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## QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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## 1. POLICY CONTEXT

### 1.1 Quality in Higher Education

Quality is a universally acknowledged factor in successful business; it is also something that everybody pays attention to in any transaction of goods or services. Broadly viewed, quality can be described as the totality of features and characteristics of a service or object that bear on its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs. There have always been different conceptions of higher education and what its basic purpose should be. Therefore, the notion of quality in higher education is very much tied to a person's understanding of the purpose of such education. One of the most widely accepted definitions is "fitness for purpose". There are two fundamentally distinct approaches to viewing "fitness to purpose". One approach pays particular attention to intrinsic qualities, that is, basic values and ideals such as capacities of higher education to respond to the changing needs of society. The format of attention to quality will vary according to whether the emphasizes extrinsic qualities such as capacities of higher education to respond to the changing needs of society. The format of attention to quality will vary according to whether the emphasis is on intrinsic quality i.e the development of an erudite class of individuals who are fascinated by knowledge for knowledge's sake or on the extrinsic quality i.e development of individuals directly responsive to socio-economic needs of society.

The two approaches are in line with two dominant perceptions of higher education. One perception sees it as being a "social institution", whose main functions are the cultivation of good citizenship, the preservation, and transmission of cultural heritage and the formation of skills and character in the students. The other perception emphasizes that higher education is an "industry" that sells goods and services, trains an important part of the workforce and fosters economic development. The quality of such goods and services, therefore, cannot be assumed to be good unless they are independently tested and proved to meet professionally set standards.

In systems where the emphasis is on intrinsic quality, the mechanisms to check and monitor quality tend to be implied and systemic rather than explicitly stated and measured. This has largely been the case with most higher education institutions up to a few decades ago. The emphasis on the need to employ explicit and systematic measures to check and monitor quality is

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a relatively new phenomenon and is a manifestation of a shift of emphasis in the perception of the purpose of higher education i.e the need to respond to societal demands comes first. In this context Quality Assurance essentially means measures, or a set of measures, taken by an institution to satisfy itself and demonstrate to its clients that it has the constant capacity to keep its promise to deliver goods and services of the desired standard.

From its foundation to the present, UoK has explicitly pursued a combination of the two approaches to higher education, i.e installing of intrinsic values and development of practical capabilities among students. This would have meant employment of intrinsic measures to like other universities of its time, it did not put in place mechanisms for systematically and constantly checking the practical relevance of its education to students' post –graduation tasks.

## **1.2 Traditional Safeguards of Quality in Higher Learning Institutions**

As the center of higher learning, universities have always regarded quality as a crucial factor in building a reputation and winning admiration and support from the public. Responsibility for maintaining and promoting the quality of academic programmes has always been vested in the Senate. Succinctly stated the functions of Senate have been:

- To satisfy itself regarding the content and academic standard of any course of study offered by the institution;
- To formulate by-laws regarding eligibility of persons for admission to any course of study;
- To formulate the standard of proficiency to be gained in each examination;
- To decide whether any candidate has attained required proficiency and therefore fit for receiving the particular academic award.

In carrying out these functions, the Senate relies heavily on reviews and judgments made by peers from within as well as from outside the institution. Such reviews largely focus on the academic contents and processes of the particular programmes. This arrangement has provoked three criticisms. First, Senate-sponsored reviews narrowly focus on the particularities of a subject or discipline without giving due weight to the interests of the immediate and ultimate client. Secondly, the organ that is responsible for monitoring and ascertaining academic quality does not

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have adequate representation from the broader public. Thirdly, the issues that the reviews tend to focus on are often abstract, theoretical and sometimes somewhat mechanical.

## 1.3 Changing Perceptions and New Demands

Up to four decades ago universities were perceived as honest, self-steering, self-censoring and quality conscious centers of learning. Since about three decades ago, questions began to be raised as to whether this traditional trust was well founded and still valid. It is in the context of this questioning that calls were made for the establishment of external mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the soundness of what was happening inside universities. Cloete (2002:163), for instance, stressed that universities be regarded as “service industries” and that they accordingly be “formally evaluated” and “held accountable for their performances”.

