

RIFT VALLEY UNIVERSITY



Hub of Excellence

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINE

September 2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Acronyms

ADRC: Academic Development and Resource Centre

ESDP: Education Sector Development Programme

QAD: Quality Assurance Directorate

HDP: Higher Diploma Programme

HEI: Higher Education Institution

HERQA: Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

HESC: Higher Education Strategic Centre

QA: Quality Assurance

SED: Self Evaluation Document

RVU: Rift Valley University

PDCA: Plan, Do, Check, and Act

QAC: Quality Assurance Council

QASC: Quality Assurance Standing Committee

CQAU: Campus Quality Assurance Unit

DQAT: Department Quality Assessment Team

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1. Introduction: Background and Context

In Ethiopia, Higher Education has changed profoundly in the past few decades. The development of mass higher education has brought concerns for standards and quality from stakeholders and clients of Higher Education that escalating the size of undergraduate students' enrolment and an even greater expansion of graduate training runs the risk of lowering quality unless major quality assurance efforts are in place within the jurisdiction of Higher Education Institution.

Rift Valley University (RVU) is also one of the private HEIs in the country which is rapidly increasing. For example, within these few years, the number of Campuses has increased from year to year, student enrolment has tripled and new instructors have been recruited at the rank of graduate assistant immediately after graduation without any pedagogic skill. Furthermore, RVU is lacking a well-developed quality assurance guideline to ensure a systematic way to meet services of institutional, national or international standards.

This situation prompts the university to develop a guideline and associated procedures for the management and assurance of the quality and standards of its programmes and services committing itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of good quality and quality assurance in its work. To achieve this, RVU has to develop a quality assurance guideline and to implement it for the continuous and sustained enhancement of quality.

The document describes a guideline and framework for Quality Assurance that are believed to facilitate the achievement of the University's Vision in particular and the Ethiopian Government Vision in general.

The guideline incorporates internal quality management strategies and puts into place its relationship with other related national policies. It is subservient to the existing national policies, guidelines and proclamations, among others, Education and Training Policy, Education Sector Strategy, Higher Education Proclamation 2003, Education Sector Development Program (ESDP), HERQA Guidelines and HESC. Above all, this policy document serves as an overall guiding and governing document in line with the Senate Legislation of RVU on matters related to quality assurance.

2. Aims, Objectives and Mission of the Policy

2.1. Academic Quality Assurance

Cognizant of the University's vision to become one of the top Private Universities in Ethiopia and aware of the ever-evolving quality assurance paradigms, the University underscores its determination to assure quality in teaching, and learning, through regular reviewing and improvement of its processes. This guideline specifies the University's approach to Academic Quality assurance (QA) and enhancement.

The Academic Quality Assurance Mission of RVU therefore is: to promote confidence in the academic provision (teaching and learning) ensuring the quality and the standards of awards of RVU are safeguarded, enhanced and effectively managed.

2.2. Aims and Objectives

The Internal Quality Assurance Guideline aims to support the University's efforts to achieve its Vision and Mission through creating an environment for high quality teaching and learning activities that meet national, regional and international standards. The guideline is based on the supposition that higher quality standards are achieved and maintained and that RVU is accredited both nationally and internationally.

Therefore, the objectives of the Internal Quality Assurance guideline include the following:

- 2.2.1. To provide guidance in the development and implementation of internal quality assurance procedures and practices.
- 2.2.2. To ensure the quality of academic programmes at RVU meet the standards expected by the stakeholders.
- 2.2.3. To ensure graduates have attained skills and knowledge through RVU academic programmes relevant and valued by the stakeholders.
- 2.2.4. To provide guidance in identifying internal standards and criteria consistent with internationally recognized standards.
- 2.2.5. To assist the university in maintaining and developing the quality of its academic programmes through enhanced support processes.
- 2.2.6. To facilitate the development of the culture of continuing quality improvement in order to achieve academic excellence.

3. Principles Underpinning the Guideline

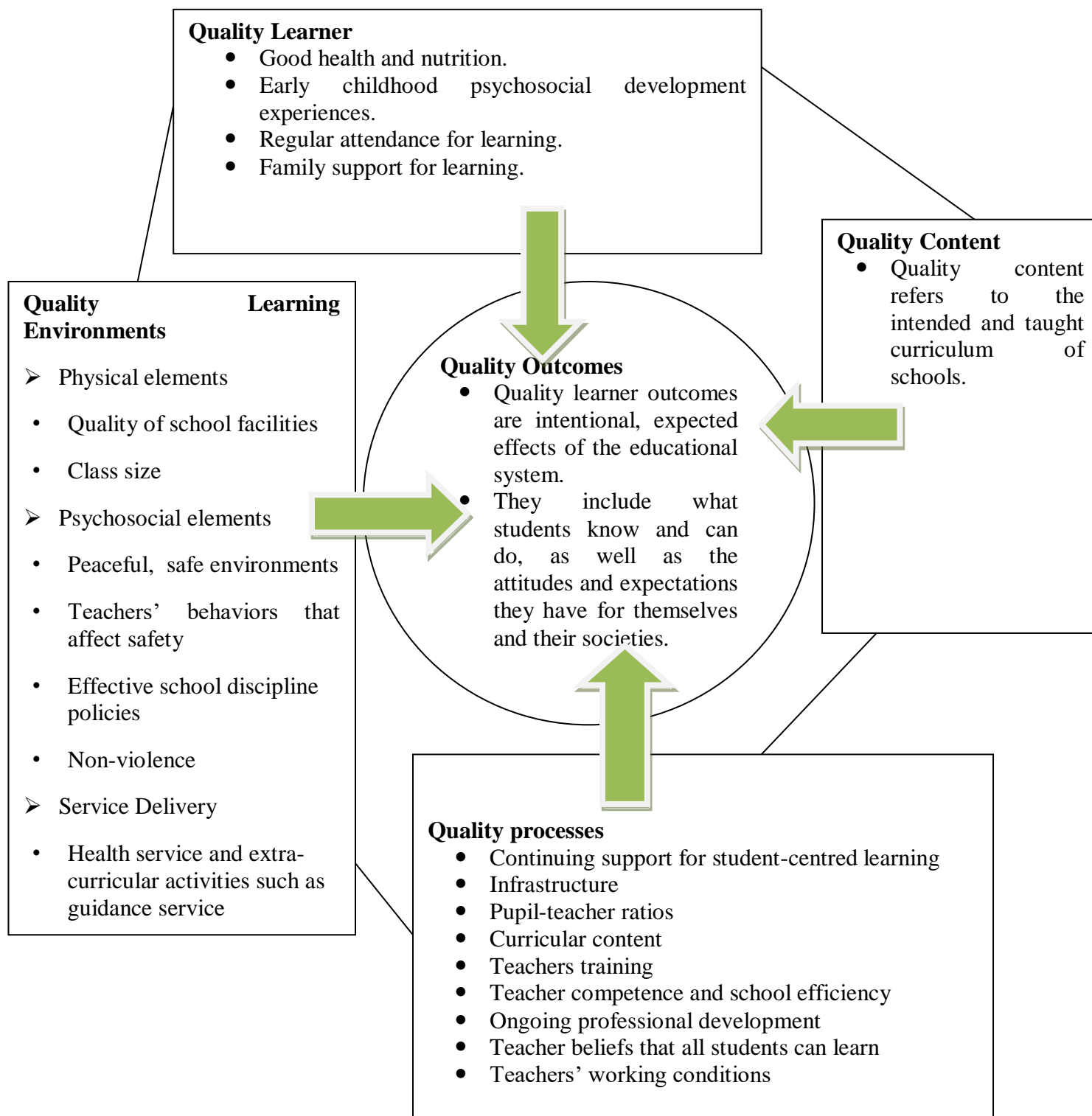
The standards and guides described in this guideline are based on a number of basic principles about quality assurance, internal to higher education. These include:

