government) since their roles, expectations and contributions in higher education vary widely. In this negotiation process, each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, his/ her requirements these should translated into the mission and goals of an institution and into the objectives of a faculty and of the educational program.

Quality from a multi-dimension perspective- Having many stakeholders at play, quality cannot be defined as a single dimension but as a multi-dimension perspective.

2.1 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Is the planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced?

It is an instrument designed to add value to higher education by encouraging high quality. An efficient and effective high quality higher education system which is internationally recognized and a well-established national Quality Culture are vital for economic growth in developing countries like Uganda.

A sustainable quality assurance programme enhances employment opportunities, improves the education and training of future employees, harnesses future leaders, facilitates an enabling learning environment, and enriches the academic and intellectual landscape. Thus it fuels the engine of economic and social development at the national, regional and international levels.

A quality providing institution of higher education is a model for creating a modern civil society. This ideal state of academic quality is not commonly realized but it is, nevertheless, a yardstick by which to measure the effectiveness of higher education systems operating in the country.

The development of Quality Assurance is a continuous process and therefore, continuity of strategies, actions and efforts is a prerequisite for quality in higher education. Quality Assurance including its processes, procedures and outcomes of assessment is a challenge and its management is even a greater challenge to

practitioners seeking workable guidelines, evidences of good practices and tools that will facilitate the process.

2.2 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education Council (NCHE) is responsible for ensuring external quality assurance while individual institution is responsible for promoting internal quality assurance and implementing policies and guidelines stipulated by NCHE.

External Quality Assurance by NCHE

The Higher Education Council is a National regulatory body responsible for establishing value-adding systems of external evaluation, which can validate institutional information on effectiveness of internal quality arrangements.

The NCHE uses peer and expert reviews to conduct external audits in a regular cycle of audits or whenever these become necessary. Institutional audits are the core of the institutional quality assurance framework. Much as the NCHE at regular intervals undertakes external audits to assess the capacity of institutions for quality management taking into account their missions, goals, and objectives. It is the duty of the institutions to undertake internal institutional audits and participate in external institutional audits. Annually, NCHE conducts university visits where they interact with lecturers and students.

Among the areas that are externally assessed to ensure quality by NCHE include:

- **University governance**-This is characterized by the existence of functioning structures such as the University Council, Senate, Faculties, Schools, Colleges Directorates and Unions whose powers are well defined. A credible institution does not depend on an individual's charismatic leadership but on the institutional strength embedded in its structures, traditions, rules, achievements and viability.
- **The vision: to what extent is the university** pursuing its vision as declared in its founding statements, statutes, charter? Is the mission of the university being achieved? Is it integrated in all the programmes and activities of the university? Is the mission appropriate to the institution, the location of the institution in Uganda,

higher education and country's strategic plans? Is the university pursuing other agendas rather than its mission?

- The external auditors would like to find out if the university has a clear and well-articulated **strategic plan**. Does the plan clearly show activities that need to be accomplished in a particular period, strategies of operationalizing the activities and the indicators of progress?

External audits are also expected to examine the powers and the functioning of University organs.

The University Senate: Is the top academic 'judiciary' of the university. By the virtue of its functions, the University Senate is the custodian of best quality assurance practices and standards through reviewing of programmes and curriculum. The assessors therefore would like to establish with documented evidence how often the University convenes.

The Administration: External Auditors also assess the university administration to establish whether it is constituted according to the statutes of the university, and whether the appropriate systems are in place. For example is the university leadership on the cutting edge of the best practices and innovations, especially in resource mobilization and management? Is the welfare of the administrators taken as a priority?

The Staff Association -Staff welfare is important in any organization. As stakeholders, they need to be recognized but more so they need to recognize themselves, this is more viable through the staff organizations/ unions. Does the institution permit the existence of and listen to staff unions? What are the mechanisms that govern the relationship between academic staff and the university administration? What suggestions do auditors have to improve the lot and welfare of the professional academic staff?

Student welfare - Students are the reason why the university exists. Auditors from NCHE during the exercise would like to establish whether students are allowed to engage in matters concerning the University. Is there an appeal mechanism against misjudgements in behavioural and academic matters?