It is a response to such calls that the 1990s witnessed the establishment of more than 50 national higher education quality assurance agencies in several countries around the world. They all arose because of the perception that traditional academic controls were inadequate to the challenges of a modern education and that more explicit assurances about quality were needed. This change of perception began to gain momentum in the last two decades largely because of four important developments:

- Demand for greater accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing;
- Trends towards mass participation in higher education even in the face of shrinking resources;
- Greater stakeholder scrutiny of education and training processes and outcomes;
- Lack of trust in the efficiency and effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms; [Nemo iudex in propriety causa!=Nobody is a fair judge of his? Her own case].

In terms of scope, the mandates and responsibilities of formal quality assurance agencies have varied considerably. Any or all of the following have featured in their responsibility.

- To assist and support institutions in their internal quality assurance activities in order to improve the quality of their output;
- To assess or evaluate designated institutions against a set of standards, benchmarks or intended outcomes;

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- To review an institution's systems for managing quality in order to establish whether they are appropriate, adequate and effective,
- To check whether an institution is good enough for some specified purpose, such as recognition, accreditation and/or state funding.

Thus, external agencies evaluate not only the curriculum contents and examination system but also the capacity of the units to deliver the intended products. The focus is on the institution's policies, systems, strategies and resources for quality management of the core functions of teaching, research, and public service. Admittedly, although the concept of quality assurance is not altogether new, the range of terms and methodologies now used to define, develop and apply it are relatively new. Given the growing importance of student mobility and the international labor market, there is indeed a need to have some reliable and explicit ways of measuring standards and qualifications in higher education across the globe.

### 1.4 Quality Assurance at UOK

Evidence that the University of Kigali cares for quality is available in the rules, regulations, and guides governing inputs, processes, and outputs of academic programmes as well as other facets of university operations. Thus there are:

- (i) Formal admission conditions and requirements that filter out possible garbage;
- (ii) Recruitment, appraisal, and staff development requirements and procedures that ensure that only quality staff members are allowed to teach;
- (iii) Stipulations regarding course contents, structure and assessment; and
- (iv) Examination regulations and degree classification procedures.

The university has in the last few years deployed three other tools for helping to gauge quality. These are tracer studies, academic audits, and institutional self-evaluation.

The relationship between the efforts mentioned above and the more routine quality assurance measures or activities does not stand out clearly. This is partly because education is still perceived in traditional terms as a social institution whose worth and value can only be measured implicitly. However, there is clear evidence that the University of Kigali wants to make quality a matter of central concern in all her endeavors. The statements of vision, mission, and objectives stated in the Strategic Plan are a testimony of this commitment. They clearly show that the

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University wants to pay attention to both the internal and external value of education and not to replace the former with the latter.



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## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

### 2.1 Main objectives.

The main goal of the quality assurance policy is to ensure that relevant and appropriate academic standards are achieved and good quality education is provided to students by encouraging and supporting continuous quality improvement in institutional as well as in programmes and research management. In particular, the QA policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To safeguard and improve the academic standards and quality of education at the University;
- (ii) To ensure the integrity of the academic awards of the University ;
- (iii) To develop and maintain, through enhanced support processes, quality academic programmes appropriate to the academic strengths of the University where a recognizable market has been clearly identified;
- (iv) To ensure that all programmes are of high standard and of continued relevance to graduate labor markets and the needs of the workforce in the country;
- (v) To continually improve quality of community service programmes offered by the University;
- (vi) To enhance constant improvement of internal support services provided to students and staff;
- (vii) To develop and refine internal quality assurance and enhancement mechanisms that are appropriate and to apply such mechanisms systematically across all programmes offered by the University, all services rendered to the society and all support services provided to students and staff; and
- (viii) To develop and sustain a culture of quality seeking and quality assurance among members of the University community.