- 3.1. Providers of higher education have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- 3.2. The interests of society in the quality and standards of higher education need to be safeguarded;
- 3.3. The quality of academic programmes needs to be continually developed and improved for students and other beneficiaries of higher education;
- 3.4. There need to be efficient and effective organizational structures within which those academic programmes can be provided and supported;
- 3.5. Transparency and the use of external expertise in quality assurance processes are important;
- 3.6. There shall be encouragement of the culture of quality within higher education institutions;
- 3.7. Processes shall be developed through which higher education institutions can demonstrate their accountability including accountability for the investment of public and private money;
- 3.8. Quality assurance for accountability purposes is fully compatible with quality assurance for enhancement purposes.

4. Quality Assurance Framework

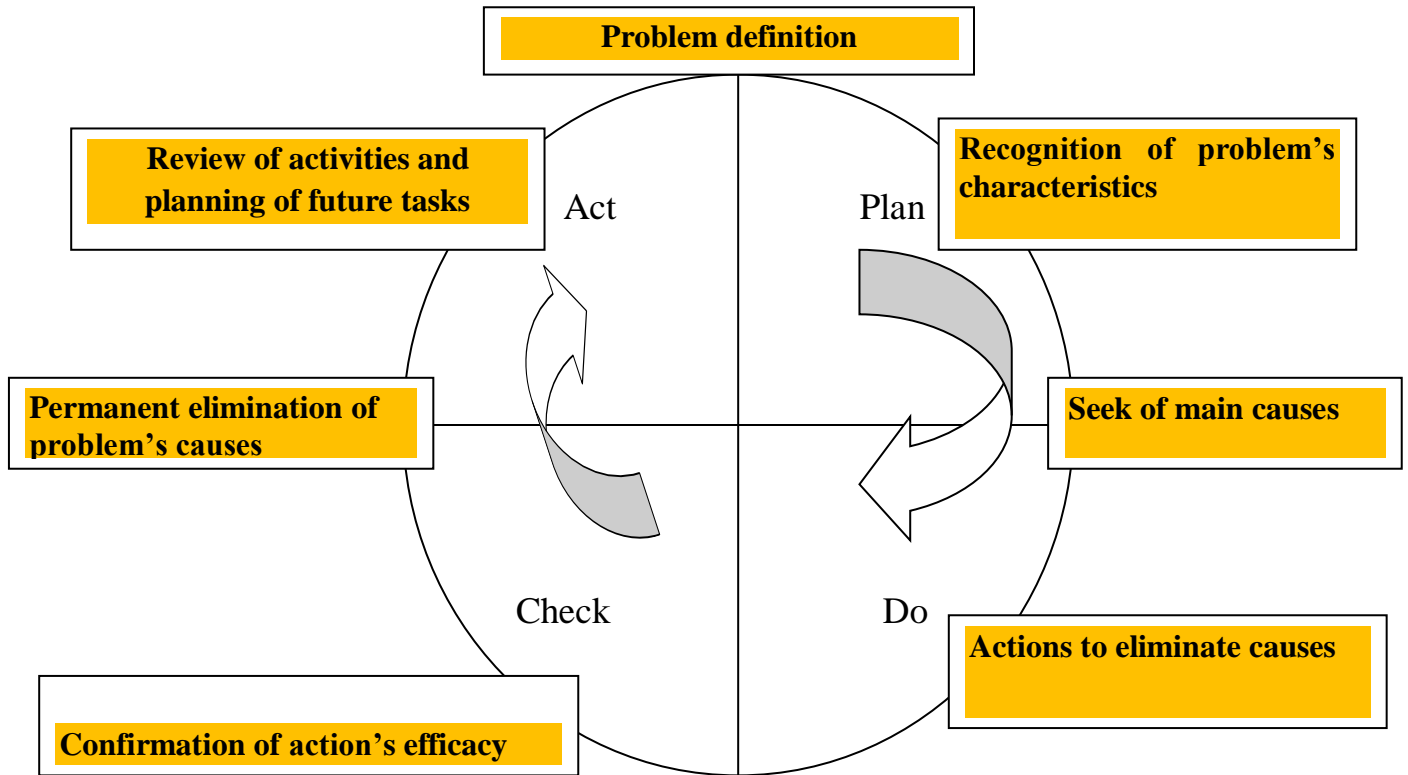
Quality Assurance Framework for Teaching and Learning at RVU is based on an **‘inputs, processes and outputs’ model**. The notion of quality underpinning the framework adopted by RVU is fitness for purpose (i.e. the institution with its components and activities has quality if they conform to the purpose for which they were designed).

4.1. Quality Model (Input-Process-Output)



Source: UNICEF (2000)

4.2. The PDCA Model for Monitoring Quality Process



Source: Quality Management Handbook for spin-off programmes (2005)

The PDCA cycle

Plan

The objectives of this phase are related to the identification of a problem (or opportunity for improvement), the recognition of its characteristics and causes, as well as the selection and development of the optimal solutions.

Do

Once the best solution is selected, it can be implemented. This phase has the objective of preparing the implementation plan, obtaining approval, and implementing the process improvements.

