

ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN KENYA: THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Prof. Florence K. Lenga
Commission for Higher Education
P. O. Box 54999 – 00200
NAIROBI

WHY QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION

- Quality safeguards the producer and consumer, in HE it safeguards academic integrity
- Identifies the producer and consumer and hence grants confidence to both, in HE safeguards qualification of graduates
- Allows trade or marketability, in HE cross-border education
- Accreditation grants recognition by the consumer and also the product itself



Why Quality Higher Education

- HE prepares the country's workforce
- Quality HE is key to a strong and growing national economy
- HE should thus be credible, relevant and should meet the needs of society

Players in Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AQA) in HE in Kenya

- Government Ministries and Departments with training institutions
- Government Ministries with core mandate of offering education and training: MoE, MoHEST
- Professional Bodies
- Commission for Higher Education (CHE)



Accreditation and Quality Assurance Concepts

- Quality is a multi-dimensional concept with various interpretations. These include:
 - Quality as Excellence: Seen in terms of high standards attainable by few only (traditional university view)
 - Quality as Perfection: “Zero Errors or Defects”. The view for mass production in industry
 - Quality as value for money: Returns to investment, Accountability to the Public on expenditure



AQA Concepts Cont'd

- Quality as Transformation: Seen as change with added value
- Quality as meeting Customers' needs: Making the customer satisfied. Used mainly in industry. Students are customers as well as products, hence in this (HE)case, needs and wants may be different (students)
- Quality as conformance to standards: Meeting pre-determined standards

AQA Concepts Cont'd

- Quality as fitness-**for**-purpose: Quality is measured against stated mission and objectives
- Quality as fitness **for** purpose and fitness **of** purpose: This is the most accepted interpretation in HE

(a) Fitness-**for**-purpose _____ **QUALITY**

(b) Fitness-**of**-purpose _____ **RELEVANCE**

Quality Assurance Defined

- Quality Assurance: A systematic and continuous attention to quality and quality improvement or enhancement
- It has two (2) Components
 - Internal QA: Refers to the Institution's mechanisms for ensuring and improving its own quality
 - External QA: Refers to periodic monitoring of quality of HE at institutions by an External Quality Assurance (EQA) agency or body



Mechanisms for Quality Assurance

- Quality Assessment: Quality review or evaluation
- Quality Audit: Evaluation of the effectiveness of the systems and tools and instruments used for management of quality
- Accreditation: Evaluation or review for formal or official recognition



Approaches to Quality Assurance

There are 3 approaches commonly used in HE

- Standards-Based Approach: Relates to conformity to pre-determined requirements or criteria
- Fitness-for-purpose Approach: Relates to adherence to the mission and set objectives
- Fitness-for-purpose with Fitness-of-purpose Approach: Relates to adherence to the mission and objectives that are relevant to the prevailing needs



Tools and Instruments for Quality Assurance

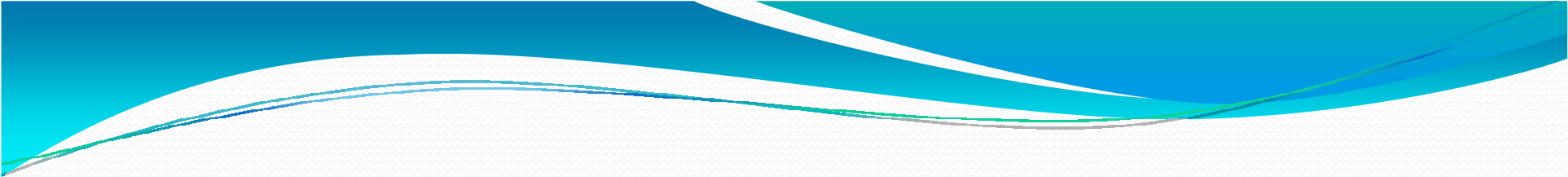
These comprise of legal and administrative provisions, and include:

- Rules
- Standards
- Criteria
- Guidelines
- Questionnaires
- Checklists



Meanings of Accreditation

- Official authorization or Sanction
- In HE, accreditation is a process by which a government or a quality assurance agency evaluates the quality of a HE institution as a whole or a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimum standards or criteria
- The results are issuance of a status of recognition or license to operate, within a time-limited validity



Levels of Accreditation

Basically two (2), namely:

- Institutional Accreditation
- Programme Accreditation

When the stipulated time span for a given accreditation lapses, a new accreditation is sought. The renewal of accreditation is referred to as: **RE-ACCREDITATION**



Unit of Accreditation and Quality Assurance

The unit of accreditation and quality assurance in HE has been:

- The institution; or
- The academic programme

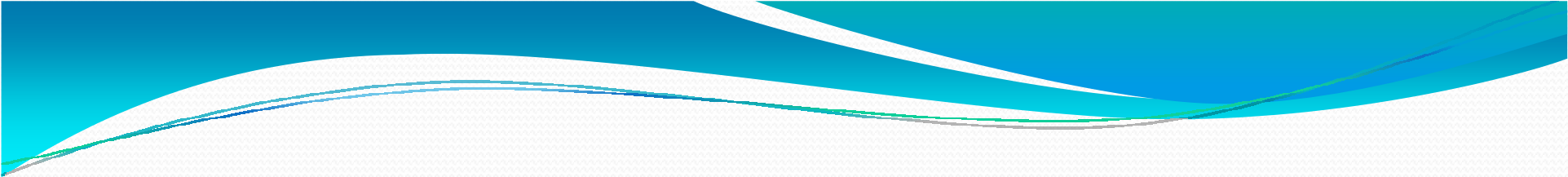
The Current Debate:

Which Way? Institutional or Programme or Both!

The Role of Commission for Higher Education (CHE)

LEGAL MANDATE:

- Established by an Act of Parliament (Cap 210B) in 1985 as a body corporate to oversee and enhance the quality of university education in Kenya
- CHE is governed by a Commission comprising of 28 Commissioners and working secretariat, with a Commission Secretary responsible for its management



Core Functions of CHE

There are 19 stipulated functions in the universities Act. However the core functions can be summarized as follows:

- Planning for Establishment and Development of HE and Training
- Mobilization of Resources for HE and Training
- Accreditation and Regular Inspection of Universities
- Co-ordination and Regulation of Admission to Universities; and
- Documentation, information Service and Public Relations for HE and Training



Role of CHE Cont'd

The Role Of CHE encompasses three (3) main Purposes of Quality Assurance in HE, namely:

- Quality Control: Ensuring adherence to minimum standards
- Quality Improvement: Enhancing Quality
- Accountability: Creation of accountability and public assurance



Operationalization of the Legal Mandate

The tools and instruments in use include:

- Universities Rules 1989 (Establishment of Universities, Standardization, Accreditation and Supervision)
- Universities Rules 2004 (Co-ordination of Post Secondary School Institutions (PSSIs) for University Education)
- Standards and Guidelines (Nine currently in use)
- Questionnaires
- Criteria for Recognition and Equation of Qualifications
- Checklists for verification of resources (Institutional infrastructure, and academic)

CHE's Principles for Accreditation and Quality Assurance

- Recognition that quality assurance is primarily the responsibility of the institutions of higher learning
- Respect of the autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions of higher learning
- Application of tools/instruments that have been subjected to stakeholders' consultation
- Benchmarking with international standards e.g. INQAAHE, AfriQAN, and UNESCO
- Use of Peer Reviewers from universities, industry and research institutions
- Use of Specialists Committees of the Commission, such as Technical, Legislation, Curriculum and Documentation & Information Services



CHE's Approaches

- Standards-Based-Approach: Conformity to predetermined requirements or criteria; and
- Fitness-for-purpose Approach: Adherence to the mission and set objectives

Accreditation and Quality Assurance as Undertaken by CHE

- Institutional and Programme Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Re-accreditation in:
 - (a) Universities
 - (b) Post Secondary School Institutions



AQA in Universities

- Institutional Accreditation: Certificate of Registration, Letter of Interim Authority (LIA), and Charter
- Programme Accreditation: Programme evaluation and approval
- Re-accreditation (also referred to as Re-inspection)
Institutional and academic programmes: Certificate of Re-inspection



AQA in PSSIs/Middle level Colleges

- Institutional Accreditation: For Collaboration with other institutions to offer university level education (Grant of Authority to Collaborate)
- Programme Accreditation: Validation of Diploma Programmes (Gazettement of Validated Programmes by institution)



Challenges Faced by CHE in AQA in HE

- Lack of a harmonized legal framework for higher education in the country. Plans are at an advanced stage to remove this hurdle
- Ascertaining quality of the ever increasing cross-border/transnational education in the wake of internationalization of higher education.
- Assuring quality of education and training delivered using Information Communication Technology (ICT), such through virtual and E-learning methods.
- Maintaining a comprehensive database on critical information relating to accreditation and quality assurance such as that of peer reviewers (who are always on the move), data on accredited institutions from all over the world (for purposes of recognition and equation), and accredited curricula/programmes.



Challenges Faced by CHE in AQA in HE Cont'd

- Establishing and maintaining formal linkages with other credible External Quality Assurance (EQA) agencies; and
- Establishing formal and cordial relationship with various professional bodies in Kenya that have a legal mandate to undertake professional accreditation. Such bodies include:
(i) The Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Board (ii) The Architectural Association of Kenya (iii) The Engineers Registration Board (iv) The Medical Technicians and Technologists Board (v) The Nursing Council of Kenya (vi) The Pharmacy and Poisons Board (vii) The Legal Council of Lawyers



COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (CHE)

THANK YOU