### 2.2 Scope of the QA Policy

Quality is the outcome of interactions of many factors. All such factors are within the scope of this Policy. However, certain factors tend to stand out conspicuously as major determinants of quality in higher education processes. The policy therefore embraces, applies and is of particular interest and relevance to the following:

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- (i) All schools, faculties, academic/administrative departments and other institutional structures operating under the umbrella of the University of Kigali;
- (ii) All staff, temporary and permanent, who are active in teaching, research and providing any form of support service to the core functions of the University;
- (iii) All students registered with the University of Kigali;
- (iv) All infrastructure, learning resources, governance/ institutional setup, information dissemination structure and social amenities belonging to the University of Kigali

Ultimately attention to quality has to become an embedded feature of the institutional culture. The entire institution has to view quality as an overarching principle of all its operations.

### 2.3 Anticipated benefits of the QA Policy

It is anticipated that successful implementation of this policy will result in:

- (i) Improved student performance and success in learning;
- (ii) Improved work performance of academic and other staff;
- (iii) Fuller satisfaction of society's and stakeholders' interests, expectations and needs;
- (iv) Enhanced transparency, society's confidence, and thus internal and external material support;
- (v) Improved institutional and public image, and thus enhances relations with stakeholders and the wider society;
- (vi) Enhanced capacity to compete with other higher learning institutions nationally, regionally and globally; and
- (vii) More focused approach to the implementation of the university's mission activities.

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## 3. POLICY STATEMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

### 3.1 Policy statements

In the effort to realize its vision, mission and objectives, UoK shall consistently monitor and systematically evaluate the implementation of all its existing policies, regulations and procedures and, where such instruments are lacking, develop appropriate ones, so as to ensure that all these guides are in line with its vision, mission, and overall objectives. In addition, the University shall ensure that at all times it has in place well stipulated and widely understood criteria for judging performance standards in all its core mission activities. This entails compilation and distribution of a comprehensive quality assurance handbook. In line these guides, UoK shall constantly monitor and evaluate all its day to day activities in the core mission areas of teaching/learning, research, service to the public and support services to students and staff:

### 3.2. Teaching/ Learning

To ensure quality in the area of teaching and learning, UOK shall:

- (i) Periodically review teaching programmes in order to confirm the extent to which:
  - Programmes are meaningfully structured and organized;
  - The goals and learning objectives are achieved;
  - Programmes not only meet student needs but actually provide an experience that lives up to their highest expectations;
  - Programmes help in the attainment of the university's academic vision and mission;
  - Teaching and learning constantly address critical national human resources requirements;
  - The quality and quantity of available human, material and financial resources meet the programme requirements; and
  - Programmes are both viable and relevant.
- (ii) Ensure that establishment and running of teaching programmes/ units proceed on the principle of rational use of resources and cost effectiveness;
- (iii) Regularly arrange an external evaluation of the quality of the teaching programmes offered by its units in terms of their contents, delivery methods, and internal assessment processes. This will entail a reconsideration of the suitability and effectiveness of existing practices, such as an external examination system and

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academic audits, with a view to improving their efficacy or/and introducing new appropriate procedures;

- (iv) Involve professional bodies, potential employers and other relevant sections of the society in reviewing and evaluating academic programmes through curriculum review workshops, tracer studies and other appropriate mechanisms;
- (v) As a matter of procedure, ensure that all major curriculum reviews or introduction of new programmes are informed by stakeholder inputs; and
- (vi) Every programme shall undergo at least one review within a span of five years.

### **3.3. Research**

In fulfilling the obligation to ensure high quality in the various research undertakings carried out in its constituent units, UoK shall consistently monitor and evaluate the quality and quantity of the research activities conducted, with a specific focus on:

- (i) Relevance and appropriateness of the set priorities;
- (ii) Adequacy of financial allocations to research activities;
- (iii) Proper structuring of research projects/ programmes to ensure relevance in graduate teaching and training of junior staff;
- (iv) Adequacy in quality and quantity of research outputs;
- (v) Effectiveness of dissemination channels and impacts of research results;
- (vi) Adherence to existing UoK policies and procedures relating to research and publications; and
- (vii) Integration of research outputs into teaching/learning.

### **3.4. Public services**

UoK shall constantly monitor and frequently evaluate the quality and quantity of public services rendered by its staff and students, with a view to assuring the highest possible quality in terms of:

- (i) Relevance of the priorities set institutionally and by individual units;
- (ii) Adequacy and quality of outputs in public service provision; and
- (iii) The overall impact of UoK services to the public.