Check

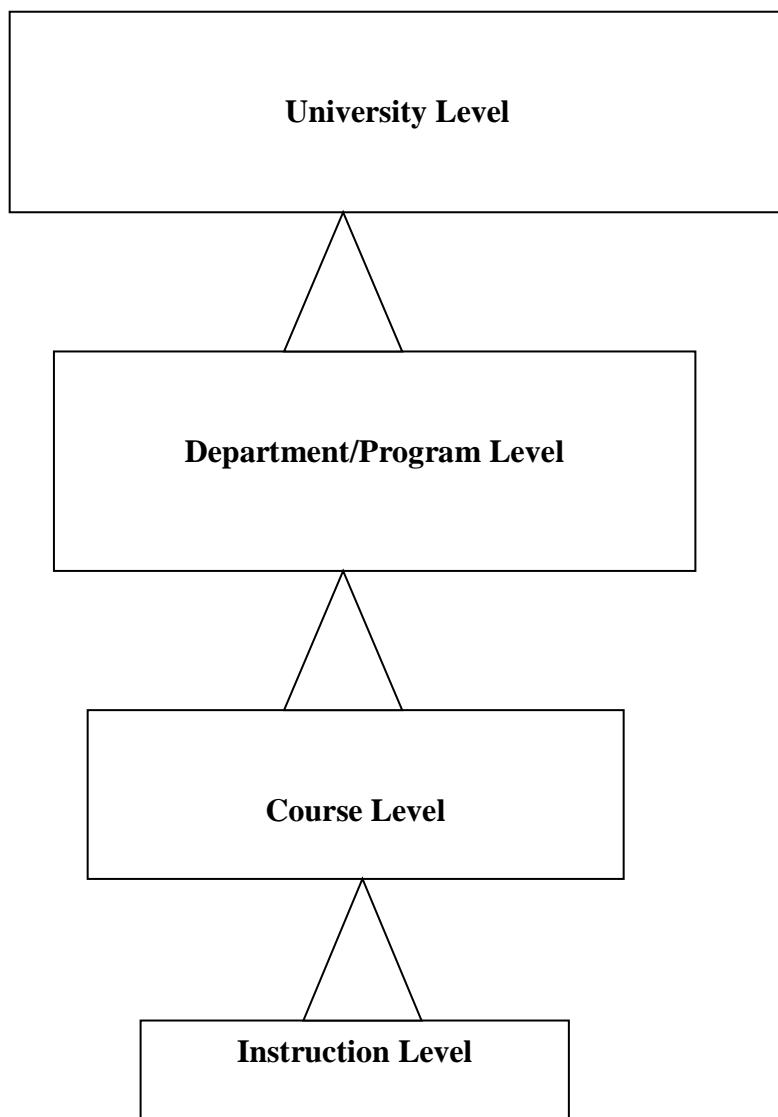
The objective of this step is to study the results derived from the implemented action. This is a crucial step in the PDCA cycle. After we have implemented the change for a short time, we must determine how well it is working.

Act

After planning an action, implementing and then monitoring it, we must decide whether it is worth continuing that particular change. If it consumed too much of our time, was difficult to adhere to, or even led to no improvement, we may consider aborting the change and planning a new one. However, if the change led to a desirable improvement or outcome, you may consider expanding the trial to a different area, or slightly increasing your complexity..

4.3. **Levels of Internal Quality Assurance**

There are four levels for academic quality assurance in RVU. These are :



5. Quality Management Structure

5.1. Quality Assurance Council (QAC)

- 5.1.1. Quality Assurance Council (QAC) shall be the highest governing body consisting of the President, Academic Vice President and the Director for Quality Assurance
- 5.1.2. The President will take the Chair and the Director for Quality Assurance will take the secretary of the committee.
- 5.1.3. QAC shall have the following main duties and responsibilities to:
 - Guide the overall activities of Quality Assurance process
 - Approve the budget for quality assurance activities
 - Receive and consider audit reports.
 - Decide on actions following audits.
 - Authorize publication of reports.

5.2. Quality Assurance Standing Committee (QASC)

QASC shall have the following main duties and responsibilities:

- It is a standing committee of the senate
- It is established to liaise the efforts of QAC with the senate
- It oversees matters related to quality assurance across the various Campus and departments of the University

5.3. Quality Assurance Directorate (QAD)

- 5.3.1. QAD shall have Quality Enhancement office and Quality Audit office which are accountable to the directorate
- 5.3.2. Quality Enhancement office shall have Staff Development Unit and Academic Development and Resource Centre
- 5.3.3. The QAD shall have the following main duties and responsibilities:
 - Develop policies, guidelines, procedures and instruments for quality assurance and auditing.
 - Assess the quality and relevance of education in the University and oversee the implementation of the different units of quality assurance activities.
 - Establish and maintain a set of procedures which allow the University to

respond in a systemic and transparent manner to the external requirements of External Audit Agencies.

- Advise the university management, deans and department heads on quality assurance and enhancement matters;
- Conduct and/or co-ordinate research on various issues of quality and relevance of education;
- Organize training for teaching staff and management on quality and relevance of education;
- Identify and disseminate good practices
- Be accountable to the President.

5.4. **Campus Quality Assurance Unit (CQAU)**

The CQAU shall have the following main duties and responsibilities:

- Oversee quality assurance operations at Campus level
- Oversee the internal monitoring, evaluation and review of all courses in the Campus
- Report to the Campus dean and to the Institutional Quality Assurance Directorate
- Receive the outcomes of external reviews of quality and standards and monitor action plans to address any matters raised
- The unit is accountable to QAD

5.5. **The Departmental Quality Assessment Team (DQAT)**

5.5.1. The DQAT shall consists of three members nominated by Department Council

5.5.2. The DQAT shall have the following main duties and responsibilities:

- Devise ways of improving the quality of service given to students
- Assess the standard of modules and other teaching materials in each program
- Administer the assessment activity at department level
- Report to the dean of the Campus and Campus Quality Assurance about quality assessment at department level
- Prepare a self-evaluation document for programme audit
- Is accountable to the dean of the Campus

6. Areas of Internal Quality Assurance

Quality management shall include the following activities:

- 6.1. Mandatory internal moderation procedures to ensure the validity of student assessments and the reliability of marking.
- 6.2. The assessment and monitoring of academic honesty.
- 6.3. The monitoring academic staff performance standards.
- 6.4. Self-evaluation/study reports.
- 6.5. Standardize programme and course development procedures which include guidelines/templates approved by the senate.
- 6.6. An annual appraisal of what the department is trying to do (Planning), what it has done (Doing), monitoring and evaluating processes and outcomes (Reviewing) and making appropriate changes based on the data (Improving).

7. Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- 7.1. The guideline shall be implemented and carried out in the context of the University's Vision, Mission and Values Statements.
- 7.2. The guideline shall apply to all Campuss of academic staff at RVU.
- 7.3. Implementation of this guideline and framework shall be facilitated and guided by the Quality Assurance Directorate.
- 7.4. The university shall publish clear principles and policies for quality control.
- 7.5. The university shall develop effective procedures for quality assurance and enhancement systems that shall be widely understood at the institutional, faculty and departmental level.
- 7.6. The university shall have an internal quality assurance procedure for systematic monitoring and review processes to determine the quality and relevance of its programmes and the appropriateness of its infrastructure.
- 7.7. The university shall regularly and systematically evaluate the achievement of its mission and purposes giving primary focus to the realization of its educational objectives. Its system of evaluation shall be designed to provide relevant and trustworthy information to support institutional improvement, with an emphasis on

the academic programme.

- 7.8. The university shall collect a wide range of data about the services it provides through surveys of student views, internal peer review of teaching and internal audits of quality procedures, external reviews of teaching and research, professional body scrutiny of programmes, surveys of recent graduates and employer's views of graduates of WU.
- 7.9. The university shall have a clear programme review system organized and carried out by the university on a regular basis. The programme at the university shall include a timetable ensuring the review of each academic programme.
- 7.10. The university shall monitor the effectiveness of its programmes regularly. In doing this, the university shall have a well-established set of procedures for annual monitoring and review of course, department and faculty performance.
- 7.11. Every Campus/Department shall prepare its own Self Evaluation Document every three years (6 months for SED preparation, 6 months for auditing and audit report publishing, 2 years for enhancement plan implementation by the respective Campuses/Departments which will be monitored by QAD) and send their report to the Quality Assurance Directorate. Based on this SED, QAD shall audit so as to verify their claims.
- 7.12. After conducting an internal audit QAD shall give appropriate recommendations and monitor the implementations of these recommendations based on action plan prepared by respective Campuses /Departments.
- 7.13. The faculties (departments) shall present annual monitoring reports to Quality Assurance Directorate.

8. Areas of Internal Quality Assurance

Internal quality assurance mechanisms shall be departmentally generated and continuous. The mechanisms shall be coherent with the quality assurance framework set forth in this guideline, be approved by the Senate and include mechanisms to assess the following areas:

- The Quality of Programmes and Courses
- The Quality of Academic staff

- The Quality of Teaching and Learning experience
- The Quality of Student Assessment
- The Quality of Resources and Facilities
- The Quality of Graduates
- The Quality of Governance and Management

8.1. **The Quality of Programmes and Courses**

- 8.1.1. The programme of studies required and implemented by the university should meet prescribed standards. It should work towards the specific objectives of the institution and of the courses concerned. Assessment of the quality of programme design and implementation shall consider whether the programme is consistent with the university's vision and mission and addresses critical national human resources requirements. The programme of studies should provide for a curriculum with clear-cut goals for human and national development and for practical experience directly related to the professional roles for which the students are being prepared.
- 8.1.2. The relevance of the degree programmes in relation to the requirements of the labour market are developed on an informed basis through ongoing, published studies of the employment situation of graduates and through strengthened dialogue with students, alumni and employers respectively.
- 8.1.3. The University shall have a Student Admissions Policy.
- 8.1.4. Admission of students into programmes shall be on the basis of established and regularly updated criteria allowing fair and transparent recruitment;
- 8.1.5. Appropriate policies, procedures and regulations shall be in place for the student admission, selection and assessment at postgraduate level. These are communicated to all postgraduate students and academic staff and implemented consistently across the institution and programme.
- 8.1.6. The quality assurance of programmes and awards is expected to include:
- 8.1.6.1. Clearly stated and attainable educational goals ensuring the programme is coherently structured, learning outcomes clearly stated and physical and human resources meet the requirements of the programme;
- 8.1.6.2. Careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- 8.1.6.3. Development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;

- 8.1.6.4. Specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning)
- 8.1.6.5. Availability of appropriate learning resources;
- 8.1.6.6. Formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- 8.1.6.7. Methods of monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- 8.1.6.8. Regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- 8.1.6.9. Regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organizations;
- 8.1.6.10. Participation of students in quality assurance activities
- 8.1.7. The University shall have guidelines for the development of new programmes and their approval by the Senate.
- 8.1.8. A programme shall be reviewed once every three years (depending on the duration of the programme) based on a planned periodic reassessment of the curriculum in which both faculty and students shall be involved.
- 8.1.9. The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing validity, relevance and currency.
- 8.1.10. Assessment of quality in the design and implementation of programmes and courses shall ensure that well-qualified staff members carry out such activities, which are based on the guidelines and procedures approved by Senate.
- 8.1.11. The University shall conduct on-going internal evaluations to determine programme success by measuring student achievement and satisfaction based on valid and reliable assessment techniques. The purpose of programme review is to evaluate three aspects of the programme:
 - i.** Quality of programme inputs;
 - ii.** Quality of programme processes; and
 - iii.** Quality of programme outputs and impact.
- 8.1.12. The University shall use multiple sources of qualitative and quantitative data in the evaluation of its courses, and programmes, including feedback from students and

stakeholders.

8.1.13. The University shall strive to create courses which are relevant and timely in response to the need of the country. Every course shall be evaluated using the University's course and teacher evaluation survey each time it is offered, or if offered more than once in an academic year, at least annually.

8.2. **Quality of Academic Staff**

8.2.1. Academic staff categories (e.g., full-time, part-time, adjunct) shall be clearly defined by the institution.

8.2.2. The preparation and qualifications of all academic staff shall be appropriate to the field and level of their assignments. The University shall have teaching staff with high level of competence, experience and expertise along with highly developed communication skills.

8.2.3. There shall be an adequate number of academic staff whose time commitment to the institution is sufficient to assure the accomplishment of in-class and out-of-class responsibilities essential for the fulfillment of institutional mission and purposes.

8.2.4. Each member of academic staff shall be effective in carrying out their assigned responsibilities which shall include instruction and the systematic understanding of effective teaching/learning processes and outcomes in courses and programmes.

8.2.5. The university shall ensure equal employment opportunity consistent with legal requirements and any other dimensions of its own choosing, compatible with its mission and purposes.

8.2.6. Academic staff selection shall reflect the effectiveness of this process and result in a variety of intellectual backgrounds and training.

8.2.7. There shall be a published and implemented standards and procedures policy for all academic staff and other professionals, for actions such as appointment, promotion, tenure, grievance, discipline and dismissal, based on principles of fairness with due regard for the rights of all persons.

8.2.8. Each prospective academic staff member shall be provided with a written contract stating explicitly the nature and term of the initial appointment and when applicable, institutional considerations that might preclude or limit future appointments.

