



**UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA
CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA
CENTRE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT
ACADEMIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

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ACADEMIC QUALITY MANAGEMENT POLICY

1.0 DEFINITIONS

1.1 Assessment

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

1.2 Audit

1.2.1 Auditing is a process of identifying and ensuring that appropriate internal quality assurance processes are in place and operational.

1.3 Centre for Academic Development (CAD)

1.3.1 The Directorate in which the Academic Programme Review Unit is located and to which it is responsible.

1.4 Programme Review

1.4.1 Programme review is a process of holistic appraisal of a course/programme and resources, with a view to its further evolution and improvement.

1.5 Quality

1.3.1 In this document and in the context of academic programmes at the University of Botswana, the term quality refers to “fitness for purpose”.

1.6 Quality assurance

1.6.1 The process whereby measures are established which ensure that outcomes of academic programmes and activities are of a prescribed standard.

1.7 Quality control

1.7.1 This is the process whereby outcomes are assessed to determine whether they are of the prescribed standard.

1.8 Quality Management

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

1.9 Quality Assurance Support Committee

1.9.1 A committee of the Senate of the University, which oversees the operations of the Academic Programme Review Unit.

1.10 Stakeholders

1.10.1 The term stakeholders include agencies (government and private) that control tertiary institutions or individuals or groups that participate in or have responsibilities towards tertiary education in Botswana.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 The Academic Quality Management Policy aims to support the university's efforts to achieve its Vision and Mission through development and implementation of academic programmes that meet national, regional and international standards.
- 2.2 The objectives of the Academic Quality Management Policy include the following.
 - 2.2.1 To provide guidance in development and implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices.
 - 2.2.2 To ensure that the quality of academic programmes at the UB meet standards expected by stakeholders.
 - 2.2.3 To ensure that graduates have attained skills and knowledge through the UB academic programmes that are valued by stakeholders.
 - 2.2.4 To provide guidance in identifying internal and external standards and criteria consistent with internationally recognized standards.
 - 2.2.5 To assist in maintaining and developing quality of academic programmes through enhanced support processes.
 - 2.2.6 To facilitate development of a culture of continuous quality improvement to achieve academic excellence.

3.0 Principles Underpinning the Policy

- 3.1 Several key principles are incorporated into this Policy. The principles relate to the quality framework and processes outlined in this document.
 - 3.1.1 **Principle 1:** The framework and processes are dynamic and strive for continuous quality improvement.
 - 3.1.2 **Principle 2:** The framework and processes build on and improve the current internal quality assurance activities.
 - 3.1.3 **Principle 3:** The framework and processes are transparent and systematic.
 - 3.1.4 **Principle 4:** Ownership of the framework and processes is devolved to the responsible Faculty and Department.
 - 3.1.5 **Principle 5:** The system and processes are subjected to regular assessment and review.

4.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS

- 4.1 The Policy shall apply to all faculties and academic centres and shall include both academic and support staff at the University of Botswana and shall include the following mechanisms.
 - 4.1.1 Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms - Continuous
 - 4.1.2 External Quality Assurance Mechanisms – Periodic
- 4.2 The University, through Senate, shall determine and approve quality management frameworks for all faculties. Minimum requirements are described in Appendix A Section 4.3.
- 4.3 Regular internal audits will be conducted to ensure that policy is implemented.

4.4 Areas of Internal Quality Assurance

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

- 4.4.1.1 Quality of programmes and courses
- 4.4.1.2 Quality of academic staff
- 4.4.1.3 Quality of teaching and learning experience
- 4.4.1.4 Quality in student assessment: Internal moderation
- 4.4.1.5 Quality in support services
- 4.4.1.6 Quality of resources and facilities
- 4.4.1.7 Quality of research

N.B. More specific areas for review are included in Appendix A, (page 9-10 Section 5.0)

4.5 External Quality Assurance

4.5.1 To ensure that high quality standards are maintained the following external mechanisms shall be utilised.

- 4.5.1.1 External Academic Review for undergraduate and taught Masters programmes and
- 4.5.1.2 External Examiners for Masters theses and research essays, MPhil and PhD dissertations.