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## 3.5. Policy Assumptions

UoK has set for itself the goal of becoming a “To provide quality higher education programmes that match the labor market and development needs of Rwanda, the region and the world” .in carrying out all its core mission activities. To realize this vision, UoK and all its units shall abide by rules, regulations and quality criteria developed internally to guide the implementation of its set objects in all spheres of its operation, particularly in teaching/ learning, research, service to the public and in the provision of support services to students and staff.

## 3.6. Teaching/ learning

In ensuring quality in the area of teaching and learning, UoK commits itself to continue seeking the highest possible standards in respect of input resources, implementation processes and the final outputs.

## 3.7. Input resources

The major inputs into the teaching/ learning process are academic and technical staff, students, teaching programmes and materials, and an efficient administrative structure. UoK is committed to ensuring that its inputs are of the highest possible quality, and to this end, it shall:

- (i) Recruit and engage the best available academic and technical personnel, selected on the basis of established and regularly updated quality criteria, and through an absolutely transparent procedure;
- (ii) Admit its students from among the highest qualified candidates available, by using set and frequently reviewed selection criteria, following a fair and absolutely transparent procedure;
- (iii) Offer academic programmes that are relevant locally and internationally, in terms of both academic content and planned professional training;
- (iv) Seek adequate financing of the university’s core mission activities: teaching/learning, research, public service and provision of internal support services; and
- (v) Strive to provide the necessary learning materials and teaching/learning infrastructure for effective delivery of all teaching programmes on offer.
- (vi)

## 3.8. Implementation Processes

In carrying out its core function of facilitating learning UoK shall ensure that:

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- (i) Its teaching programmes are effectively delivered through the use of appropriate technologies and pedagogic skills;
- (ii) Delivery of its teaching programmes emphasizes practical training where appropriate, and therefore provides for the development of a good balance between academic knowledge and practical skills; and
- (iii) Its academic and technical staff is sufficiently motivated to effectively fulfill their leadership obligations in the teaching/learning process.

### 3.9. Outputs

The ultimate goal for the university's engagement in its core activities of teaching and learning is the production of knowledgeable and skilled graduates and, through the post-graduation activities of these products, impact on the society notably and positively. UoK therefore always anticipates that its graduates shall demonstrate excellent knowledge, skill, creativity and appropriate social values in their post-graduation engagements and that they will, therefore, make significant contributions towards the common imperative of improving the quality of life in society.

### 3.10. Research

Because research and teaching/learning are so inextricably intertwined, UoK gives equal weight to the two processes and is thus equally committed to achieving the highest possible quality of research outputs. In ensuring quality in research UoK shall ensure that:

- (i) The policy priorities and regulations guiding research at the university are at all times relevant, operational and effective;
- (ii) Conscious efforts are constantly made to secure and rationally utilize research funding and facilities;
- (iii) At all times the existing research policy and agendas are implemented vigilantly and successfully in light of the set objectives and performance criteria;
- (iv) All research activities undertaken in various units and by individuals are properly managed, conducted and evaluated;
- (v) Implementation of the various research projects constantly take into account ethical and environmental consideration;

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- (vi) A robust system is in place for ensuring that research outcomes are effectively disseminated, leading eventually to tangible contributions towards the improvement of quality of life in society;
- (vii) Research results are continually integrated into teaching/ learning and, where applicable, their commercial value enhanced and exploited.

### **3.11. Institutional Set-up**

To achieve its core mission goals, UoK shall operate on the basis of an effective governance structure, consisting of administrative structures and participatory organs or committees. It shall maintain clear lines of authority and accountability while maximizing transparency and legitimacy through the effective and efficient participation of stakeholders in major decision-making processes. In creating and constantly improving such a governance system, UoK shall abide by the provisions of its charter and the principles emanating there from.

### **3.12. Student and Staff Support Services**

A favorable general environment is needed for students and staff to effectively engage in a productive education process. UoK, therefore, takes the responsibility to continually strive to create and maintain this environment. In this regard, the University shall ensure that:

- (i) Its physical infrastructure sufficiently supports the core mission activities of teaching/learning, research and provision of services to the public;
- (ii) Reasonably good and accessible social services are made available to students and staff. These shall include catering, healthcare, recreational, academic advising and mentoring, social counseling and other services; and
- (iii) Students' learning is continually enhanced through the constant adoption of the latest innovations in educational media and technology and in the professional field of pedagogy.