Students should also be able to access to sports and recreation facilities; and Student exchange programmes should be enhanced.

- Relevance of the programmes to the needs of the society;
- Annual auditing and publication of the university's accounts;
- Annual publications of reports of the activities of the university; and
- The quality of teaching and learning- Several benchmarks are used by external assessors ensure the quality of teaching and learning in higher education institutions. Benchmarks often used include:
 - Approved NCHE regulations on standards, minimum requirements on courses of study with focus on the design, content, duration, contact hours and assessment as well as their relevance on the job market.
 - Student assessment methods including examination regulations and awards.
 - Quality of graduates, if necessary measured against the quality of entering students.
 - Protection of unique and professional programme against general policies that may not apply to all disciplines.
 - Access to information by students in the libraries, laboratories, computer and internet access, space, books e.t.c.
 - Appeal mechanisms for students. Protection of unique and professional programme against general policies that may not apply to all disciplines.
- The quality of academic staff- The quality of the academic staff is key to the quality of a university. In their work on this subject, auditors of universities shall review the following: The regulations regarding the appointment, promotion and dismissal of staff; Staff /student ratios in various programmes, Recruitment policies and use of part-time staff.
- Other factors that capture the interest of external assessors are students' assessments of academic staff and their usefulness in improving teaching performance in the Quality Assurance Regulations, Staff development and the Quality of research.

- **Sufficiency of education facilities-** Auditors shall review education facilities to establish whether or not they comply with the NCHE requirements Special attention is usually paid to:
- **Access to relevant and up-to-date books** as well as articles in journals; Access to computer networks and the Internet. As well as access to equipment that enhance teaching and learning such as projectors, video cameras, flip charts, typewriters, television sets, public address systems, etc.
- **Research and publication-** Universities are expected to be towers of research, academic excellence, scholarship, knowledge generation and publications. Institutional auditors during external assessment will assess the quality of research and knowledge creation of a given institution. In terms of percentage of the university budget reported to research, number of articles published in accredited local and international journals, number of research projects (i) won (ii) completed, and (iii) funds earned from research projects by both the institution and its staff; and number of patents registered by staff or the institution.
- **The quality of outputs-**The quality of outputs assessed during external assessment includes though not limited to the quality of graduates, quality of research and publications and the performance of alumni in the job market. Evidence of tracer studies, Research, publications, patent registration, consultancies and other awards obtained by staff and students of a given university will be expected.
- **Institutional financial management-** The importance of financial management in implementing and sustaining quality in higher education is very vital. During external quality assurance, auditors endeavour to establish the budgeting process of the institution, (stakeholders, planning and priorities considered), sources of funding (government, student tuition, endowments, donors)
- **The university and the community-** Among the core functions of the University is to promote community development. External quality Assurance therefore entails examining the impact of the university tough programmes and projects focusing on the community needs and aspirations, the market and general society; the number and effectiveness of internship programmes;

community participation in university activities; as well as regional collaborations.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 ASSURING QUALITY - WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

Quality is a multi-faceted concept that requires every stakeholders input. In process of producing quality graduates, it is important to have contributions from every faculty, Directorate, unit, section or entity in any higher education institution, irrespective of whether they are academic or non-academic. This means that it is not only the academic units that. The non-academic units also play roles in the production of quality graduates.

3.1: QUALITY ASSURANCE DIRECTORATE

The pivotal role of Quality Assurance Directorate is to determine whether or not quality standards set internally for measuring performance in all core operational areas of the University are constantly met and updated. Headed by the Quality Assurance director, the directorate in its day to day activities ensures quality through control, monitoring, auditing and managing.

3.2: JUSTIFICATION FOR ESTABLISHING QUALITY ASSURANCE UNITS

Every forward looking institution of higher learning has a vision that guides its operation and developmental process. The vision, as the name implies, is the final picture of where the institution should be as seen from the beginning. That final picture is always a glorious one and it serves the purpose of giving the operators of the system the impetus to move on and not be discouraged when there are cogs in the wheel of progress of the process of achieving the vision.

To note however although the vision is important for the developmental focus of an institution, the vision by itself is worthless if there are no directions for its attainment.