4.5.2 External Academic Review

- 4.5.2.1 Quality of educational programmes shall be assured through External Academic Review *every four years* (for programmes eight semesters in length) *and five years* (for those that are ten semesters in length).
- 4.5.2.2 Senate shall approve the external academic review process, which may include:
 - 4.5.2.2.1 Review by external accreditation agencies (for professional programmes that have recognized, credible professional accreditation agencies).
 - 4.5.2.2.2 External reviewer(s) appointed by the Vice chancellor through recommendation of the DVC (AA).

4.6 External Examiners for Master's dissertations and research essays, MPhil and PhD theses

- 4.6.1 Procedures for the External Examiners for Masters, MPhil and PhD theses are as contained in the Academic Regulations for Master's, MPhil and PhD.
- 4.6.2 These procedures shall be reviewed periodically but not less than every four years.

4.7 Quality assurance processes for Affiliated Institutions

4.7.1 Procedures for quality assurance and control in Affiliated Institutions will be as per the Affiliation and Validation Policy.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs shall oversee implementation of the policy.

6.0 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENT

6.1 University Vision, Mission and Values Statement

6.1.1 The University Vision, Mission and Values Statement shall underpin the execution of this policy.

APPENDIX A

NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These notes provide further clarification of the Quality Assurance Policy provided in this document.
- 1.2 In August 2002 the University of Botswana revised the academic programme structure, implementing a semesterized system. With implementation of the semesterized system it was agreed that continuation of the system of quality control through external examination was not financially or logistically feasible.
- 1.3 It was recognized, however, that in order for the University of Botswana to achieve its Vision to be “a leading center of academic excellence in Africa and the world” a system of quality management needed to be in place.
- 1.4 This document describes a policy and framework for Academic Quality Assurance at the University of Botswana that will facilitate achievement of the University Vision and the Botswana Government Vision 2016.
- 1.5 Experience has shown that “the rhetoric of quality is all about empowerment, however, the reality is different: People do not uniformly embrace quality willingly.”(Rippin, White, & Marsh, 1994, p. 13). Consequently, the policy and framework proposed for academic quality assurance at UB is a participatory model, the goal of which is to obtain ownership by academic staff.
- 1.6 A devolved, departmentally based system of academic quality assurance and programme review is envisioned based on a Quality Assurance Policy approved by Senate.
- 1.7 Implementation of this policy and framework shall be facilitated and guided by the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) through the Academic Programme Review Unit and a University wide support committee.
- 1.8 The policy and framework incorporate both internal and external quality management strategies. Some Faculties, i.e., are exploring the possibility of accreditation by professional agencies and this is supported where disciplines have professional agencies to do this.
- 1.9 The following sections outline in greater detail the aims, principles, policy and structure of the proposed quality management system.

2.0 Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (Table 1)

- 2.1 Proposed Performance Indicators for the objectives outlined in Section 2.2 are presented in Table 1.

3.0 Principles Underpinning the Academic Quality Assurance Policy

- 3.1 The key principles incorporated into this policy related to the quality framework and processes outlined in the policy are further clarified in this section.
- 3.1.1 **Principle 1: The framework and processes are dynamic and strive for continuous quality improvement.**
Quality is best achieved if contextualized within an environment in which it is recognized as a fundamental concern of a system and understood to be achievable through a process of continuous reflection and action (praxis).
- 3.1.2 **Principle 2: The framework and processes build on and improve the current internal quality assurance activities.**
There are lessons to be learned from suggestions made by external examiners and moderators, which if analyzed and synthesized, might provide a useful starting point for developing a department-based standards and criteria. In addition, consideration must be given to current and planned physical and institutional resources and practice development outlined in documents that inform NDP9.
- 3.1.3 **Principle 3: The framework and processes are transparent and systematic.**
The “political” nature of quality assurance is an overarching factor. Transparency is important to institutions using a framework and processes that measure their quality. Consequently, the framework should be clear to those who use it and processes should be communicated widely to all stakeholders, i.e., students, staff, and the public.
- 3.1.4 **Principle 4: Ownership of the framework and processes is devolved to the responsible Faculty and Department.**
Academic departments must own and be responsible for devising and developing their own standards and criteria for quality. These standards and criteria need to be coherent with existing UB and international tertiary education quality standards.
- 3.1.5 **Principle 5: The system and processes are subjected to regular assessment and review.**
This principle emphasizes the interrelatedness of internal and external quality assurance procedures. It must be stressed that effective and successful external assessment and review is contingent upon satisfactory internal procedures and structures being in place.