8.2.9. Where graduate teaching assistants are employed, the institution shall carefully

select, train, supervise and evaluate them.

- 8.2.10. Campuss/Faculties/Schools shall avoid undue dependence on part-time academic staff, adjuncts and graduate assistants to conduct classroom instruction. Whenever graduate assistants are used, faculties must ensure they receive appropriate pedagogical training (like induction, HDP, and others) before they commence their teaching duties.
- 8.2.11. RVU shall employ effective procedures for the regular evaluation of academic staff appointments, performance and retention.
- 8.2.12. RVU shall provide all staff with substantial and equitable opportunities for continued professional development throughout their careers.
- 8.2.13. All academic staff shall pursue scholarships designed to ensure they have the latest knowledge, skills and pedagogy of their discipline or profession.
- 8.2.14. RVU shall have an academic code of conduct which ensures all academic staff acts responsibly and ethically.

8.3. **Quality of Teaching and Learning Experience**

Teaching and learning are the primary activities of any institution of higher education, whether of the undergraduate or graduate level. The breadth and depth of student learning should be appropriate to the programmes and levels of study and the demonstrable ability of students to integrate knowledge are key elements in judging the success of the educational programs of the university.

Instructional Procedures

- 8.3.1. The methods of instruction shall be employed with a view to guiding the student's self- realization through the development of his/her analytical and critical judgment and the stimulation of his/her social awareness. They are adapted to subject matter, situational needs and individual differences, and are conducted on a collegiate level. Academic staff shall be encouraged to join seminars and educational associations and to experiment, where feasible, with new approaches in teaching.

Classroom Management

- 8.3.2. The rules and practices relating to classroom management shall be conducive to effective instruction and shall be carefully observed. Measures shall be taken to ensure the punctual attendance of faculty members and students.

- 8.3.3. Student absences should not exceed the number specified by the institution. Records of these absences shall be kept.
- 8.3.4. Overcrowding of classrooms should be avoided. The number of students should be appropriate to the size, furniture and acoustics of the room and subject taught.
- 8.3.5. Class sizes shall be considered satisfactory if they remain within the following limits: for ordinary lecture courses involving recitation – 40 students, for language and other laboratory courses - 30 students.

Assessment of Quality in Teaching/ Supervision for Effective Instruction

- 8.3.6. RVU shall employ effective procedures for the regular evaluation of teaching.

Assessment of quality in teaching and learning shall cover the following;

- 8.3.6.1. Use of well-established tools such as the Head of Department assessment;
- 8.3.6.2. Student evaluation of course and teaching;
- 8.3.6.3. Peer review;
- 8.3.6.4. Individual performance management goals, appointments and promotions procedures that pertain to teaching shall be included in the assessment of quality teaching.
- 8.3.7. Supervision of instruction shall include such practical measures as: requirement of syllabi, observation visits to classes, informal dialogues with academic staff and students, evaluation of tests and examinations (both of questions and of the manner of correcting papers).
- 8.3.8. Academic staff shall be encouraged to join seminars and educational associations and to experiment, where feasible, with new approaches in teaching.

Instructional Administration

- 8.3.9. Instructional administration shall cover co-ordination of curriculum offerings; their development and management; the adoption of the proper textbooks; the organization of the faculty into departments or the like, to promote effective teaching and learning.

Co-curricular Activities

- 8.3.10. Co-curricular activities shall be given a proportionate role in the overall academic programme. A well-rounded student personality should result from participation in such a programme.

Academic Counseling

8.3.11. Students shall be orientated on the availability of academic guidance and counseling. Persons in charge of academic counseling shall be available for the students' consultation.

Improvement of Teaching

8.3.12. The Academic Quality and Assessment Directorate shall have an advisory and supportive role for the improvement of teaching, for example, through implementation of induction courses for academic staff, on-going professional development programmes and the Higher Diploma Programme.

8.4. Quality of Student Assessment

The University's main goal in teaching and learning is the production of well-rounded graduates who are knowledgeable, skilled and of sound professional and social ethos. Assessment for attainment of these attributes shall be guided by the following:

- 8.4.1. The University shall have assessment policies and published procedures at the institutional level which are applied consistently within and across disciplines.
- 8.4.2. The University's assessment policy shall be driven by core principles of assessment and shall reflect an institutional vision for the purposes of assessment, including giving more depth of understanding to assessment of learning while simultaneously valuing and promoting assessment for learning.
- 8.4.3. Assessment strategies shall reflect a modular approach to students learning and instruction and thus the assessment of students shall be on a continuous basis in relation to achievement of the modular-objectives (criterion-referenced) with a passing standard of 50 percent.
- 8.4.4. The University shall ensure all methods used to assess student performance are fair and fit for purpose and shall ensure a range of formative and summative assessments are applied which ensure that all learning outcomes are validly assessed
- 8.4.5. The University shall ensure teachers will use a balance between formative and summative assessments.
- 8.4.6. The University shall ensure all faculties and departments establish examination committees at all levels to scrutinize the assessment tasks set, to ensure assessments are of an appropriate standard and are consistent with the programme's aims and

objectives, content and learning outcomes and assessment methods.

- 8.4.7. The University shall ensure all individuals and committees involved in assessment are aware of and act in accordance with, their specific and identifiable responsibilities.
- 8.4.8. The University shall ensure students are clearly informed about the assessment strategy in use for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods will be implemented and expectations together with the criteria applied to the assessment of their overall performance.
- 8.4.9. The University shall encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in respect of assessment and seek to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities.
- 8.4.10. The University shall ensure assessment regulations and marking criteria are transparent and easily accessible to staff, students and other interested stakeholders.
- 8.4.11. The University shall have transparent and fair mechanisms for marking and for moderating marks.
- 8.4.12. The University shall ensure all assessment decisions and marks are recorded and documented accurately and systematically.
- 8.4.13. The University shall have in place an appeal system for students who have a complaint about the fairness of the assessment.
- 8.4.14. The quality of assessments shall be reviewed regularly to ensure the reliability and validity; that assessment activities are consistent and accurate and they measure the relevant knowledge, skills and competences in relation to the learning outcomes set.
- 8.4.15. The University shall make every effort to ensure teachers are competent with regard to assessment and development of assessment procedures and shall provide teachers with training to ensure such competency and to practice both assessments of and for learning.
- 8.4.16. The University shall continually review how the assessment policy and its implementation is working, what improvements are needed to ensure quality, relevance and currency in programme offerings and amend assessment regulations periodically to assure themselves the regulations remain fit for purpose.