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## 4. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

### 4.1 University-wide Quality Assurance Office

Whereas the University and its various operational units shall continue to strive to meet set quality standards in carrying out their day to day activities, there shall be a university-wide Quality Assurance Office (QAO), whose task will be to constantly monitor and evaluate Quality Assurance processes at UoK. The pivotal role of this organ 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. The QAO shall spearhead the UoK QA system, which includes all implementation units and all measures they take to maintain high-performance standards.

### 4.2. Constitution of the QAO

The QAO shall be headed by a University Quality Assurance Director (QAD), who shall be assisted by a deputy. The Office shall, in addition, have a small secretariat consisting of an administrative secretary and two auditors. The QAD will be appointed by the Chairman of Board of Promoters and the deputy shall be appointed by the VC through advertisement and/or search procedure.

### 4.3. Functions of the QAO

The QAO shall be a university level organ, responsible for the overall management of quality assurance activities at UoK. The QAO shall function as the BoP's secretariat on QA issues. Its day to day activities shall focus on monitoring and evaluation of all Quality Assurance operations at UoK, including the following:

- (i) Ensuring that set performance standards in all aspects of university functions are appropriate and relevant;
- (ii) Developing and periodically updating general operational manuals to guide university-level QA operations, as well as instruments for use in internal evaluations;
- (iii) Monitoring /implementation of quality assurance activities in all units as per the set standards;
- (iv) Providing advice and guidance to implementation units in the execution of QA activities;
- (v) Coordination of internal self-evaluation of quality assurance systems;



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- (vi) Analysis of all QA reports (students' course evaluation, External Examiners 'reports, external audit reports, etc.) and identification of issues arising from them for the attention of the management at departmental, faculty/school, college and university levels;
- (vii) Facilitation of external evaluation of UoK and its academic programmes;
- (viii) Provision of external evaluation results to management and units;
- (ix) Monitoring of implementation of internal and external evaluation recommendations;
- (x) Advising the VC on QA matters relating to teaching/learning, research, and consultancy, and matters relating to internal support services and provisions in general;
- (xi) Synthesis of topical QA matters in higher education (arising from debates and practices in the regional and global contexts) and updating the university community and Management accordingly;
- (xii) Updating the Chairman and the VC on the functioning of the UoK QA system and on the overall quality status of the University;
- (xiii) Linking UoK with professional bodies that are relevant to its various curricula.

#### 4.4. Role of the QAD

The Quality Assurance Director shall be the chief executive of the QAB and shall, in that capacity:

- (i) Oversee the functions and responsibilities of the QAB;
- (ii) Be accountable to the Chairman of Board of Promoters and Chairman of BoD;
- (iii) Maintain a working contact with the DVC-A and DVC-R and DVC-AF on QA matters touching on their respective jurisdictions;
- (iv) Forward to the DVCA, Quality Assurance matters requiring tabling at senate, SMB and Executive Committees;
- (v) Provide technical support on QA matters at Senate, SMB and EC;
- (vi) Represent UoK at regional and other international forums on higher education QA matters;
- (vii) Be ex-officio member of, and a technical advisor on QA matters deliberated on the UoK Senate, SMB and Executive Committee meetings; and

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- (viii) Constantly updating UoK on new global developments in Quality Assurance matters for Higher Education Institutions.

### **4.5. Responsibilities of Deputy QA Directors**

The deputy of the QAD shall assist the QAD in all day to day activities and responsibilities. His/Her tasks shall, among other things, include:

- (i) Initiating action plans and carrying out activities falling under their respective sections;
- (ii) Working hand in hand with respective unit Heads on QA matters falling under their respective sections;
- (iii) Carry out all duties assigned to them from time to time by the QAD; AND
- (iv) Deputize for the QAD whenever the need arises.