4.0 Academic Quality Management Policy

- 4.1 The Policy shall be implemented and carried out in the context of the University’s Vision, Mission and Values Statements.
- 4.2 The Policy is based on the expectation that high quality standards are achieved and maintained and that academic programmes are internationally recognised.
- 4.3 Quality management shall include all of the following activities:
- 4.3.1 Mandatory internal moderation procedures to ensure validity of student

- assessments and reliability of marking
- 4.3.2 Assessment and monitoring of academic honesty
- 4.3.3 Monitoring academic staff performance standards
- 4.3.4 Self-study reports
- 4.3.5 Standardized programme and course development procedures, which include senate approved guidelines/templates
- 4.3.6 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) (Millar, 2002, p. 10).

5.0 Areas for Internal Quality Assurance

- 5.1 The following areas for internal quality assurance are further described.
- 5.2 Quality of Programmes and Courses
 - 5.2.1 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 guidelines and procedures approved by Senate.
- 5.3 Quality of Academic Staff
 - 5.3.1 Assessment of quality in academic staff shall include expectations with regard to qualifications, scholarly work and continuing professional development. Benchmarks for minimum qualifications, scholarly work and involvement in continuing professional development activities shall be determined by departments. Guidelines and procedures from the Performance Management System (PMS) and Appointments and Promotions Procedures shall be considered when developing these academic staff expectations.
- 5.4 Quality of Teaching and Learning Experience
 - 5.4.1 Assessment of quality in teaching and learning shall include but not be limited to: use of well established tools such as the Head of Department's assessment, Student Evaluation of Courses and Teaching (SECAT), teaching portfolios and peer review. Individual performance management goals and Appointments and Promotions Procedures that pertain to teaching shall be included in the assessment of quality in teaching. The CAD shall have an advisory and supportive role in the improvement of teaching, for example, through implementation of the induction courses for academic staff, ongoing professional development programmes, Teaching Improvement Grants and Teaching Excellence Awards.
 - 5.4.2 Assessment of level of student engagement in the teaching and learning experience.
- 5.5 Quality in Student Assessment: Internal Moderation
 - 5.5.1 Quality assurance mechanisms for determining quality of student assessments, both continuous and final shall be developed. In the absence of external examiners, departments shall develop systems that are coherent with the QA

framework approved by Senate. These systems shall include a minimum of internal moderation procedures that ensure validity of student assessment and reliability of marking.

5.6 Quality in support services

5.6.1 Assessment of quality in the academic support services provided to departments and faculty including record keeping and attention to process as it relates to academic excellence shall be included in the framework for quality assurance.

5.7 Quality of resources and facilities

5.7.1 Assessment of quality of resources and facilities shall include measures of the availability and appropriateness of classrooms, ICTs, laboratory or practical facilities and equipment, etc.

5.8 Quality of research

5.8.1 Assessment of capacity to perform research at the individual and faculty level.

5.8.2 Assessment of the research relevance to the discipline and the UB.

5.8.3 Assessment of external research funding.

5.8.4 Assessment of research management.

5.8.5 Assessment of research findings dissemination

5.9 Implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance Framework

5.9.1 The participatory nature of the QA structure is critical and shall be reflected in the composition of the committees and task forces.