8.5. **Quality of Learning Resources and Facilities**

Learning resources and facilities are an essential part of the curricular programmes of an

institution. They include not just the space but also the supplies, equipment and features desired of good laboratories and libraries to help attain course objectives. The University shall have mechanisms enabling it to design, manage and improve its physical resources and facilities in order to support student learning.

Assessment of quality of resources:

- 8.5.1. The university libraries shall be administered and supervised by full-time, qualified librarians under a clearly- drawn organizational set-up.
- 8.5.2. A written collection development policy shall be formulated by the librarians with the cooperation of the Campuss/Faculties/Schools. Collection development is the joint responsibility of the faculty and the library. The emphasis is on quality rather than quantity.
- 8.5.3. The library holdings shall be adequate to meet the curricular, instructional, and recreational needs of the clientele. The collection shall consist of, but not limited to up-to-date and relevant books, journals, serials, pamphlets, documents and non printed materials.
- 8.5.4. The books shall be catalogued and classified according to an internationally accepted system.
- 8.5.5. The head librarian shall prepare an annual budget justifying all library needs, apportioning all expected revenues according to these needs.
- 8.5.6. Co-ordination between the library staff and the Campus/faculty/school shall be strengthened to promote effective use of the library by the students.
- 8.5.7. Laboratory rooms shall be spacious, well ventilated, well lit and safe. There should be adequate equipment and supplies for each of the laboratory courses.
- 8.5.8. The size and number of classrooms shall be sufficient to accommodate the student population. Classrooms should have a pleasant atmosphere, shall be clean and adequately equipped with furniture and black/whiteboards. There should be satisfactory provisions for proper lighting, ventilation and freedom from noise.

8.6. Quality of Graduates

- 8.6.1. The University shall collect data on those graduates from each programme who gains employment, their employers and the nature of the employment.
- 8.6.2. The University shall collect and analyze feedback from the employers of the

graduates and uses this to improve its programmes.

8.6.3. The University shall develop and establish an effective and active relationship with its alumni.

8.6.4. The University shall conduct tracer studies to generate information on graduate outcomes from employers of the graduates.

8.7. **The Quality of Governance and Management**

The institution shall have clearly articulated governance and management structures. The detail of this session is discussed below under 9.2.

9. Internal Quality Audit

Introduction

In line with the principle that higher education institutions have the primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and assurance thereof, presents guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) at the level of higher education institutions, but also incorporates guidelines for CODE modes. The guidelines cover areas that are considered essential for the attainment of the provision of quality higher education, focusing on ten focus areas of internal quality audit set by ETA.

9.1. **Vision, Mission and Educational Goals**

The institution shall have published vision, mission and educational goals; and clear policies and procedures that are consistent with the vision and mission statement, which reflect the institution's commitment to continuous quality enhancement.

9.1.1. The vision, mission and educational goals are publically disclosed; they reflect the aspirations and needs of stakeholders, and indicate strategic development plans and targets.

9.1.2. The institutional vision and mission on quality assurance are translated into clear policies and strategic plans, which are operationalised into achievable goals.

9.1.3. The institution ensures that there is a robust and well-functioning quality assurance system for its entire academic and research activities, and to facilitate the coordination of the approval of policies, procedures and mechanisms. The

institution, therefore, ensures that:

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

9.2. Governance and Management System

The institution shall have clearly articulated governance and management structures, which ensure sound and ethical governance and management practices, and supports the achievement of its mission and legal mandate.

- 9.2.2. The institution has qualified, competent and experienced leadership to oversee all development, management and quality functions of the university;
- 9.2.3. The institution has relevant organs of governance, such as the University Council, Senate, Management Board, Student Body; and various committees, each with a clear mandate, duties, responsibilities, powers, privileges and tenure; these organs are properly coordinated to ensure efficiency;
- 9.2.4. The institution has clear communication systems and networks for the promotion of internal and external information circulation and public accountability;
- 9.2.5. The institution makes use of its autonomy responsibly; has policies and procedures for the delegation of authority for financial and management decisions, whenever needed;
- 9.2.6. The institution enables students to participate in decision-making;
- 9.2.7. The institution ensures regular consultations with stakeholders, reports and follows up actions on key issues of policy and operations to promote cohesion, harmony and identity within the institution;

- 9.2.8. The institution emphasizes ethics, transparency and academic integrity throughout its teaching and research activities;
- 9.2.9. The institution promotes a high degree of institutional integrity and responsiveness by advocating and demonstrating honesty and non-discrimination in its treatment of staff, students, members of the public and in the management of institutional affairs;
- 9.2.10. The institution publishes on a regular basis, impartial and objective qualitative and quantitative information about courses offered, research undertaken and community services provided;
- 9.2.11. The institution has implemented sound processes for deterring, detecting and dealing with academic misconduct by students or staff;
- 9.2.12. The institution has policies and activated procedures to manage conflict of interest throughout the institution; and
- 9.2.13. The institution has effective, systematic, timely and fair processes for investigation of complaints, grievances and appeals.

9.3. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

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

- 9.3.2. For a good higher education experience, institutions provide a range of resources to assist students' learning, which vary from physical resources (infrastructure and facilities) to human support (tutors, counselors and other advisers).
- 9.3.3. Infrastructure and facilities are in line with the goals and aims of the HEI; the programmes on offer; and the teaching and learning strategy. The institution has:
 - a) Adequate academic and administrative facilities (lecture theatres, seminar rooms, academic and administrative staff offices, laboratories, studios, workshops, recreational facilities, etc.);
 - b) Adequate, well equipped and a properly organized library and resources for the number of students and staff (physical and online); and
 - c) Adequate ICT infrastructure.

9.4. Academic and Support Staff

The institution shall have gender-sensitive policies on human resources that ensure recruitment and retention of adequate numbers of qualified and competent staff to achieve its mission and carry out its legal mandate.

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

- a) Has clear policies and procedures for recruitment, retention, and promotion of staff;
- b) Ensures that all staff have the right qualification and competency;
- c) Has a core of full-time academic staff and keeps up-to-date records of staff numbers, qualifications and staff turnover rates;
- d) Has clear policies and procedures for staff development and continuing development;
- e) Provides adequate staff support facilities;
- f) Undertakes periodic monitoring, evaluation, and appraisal of staff; and
- g) Adheres to (local/regional) norms for student-faculty ratios that promote/enhance student -centered learning.

9.4.3. The institution enables female and male faculty and office holders to realize equal outcomes in their academic and professional performance. More specifically, there is:

- a) A gender-balanced staff composition, across campuses and across degree programmes;
- b) Gender balance in management and decision-making; and
- c) Inclusive management and leadership.