### **4.6. QAO Linkage with Other Units**

The QAO shall be a pivotal technical unit responsible for QA at the institutional level. It shall be directly accountable to the university's Board of Promoters, the Chairman of Board of Directors, and shall serve as the latter officer's secretariat on QA matters. The QAO shall maintain a close working relationship with the two DVCs by keeping them informed of newly arising QA issues falling under their respective jurisdictions and by providing them with technical advice on such issues. During the deliberations on QA issues by various council committees the VC may severally or jointly call upon the QAO's chief executive or his/her deputy to make a technical presentation on their behalf. The QAO shall also maintain a close working relationship with all units, academic and non academic, on matters pertaining to quality assurance in their spheres of operation. It shall update the unit heads with new information on QA issues as well as supplying them with various evaluation schedules and instruments. It will facilitate unit and programme evaluations and provide the unit heads with feedback on external and internal evaluation results; and shall advise them on proper implementation of improvements recommended by review teams. In its monitoring role, the QAO shall ensure that the units adhere to established QA procedures and carry out scheduled activity appropriately and in a timely fashion. In the evolving era of increased external monitoring and harmonization of quality standards in higher education provision, the QAO shall be a link organ between the University and external QA agencies. It shall prepare and submit UoK portfolios to the HEC and other external bodies involved in

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mandatory or voluntary accreditation/ re-accreditation of the institution and its programmes. Accordingly, the QAO shall organize and coordinate all external evaluation activities, and shall ultimately report (to units and the university Management) on the results of such external evaluations. The Office shall also link UoK with professional bodies whose concerns and interests have bearing on the university's curricula development and implementation.

### **4.7. QA Roles of the Implementation Units**

For the purpose of this policy the caption "implementation unit" refers to a school, faculty, institute, center, directorate or any other basic segment of the UoK establishment, with a primary responsibility for planning and carrying out activities aimed at meeting a set of established institutional objectives. Implementing units shall have the primary responsibility not only to achieve and maintain high-quality standards in carrying out their mandated roles but also to regularly conduct self-evaluations. Their role in the UoK QA system shall therefore include:

- (i) Implementation their mandated roles effectively and in the most cost-effective manner so as to contribute to the effort to achieve the umbrella UoK goals and objectives;
- (ii) Developing and periodically revising unit-specific performance standards, and striving to meet those standards in practice;
- (iii) Preparing unit-specific QA procedures, operational manuals, and measurement instruments, and providing the QAO with copies of such documents;
- (iv) Conducting regular self-evaluations to determine the extent to which it meets the set performance standards in practice, and using the results of such evaluations to improve practice;
- (v) Providing the QAO with self-assessment reports in readiness for university-level and external evaluations;
- (vi) Implementing the recommendations resulting from internal and external evaluations and providing the QAD with timely reports on the status of such implementation; and
- (vii) Keeping staff, students and other stakeholders informed of the evaluation results and efforts being made to implement the recommended improvements.

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### 4.8. QA Roles of Participatory Organs

Participatory Organs include departmental meetings, faculty/school boards and their technical committees (e.g. faculty undergraduate/ higher degrees committees), Senate and its technical committees (e.g. Senate undergraduate studies/higher degrees committees and research and publications committee), etc. The core QA role of these organs shall be to oversee quality in their respective areas of jurisdiction, taking into account the concerns that gave rise to the promulgation of this policy, Among other roles, their specific functions shall include:

- (i) Ensuring that their respective unit/operational area has in place appropriate quality standards to guide the implementation of its mandated functions and that the standards are regularly reviewed for sustaining relevance;
- (ii) Regularly assessing the performance of implementers in the respective units/operational area in light of the set quality criteria and recommending improvement measures to implementers and /or relevant organs within or above the implementation unit concerned; and
- (iii) Frequently uprising implementation of recommended improvements and directing corrective measures against poor implementation.

As an agency/ secretariat of the BoP, the QAO shall constantly monitor and periodically evaluate the functioning of these participatory organs to determine the extent to which they play their roles as per established regulations and schedules. The QAO shall also provide technical guidance to the organs wherever the need arises.

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## 5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

UoK shall utilize a variety of strategies and instruments to evaluate the implementation of its core mission activities. The main strategies include surveys of students', alumni, employer and community satisfaction, as well as institutional audits and programme reviews, both external and internal.