It is the reason why institutions have missions/Objectives. These are statements that reveal how the institution intends to achieve its vision.

Worldwide the basic function of most Universities is to generate knowledge through teaching, research and community outreach services. To achieve this University, therefore, consists of a body of trained and experienced lecturers, researchers and learners.

So in order to fulfil the vision and mission statements there is need to promote and coordinate the application of quality measures in the university for ensuring relevance, ensuring quality of teaching and learning, strengthening research and internationalising the university.

The institutions themselves are bound to ensuring that procedures are established and maintained which allow them to respond in a systemic and transparent manner to the external requirements of the regulatory agencies. This simply explains the need for the creation of Quality Assurance Units in tertiary Institutions that will holistically take care of these aims through:

- a) Ensuring continuous improvement in the entire operations of the higher education institution; and
- b) Assuring stakeholders connected with higher education – namely, students, parents, teachers, staff, would-be employers, funding agencies and society in general the accountability of the institution for its own quality and probity.

3.3.1: Roles and Responsibilities of Top Management in Quality Assurance

Commitment from the top management is an essential pre-requisite for an effective quality assurance system. Members of top management are the bedrock, the anchors of Quality Assurance. Some of the roles of the Leadership/Management include but are not limited to:

- i. Establish a clear mission, articulate core values, and communicate high expectations of performance at all levels;

- ii. Guide the University in reviewing the organizational performance for quality assurance;
- iii. Encourage research, innovations and pursue current and future opportunities for improvement;
- iv. Establish priorities for quality improvement to ensure that University's mission is successfully achieved; and
- v. Create and sustain an educational environment that promotes ethical values and equity for all stakeholders at the University;

3.3.2: The Quality Assurance Committee/Governing Board

Quality is not only ensured by the quality assurance officer, it is the role of every faculty, Directorate, unit, section or entity; (academic or non-academic) in producing quality graduates for the labour market. This can be efficiently and effectively achieved with team work of the Quality Assurance Committee. Members of this committee could include:

1. Vice-Chancellor - Chairperson
2. Deputy Vice Chancellor- Academic Affairs - Member
3. Director Finance/University Bursar - Member
4. University Chief Librarian - Member
5. Dean, Students Affairs - Member
6. Director Higher Degrees and Research - Member
7. Director, Academic Affairs - Member
8. Director, Planning - Member
9. Director, ICT - Member
10. Director Estates - Member

11. Director Examinations and assessment - Member

12. Some Principals /Deans of School/Colleges/ Faculty - Member

13. Some Heads of Directorate - Member

14. Director, Quality Assurance - Member/Secretary

3.3.3 Role and Responsibilities of Quality Assurance Committee

Comprising of majority the top most members of the University management, the Quality Assurance committee is responsible for ensuring that the Quality Assurance Policy is in line with the Mission, Vision and also reflects the Universities strategic plans.

The committee is entrusted with the following responsibilities.

- i. Promote the University quality culture within the respective Faculty/School/Directorate/Centre/Unit/Division;
- ii. Establish and monitor Directorate-based quality standards and practices;
- iii. Coordinate self-reviews and evaluation of Directorate quality assurance systems and procedures;
- iv. Coordinate the implementation of recommendations from self-reviews; and
- v. Build capacity on Quality Assurance within the respective Directorate.

3.3.3: Role and Responsibilities of Division-based Quality Assurance Committees

The University-wide Quality Assurance Policy expects all Faculties/Directorates, Divisions, Units and Centres to have Directorate structures to coordinate the implementation of the quality assurance system at Directorate level, in which the representative on the University-wide Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) has defined responsibility of being a facilitator.

Faculty/school/college Quality Assurance Committee-The Faculty/school/college Quality Assurance Committee is comprised of the Dean of Faculty, Heads of

Directorate, Faculty Officer (Secretary). The Function of this Particular committee is to implement the institution quality assurance policy at the Faculty level.

Directorate Quality Assurance Committees-At Directorate level the quality assurance committee is expected to implement the institutional quality assurance at Directorate level. This committee may be comprised of the Head of Directorate, Two Academic Staff, Chief Technologist/Equivalent, Secretary.