9.5. Student Admission and Support Services

The institution shall have pre-defined, published and consistently applied policies and procedures that ensure fair and equitable recruitment and admission, progression, certification, and support services for the students (all phases of the student's "life cycle").

9.5.2. The institution shall have documented policies and strategies that promote students'

welfare and guidance in curricular, vocational and personal domains.

9.5.3. Providing conditions and support that are necessary for students to make progress in their academic career is in the best interest 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 guidelines and strategies:

- a) For marketing/promoting the institution and its programmes, recruitment, admission, selection and registration;
- b) That promote diversity in admission, including gender mainstreaming and consideration of disadvantaged groups ;
- c) That ensure that students admitted meet minimum general and programme specific entry requirements;
- d) That ensure monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking for improvement of enrolment management; and
- e) That promotes student retention and progression.

9.5.4. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

9.5.5. 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-centered learning and flexible modes of learning and teaching, are taken into account when allocating, planning and providing the learning resources and student support.

9.5.6. Support services may be organized 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.

9.5.7. 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 enrollment

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

- a) Promoting affirmative action for gender mainstreaming;
- b) Advising them on academic issues;
- c) Advising them on financial matters;
- d) Providing personal counseling services; and
- e) Providing career guidance.

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

9.6. Program Relevance and Curriculum

The institution shall have policies and systems that ensure the design and development of quality, relevant academic programmes that contribute to the achievement of its mission and commensurate with national, regional and international standards.

9.6.2. The institution has policies and procedures for introducing new programmes and amending or phasing out standing programmes, and programmes are subject to continuous monitoring (including periodic external review) and development to ensure currency and relevance;

9.6.3. The institution has academic programmes that are in line with the mission and objectives of the institution and address the expectations and needs of stakeholders; therefore, the programmes show range, depth, coherence 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

9.6.4. The institution ensures that programmes' structure and credit hours/points are in accord with international norms for the amount of study required for each degree offered by the institution (or for the level of the awarded qualifications); and that programmes are approved by ETA, where applicable;

9.6.5. The institution has effective mechanisms for industry and other stakeholders' participation in curriculum design and validation;

9.6.6. The institution has policies requiring formulated learning outcomes to be defined and documented for all programmes and subjects, and ensures that the programme specifications are accessible to learners (or stakeholders);

- 9.6.7. The institution has programmes that are delivered by adequate, qualified and competent staff with pedagogical skills;
- 9.6.8. The institution 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; and
- 9.6.9. In the case of CODE, learning materials is essential to ensure that the learners will be able to achieve the objectives or intended learning outcomes. The broad requirement shall be made available by providing module addressing key areas of the study materials, for example:
- a) Students' understanding of the objectives;
 - 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; and
 - g) Navigational devices for online materials.

9.7. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The institution shall put in place, in a way that is consistent with its vision and mission, policies and procedures that promote active student learning and assure fair and transparent assessment.

- 9.7.2. The assessment principles, criteria and procedures are explicit and made publically available to both students and staff.
- 9.7.3. 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 quality student experience, to enable the students to acquire appropriate knowledge, competences and skills. To do so:
- a) The teaching and learning strategies are student-centred and flexible; motivate students' self-reflection and engagement in the learning process;
 - b) The environment and resources are appropriate and adequate to support each student;
 - c) There are systems in place for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the

- teaching and learning approaches for quality improvement;
- d) There are mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the results of postgraduate management systems against international best practices;

9.7.4. In the case of CODE:

- a) The decision on the medium or media of delivery should take into account:
 - 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. Organizational requirements for development,
 - vi. Its Novelty, and
 - vii. Speed within which it can be set up.
- b) There are sessions to provide general orientation and introduction to the course materials at the commencement of the course;
- c) There are special tutorial sessions for the course during the programme/course; and
- d) There are sessions to provide some revision work to students before examinations.

9.7.5. Student assessment is one of the most important elements of higher education because the outcomes of such assessment have a profound effect on students' progression and future careers. It is, therefore, important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times. This implies that:

- a) The assessment procedures and instruments are published and consistently applied, and include:
 - i. A range of assessment methods (e.g. coursework, projects, research and examinations to serve formative and summative assessment purposes),
 - ii. Internal and external moderation,
 - iii. Invigilation procedures,
 - iv. Monitoring of student progress,

- v. Validity and reliability of assessment practices,
 - vi. Recording of assessment results and settling of disputes,
 - vii. Rigor and security of assessment system.
- b) Assessment is carried out transparently by competent and impartial examiners, and by use of external examiners.
 - c) There are regular objective feedback to students on their strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate counseling support for improvement.
 - d) There is a disciplinary and appeals process for students who may feel aggrieved.
 - e) There is continual collection and compilation of data on students' access and performance.

9.8. Student Progression and Graduate Outcomes

- 9.8.2. Tracking records information on students and/or graduates, with regard to their learning progress, skills acquired, perceptions, jobs, between at least two points in time, through aggregated or individual-level data, collected mainly via administrative processes and surveys.
- 9.8.3. Tracking processes or instruments would require application of results, i.e. improvement of curricula, enhancement of student services etc.
- 9.8.4. Administrative data is the main resource used for student tracking both at national level and in individual institutions, while graduate tracking mainly relies on surveys.
- 9.8.5. A number of countries deploy a 'centralized approach' for student tracking by administrative data. Institutions collect data on their students (often mandatory) and deliver it to a central national database which is typically administered by a national body.
- 9.8.6. Student tracking is often supplemented with quantitative and qualitative surveys, in order to capture student perceptions.
- 9.8.7. Technically, graduate tracking can also be done on the basis of administrative data, which is the case in a few countries, where national-level databases combine student data with social security or labor market data, or even data from the school sector.
- 9.8.8. In some countries 'shared approaches' are explored, where individual institutions participate in a centrally designed initiative/process (regarding method,

schedule, etc.), usually initiated by a national body, occasionally as a joint initiative of a network of universities, or with a research institution. Data is collected via standardized questionnaires, which provide room for individual institutions to add specific questions.