### 5.1 Student Satisfaction Surveys

The Quality Assurance Office (QAO) shall regularly and systematically organize student satisfaction surveys. These surveys will aim at giving the students an opportunity to provide feedback on their experience with individual modules, courses and teaching programmes as a whole. In carrying out this task, the QAO shall design appropriate tools for collection views, coordinating data collection activities and analyzing the results. Capturing of student experiences and opinions may be done by use of a questionnaire, a structured interview or any other appropriate method. The QAO shall eventually disseminate the survey results to teaching units and staff and shall coordinate the formulation and implementation of strategies to improve on problem areas revealed by the evaluation results.

### 5.2 Employer Satisfaction Surveys

Departments, faculties, and schools, in collaboration with the QAO, shall conduct employee satisfaction surveys on regular basis. The surveys will provide vital information on the relevance of the teaching programmes on offer and on ways in which they can be made more responsive to the market needs. The University-wide employer satisfaction surveys shall be conducted by the QAO every five years, but units may do their own surveys more frequently, and the QAO may ask particular units to carry out employee satisfaction surveys with respect to particular teaching programmes.

### 5.3 Alumni Satisfaction Surveys

In addition to the employee satisfaction surveys, the teaching units and QAO shall regularly conduct alumni satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. The purpose of such surveys shall be to know from former students the extent to which their studies at UoK have been relevant to their post-graduation needs and challenges. The information from these surveys shall be used in curricula reviews and in improving approaches to teaching. The surveys shall ordinarily focus on recent graduates (2-3 years), but older alumni may be surveyed for specific purposes. Alumni satisfaction surveys shall go hand in hand with employee satisfaction surveys, to be conducted

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by the entire university once every five years. Faculties and departments may conduct surveys more frequently, and the QAO may ask particular units to carry out alumni satisfaction surveys with respect to particular teaching programmes.

### **5.4 Surveys of Academic Staff Opinions**

The QAO shall also occasionally conduct academic staff opinion surveys, specifically aimed at assessing the level of academic staff satisfaction with the current quality of teaching and learning at the University and collecting suggestions on required interventions and possible improvement measures. The QAO shall communicate the results of such surveys to individual units and the University Management, and shall coordinate discussions at both the unit and general University levels, aimed at streamlining the improvement proposals and strategizing on their implementation. The Office shall also monitor the implementation of improvement strategies and report progress to the BoP, BoD and the VC.

### **5.5 Surveys of External Community's Perceptions**

The QAO shall periodically run surveys to collect information about the neighboring communities' feelings and attitudes towards the University. The exercise shall aim at assessing the general social acceptability of the institution by the broader society as well as identifying specific program areas in the University-local community linkage. The resulting data shall be used to improve the University's relationship with the surrounding communities as well as designing activities that involve neighboring communities in a mutually beneficial manner.

### **5.6 Institutional Audits and External Programme Reviews**

The QAO shall regularly arrange and coordinate external institutional audits and programme reviews. In facilitating these external evaluations the QAO shall each time appoint a panel of up to three experts. Two-thirds or more of the panelists shall be drawn from outside Rwanda and shall act on the basis of specific Terms of Reference prepared by the QAO. External institutional audits and programme reviews shall be carried out with the fifth year since the last evaluation.

Institutional audits shall focus on the structure and functioning of administrative and governance organs of the University, while programme audits shall evaluate the relevance of the teaching programmes on offer and the effectiveness of the delivery and evaluation strategies employed. The QAO shall disseminate the results of institutional audits and programme reviews to the teaching units, each of which shall discuss the report and draw strategies to implement the

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subsequent recommendations. The QAO shall centrally coordinate institutional and programme reviews and monitor implementation of the resultant recommendations.