3.3.4: Roles and Responsibilities of Students in Quality Assurance

Students are among the main stakeholders in higher education. They therefore make a significant contribution to the quality of their own learning and that of their fellow students. Their contribution to quality assurance can lead to the improvement of the learning opportunities of future students on similar programmes. Students can also contribute to quality assurance through student representation on various structures of the institution as members of student unions (bodies).

To ensure quality students are expected to attend classes regularly, prepare for their lectures and attend to all forms of assignments (course works, course tests as well as the end of semester examinations).

Students are mandated to use all resources at the university (academic, human, infrastructure, recreation, social etc.) for as long as it contributes to their positive growth and development.

As stakeholder's students are supposed to use the information and guidance provided; take up available opportunities to receive academic advice and feedback on their work; thoughtfully complete course questionnaires and other surveys and consultations; and use the system of Student Representative Council (SRC), faculty representatives, etc.

They are also entitled to contribute to making decisions concerning them and for the good of the university.

3.3.5: Roles and Responsibilities of Academic Staff in Quality Assurance

The quality of academic staff plays a big role in determining the quality of outputs-graduates released into the labour market. In fact the University's confidence in the quality of its academic programmes, research output, and community engagement activities rests mainly on its expectations with regard to the professionalism of individuals, who are aggregated in programmes and course teams, organized and managed in Directorates and faculties or that matter therefore all academic staff have responsibilities both for maintaining and continuously improving quality in their mandated activities of teaching, research and community engagement. Through:

- i. Effectively and efficiently attending to the students' academic needs, mentor and guide them
- ii. Assessing students to ensure proper understanding of the concepts
- iii. Evaluating and accept to be evaluated by others
- iv. Actively participating in all forms of training for career growth and enhancement
- v. Actively engaging in reading and research to be up to date with contemporary issues

3.3.6: Roles and Responsibilities of Support Staff in Quality Assurance

Support staff also have a responsibility to maintain professional standards appropriate to the service function, and to plan, manage and review the services they provide to ensure that those services align with institutional priorities, support academic developments and add to the quality of the student experience. Support Directorates have an additional responsibility to:

- i. Gather information on customer needs and priorities to inform the planning of the service;
- ii. Consider stakeholder feed-back, through surveys and use the findings from the exercise to improve their services; and
- iii. Develop a culture of customer service. iv. Participate in trainings and workshops for career enhancement

3.4: Quality Assurance Instruments

In addition to the quality assurance committee, implementation of quality assurance mechanism can be implemented by use of quality assurance implementation tools or instruments.

Quality Assurance Policy is a written document containing standards, guidelines and procedures how quality in education institutions should be maintained.

Accreditation documents (could be institutional and for programmes offered)

Monitoring instruments (Self – Assessment Reports, Staff Assessment forms, student evaluation, examinations, and peer review e.t.c)

3.5 What Quality Assurance Director needs to monitor

The quality assurance director is mandated to monitor all university activities in liaison with other university employees and students. These are based on the generic functions of the university as well as the mission and vision of the institution.

Issues to assess, monitor and evaluate

i. Teaching and Learning

- Admissions of Students
- Lecturing and lecture attendance
- Staff qualifications and expertise
- Programmes and curriculum
- Specific qualifications for particular programmes
- Library facilities
- Computer and practical laboratories
- Teaching facilities- white boards, projectors etc
- Mid Semester and end of semester evaluation forms
- Assessments course work, course exams and end of semester exams
- Examination policy
- Internal and external examiners reports

ii. Research and publications

Research and publication is an important component of a universities function.

This can be at institutional level and research program/ unit level.

- At institutional level we have to analyse:
- The university's research policy
- The university's intellectual property rights policy
- The code of conduct for research
- The code of ethics for research
- Staff engagement in research and publication □ Research Funding

iii. Community Outreach Projects

A university is not only responsible for training academics and doing research. It is also responsible for serving society.

Consultancy is one of the community outreach activities and it involves the provision of professional advice or services to an external party for a fee or other non-monetary consideration.

APPENDICES

INSTRUMENTS USED IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

Teaching and Learning

End of Semester Student evaluation forms