- 9.8.9. Institutions often complement tracking with other measures such as interviews, focus group meetings, student feedback sheets, etc. For graduate tracking, developing relationships with alumni can be useful.
- 9.8.10. Institutions track students and graduates with regard to their factual progression and their own subjective perceptions of the learning provision.
- 9.8.11. Student tracking is critical in particular to the first year of study, and many of the measures relate to ensuring retention. This is also one of many motivations for institutions to include potential students into tracking: to provide information, allow early identification of students at risk, but also as part of the institution's marketing and recruitment initiatives. Assessing the reasons and devising measures for preventing dropout is another focus of student tracking. A challenge in some higher education systems is that institutions can only distinguish through surveys which students left the institution to study elsewhere, or dropped out.
- 9.8.12. Graduate tracking requires substantial resources in order to ensure good response rates. Beyond gathering data, institutions develop platforms for matchmaking between students and employers and other novel approaches. Graduate tracking was also found to develop synergies with alumni relations, which is yet another area of activity and rising importance for institutions.
- 9.8.13. There are major differences in the ways institutions are able to collect information on students' social and ethnic backgrounds, depending on national policies, and whether and how these extend to higher education. For example in some countries, questions on students' background are part of the enrolment procedures, whereas in others they are not. However, even in countries where it is not mandatory, individual institutions developed measures to gather information on these issues, e.g. through supplementary surveys.
- 9.8.14. In most places, tracking does not include or does not identify lifelong learning, international and mobile students but many institutions have recognized this,

given the growing number and importance of these groups, and strive for inclusive approaches.

- 9.8.15. Generally, students and staff were positive about tracking, and its impacts. Even staff members, who admitted to being highly skeptical when tracking was initiated, acknowledged the benefits to be able to rely on data rather than only on anecdotal knowledge. However, there were also critical remarks, mainly regarding lack of resources for tracking, and insufficient follow-up on results.
- 9.8.16. Tracking was generally found to enhance awareness of teaching results, and to communicate and compare them throughout the institution. It helped, for instance, to better understand reasons for dropout, and to consider professional career prospects for the revision of curricula.
- 9.8.17. Tracking is also of some use for identifying and targeting potential students, and for planning for the next intake.
- 9.8.18. Tracking results were found to be instrumental for improving and devising better targeted student support systems that underpin all phases of the student's lifecycle, resulting in better quality of education and better student retention. It is also used for benchmarking within the institution or between institutions.
- 9.8.19. Tracking results were used also for strategic dialogue between institutional leadership and the faculties, and to provide the basis for jointly agreed development goals and indicators.
- 9.8.20. It enables inter institutional comparison and benchmarking, as a means for building awareness among staff and to encourage further enhancement of management, teaching and services.
- 9.8.21. It stimulated institutions to reform their data collection, and make better use of existing data.
- 9.8.22. Results are also used for the overall institutional development, e.g. development of strategies and the enhancement of governance and management processes and structures.
- 9.8.23. With growing competition between institutions, use for marketing and targeted student information is gaining popularity.

9.9. Research and Community Engagement Activities

The institution shall encourage, promote, and engage in innovative research consistent with its policies and strategic plans, and address national, regional, continental, and international needs. Moreover, the institution shall encourage engagement in community outreach programmes that promote cultural and corporate social responsibility.

9.9.2. Research is one of the core activities of a university, and the institution needs a university-wide research policy that sets the direction of institutional research. The policy is at both institutional and research-programme level (postgraduate studies) to ensure proper engagement in research. It ensures that:

- a) There are criteria, procedures and processes for the approval of research proposals and theses, and the conduct and supervision of research studies;
- b) There are policies, research management systems and strategies, adequate infrastructure and resources that facilitate all staff to undertake innovative research, and publish research results;
- c) There is a shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of research at the institution;
- d) There are criteria and processes for the approval of research proposals, 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 commercialization of research, and effective and trustworthy management of research information.
- e) There is adequate academic integrity through the establishment and use of appropriate research committees and boards for the protection of human subjects, and ensured academic integrity; The research undertaken is relevant and responsive to the needs for academic advancement and community development expectations; and
- f) There is effective monitoring and evaluation of the research system.

9.9.3. A higher education institution is not only responsible for teaching, learning and research, but it is also responsible for serving society. 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, regional/state, national, global) for a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.

Community engagement should:

- a) Enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity;
- b) Enhance curriculum, teaching and learning;
- c) Facilitate preparation of educated and engaged citizens;
- d) Strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility;
- e) Address critical societal issues and contribute to public good; and
- f) Ensure there are mechanisms for partnering with other stakeholders in the community for sustainable development.

9.10. Internal Quality Assurance

9.10.2. The campus needs to consolidate a quality culture which is supported by a policy and goals for quality that are made known and are publicly accessible.

9.10.3. The campus must have mechanisms to maintain and update its programs and develop methodologies to approve, control, evaluate and periodically improve their quality.

9.10.4. The campus must have procedures in place to check that the fundamental purpose of its actions is to encourage learning in the students.

9.10.5. The campus must have mechanisms to ensure that the recruitment, management and training of its academic staff and service and administration staff are carried out with appropriate safeguards in order for them to adequately carry out their corresponding functions.

9.10.6. The campus must have mechanisms whereby it can design, manage and improve its services and physical resources so that student learning can develop and take place in an appropriate way.

9.10.7. The campus must have mechanisms to ensure and promote the development of research activities according to the programmes delivered by the institution and the social context where it is related to.

9.10.8. The campus must put in place mechanisms that ensure the development and improvement of actions towards the community and social engagement relevant to

the requirements of society.

9.10.9. The campus must be provided with procedures to ensure that outcomes (teaching and learning processes, graduate employability and the satisfaction of the different stakeholders) are measured, analyzed and used for decision-making and to enhance the quality of degree programmes.

9.10.10. The campus must have mechanisms to ensure that updated information on degrees and programmes is published periodically.

10. Amendment of the Guideline

10.1. The Quality Assurance Policy shall be updated as necessary to reflect the changing situation of the University.

10.2. The Academic Quality and Assessment Directorate shall submit the revised Academic Quality Assurance Policy to the Quality Assurance Council which will issue the policy if and when amendments are accepted.

Appendix: Glossary

Definition of Terms

Assessment: In the context of quality assurance, assessment is the process of identifying and ensuring appropriate internal procedures are in place and operational and the outcomes of academic programmes and activities are in accord with established standards.

Audit: the process of identifying and ensuring appropriate internal quality assurance processes are in place and operational.

Programme review: the process of holistic appraisal of a course, programme and resources for further evolution and improvement

Quality: in this document and in the context of academic programmes at the University of Gondar quality refers to “fitness for purpose”.

Transformational quality: the concern of leaderships with continuous improvement and organizational transformation brought about by strong leadership.

Quality assurance: the process whereby measures which ensure the outcomes of academic programmes and activities are at a prescribed standard and established.

Quality control: the process whereby outcomes are assessed to determine whether they are of the prescribed standard.

Quality management: refers to all the processes in place to facilitate achievement of quality in an institution.

Stakeholders: The term stakeholders includes agencies, government and private, who control tertiary institutions or individuals or groups who participate in or have responsibilities towards tertiary education in Ethiopia.