### 5.7 Internal Programme Reviews

The principals of campuses, school, and faculty deans shall be responsible for the implementation of the UoK policy on regular self-evaluation of the units. In each case, the dean shall appoint a team of up to three people from among the staff in the school/faculty to constitute a school or faculty Review, Team. The Team shall execute its tasks under the guidance of the Terms of Reference and modalities centrally drawn by the QAO. The Review Teams shall generate and submit reports to school/faculty deans and college principals, who shall, in turn, communicate them to the QAO for scrutiny of their completeness. In consultation with the DVC, the QAO shall arrange and conduct a verification visit to respective units, using a small committee of three people, consisting of the following:

- Two people from within UoK but outside the unit concerned, to be identified by the QAO in consultation with the VC;
- One person is chosen from another institution of comparable status who is an acknowledged authority in the programme in question, to be appointed by the VC after consultation with the Unit Head.

The committee shall execute its task based on the terms of Reference prepared by the QAO and approved by the Senate. It shall review pertinent documents and contact staff and students in the unit concerned. The Committee's focal tasks shall be to:

- Validate the self-assessment document;
- Examine and provide recommendations on the structure, organization, and contents of the programme or unit concerned;
- Make any observations on any issue that may affect the present and future well-being of the programme or unit concerned; and
- Complete its work within the period specified.

The committee shall submit its report to the QAO which, upon consultation with the DVC-A, shall forward it to the respective unit with comments and directives on the improvements recommended by the committee. Upon receipt of the improved report, the QAO shall transmit it

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to Senate to discussion and approval. The QAO shall subsequently monitor the implementation of the approved recommendations/directives by the respective unit.

All mandatory external programme reviews by the HEC shall be preceded by these internal programme reviews; and shall be coordinated and facilitated by the QAO at the institution level.

### **5.8 Improvement Plan**

The evaluation reports shall be discussed at the department, faculty and college levels, where strategies for addressing the shortfalls emanating from these reviews are drawn. The Units shall then forward these improvement plans to the appropriate DVCA, who shall arrange the discussion of the same by appropriate participatory organs at the institutional level and direct the implementation of its resultant recommendations and improvement strategies.

At the same time, the QAO shall study the improvement strategies approved by the participatory organs at the institutional level. It shall subsequently monitor the implementation of all approved improvement plans and evaluate the outcomes. The QAO shall prepare and present implementation status reports to relevant Unit Heads, relevant DVCs and the VC, and shall execute directives given by the VC in connection with the reports.

### **5.9 Programme Accreditation**

Whenever applicable, UoK teaching programmes shall be accredited by qualified and legally competent agencies. However, the internal procedures for such accreditation shall be coordinated and overseen by the QAO. In this context, the QAO shall cause the concerned unit to prepare an application portfolio based on the guidelines given by the accrediting agency, and shall advise on the proper filing of such applications. It shall coordinate and facilitate the activities of the accrediting agency. Ultimately, it shall receive verdicts on accreditation applications and, upon consultation with the DVC-A and DVC-R, pass the verdict on to the concerned units, together with advice or directives on the way forward.



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## 6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW, AND AMENDMENTS

### 6.1 Policy scope and Implementation

This policy provides a general guide to the process of monitoring and evaluating quality in all aspects of UoK operations. It does not specify modalities or procedures for the actual process of ensuring quality, a task left to individual units and the University Senior Management Team. The policy assumes that the units and the University shall continually set and review quality standards in all the major fields of operation. The task of the quality assurance process is to constantly determine the extent to which UoK achieves the standards it set for itself, and to advise on ways of improving quality at both the institutional and unit levels. The QAO shall continually execute this task using appropriate evaluation instruments. It is the duty of the QAO to constantly develop and review these instruments with a view to ensuring that they are capable of capturing sufficient evidence to show the extent to which UoK is achieving its set quality standards in all major spheres of operation.

### 6.2 Validity of the Policy Provisions

These policy provisions shall become operational immediately upon approval by the Board of Directors, and shall remain valid until when they are revoked by the same authority. However, given the changing circumstances under which the University operations, this document is subject to periodic reviews and alterations, and, whenever such alterations happen, the revised version of the document shall take precedence over the previous one.

### 6.3 Revision of the Policy Document

In the event that any statement in the policy provision is outdated or a need to introduce new statements arises as a result of the changing university environment, or market forces, or any other reason, such statements may be changed or modified at the direction and approval of the Board of Directors. In any case, the entire document will be reviewed after every 5 years.