5.9.2 The available expertise and leadership in each department should be exploited when identifying the leaders of teams, for example, where possible professors, associate professors or where necessary, senior lecturers in good standing may be used in key positions.

5.9.3 Wherever possible students will participate in the quality assurance committees and teams.

5.9.4 The direction and support provided by the Quality Assurance Support Committee (QASC) is critical to operationalizing the Policy.

6.0 External Academic Review

6.1 Areas of External Review will include but not be limited to the following areas.

6.1.1 Courses/programmes content and delivery

6.1.2 Student assessment

6.1.3 Programme resources

6.1.4 Academic staff qualifications, scholarly work and professional development activities.

6.2 Procedures for External Review will include but not be limited to the following areas.

6.2.1 Review of documents, i.e., staff and student records

- 6.2.2 Observations, e.g., classroom teaching, laboratory work, counselling, etc.
 - 6.2.3 Interviews with staff, students, senior management, etc.
 - 6.2.4 On site visits to the Department at an agreed time and duration to examine the quality, reliability and validity of the self-study data through review of documents, observation and interviews with staff and students.
- 6.3 The following documentation should be available for the External Academic Reviewer(s). Other documents may be required and should be made available upon request of the External Reviewer(s)
- 6.3.1 Students assignments, tests, projects, examinations papers, answer scripts
 - 6.3.2 Academic staff course materials such as course outlines, handouts, monographs, laboratory manuals, and study guides
 - 6.3.3 Programme and course structure and content
 - 6.3.4 Physical facilities: laboratories and equipment, library facilities, computer facilities
 - 6.3.5 Information on administrative support
 - 6.3.6 Financial support information, i.e., research grants, conference funds, etc.
 - 6.3.7 Academic staff CVs
 - 6.3.8 Publications by academic staff
 - 6.3.9 Student tracking information, i.e., progression and employment data
 - 6.3.10 Records
 - 6.3.11 Any other material in connection with teaching, research and publications as shall be requested by the External Academic Reviewer(s)
- 6.4 The Departmental Self-Study should include but not be limited to the following areas of academic programme review.
- 6.4.1 Assessment methods analyses /evaluations
 - 6.4.2 Marking guides/strategies
 - 6.4.3 Assessment of teaching and learning environments including teaching strategies used, resource availability, etc.
 - 6.4.4 Summaries of peer assessments
 - 6.4.5 Statistical summaries of SECAT scores
 - 6.4.6 Academic staff information, i.e., qualifications, scholarly work and professional development activities
 - 6.4.7 Student results
 - 6.4.8 Department organizational structure including record keeping

Table 1
Academic Quality Management Policy Objectives and Performance Indicators

Objective	Performance Indicator
To provide guidance in development and implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance is available to FQAC, DQAT and SSQAT in the form of templates, guidelines, data, audit tools etc.
To ensure that the quality of academic programmes at the UB meet standards expected by stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect baseline data • Share baseline data – best practices • Assist DQAT in developing their procedures
To ensure that graduates have attained skills and knowledge through the UB academic programmes that are valued by stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction surveys developed (Student & employer) • Surveys (Student) conducted

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys (Employer) conducted
To provide guidance in identifying internal and external standards and criteria consistent with internationally recognized standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and share support documents • Share research findings • Provide guidance • Web resource list is created • Web based discussion group developed • Meeting with FQAC, DQAT and SSQAT a minimum of biannually
To assist in maintaining and developing quality of academic programmes through enhanced support processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance is available to FQAC, DQAT and SSQAT in the form of templates, guidelines, data, audit tools, etc.
To facilitate development of a culture of continuous quality improvement to achieve academic excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop “Think Quality” offered biannually • Two Newsletter articles are written annually • Web resource list is created • Web based discussion group developed • Meeting with FQAC, DQAT and SSQAT a minimum of biannually • Attendance at an international conference annually