

Quality Assurance in Kenyan Higher Education Institutions: A Vision for the Future

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Definition of QA and HEIs

- QA can be generally defined as the means by which an institution can guarantee that the standards and quality of its provisions are being maintained and or improved
- HEIs are those institutions offering post secondary education and training and include: (1) Certificate and Diploma granting institutions, and (2) Degree granting institutions (middle level institutions and universities)
- In the context of this presentation our focus on HEIs will be on Universities (public and private)

Current QA Situation in HEIs

- QA system under 2 legal systems; Universities Act Cap 210 B for CHE oversees QA in private universities, while public universities are governed by individual university Acts of Parliament
- QA in private universities generally done through programme and institutional accreditation, and re-audits of the same based on rules, standards and guidelines
- Public universities are self regulating in matters of QA through their developed policies and mechanisms approved by their Councils and dictated by their mandates stipulated in the Acts.

Current QA Situation in HEIs Cont'd

- In developing their policies, public universities take into consideration the CHE guidelines, and standards such as admission criteria into the programmes, curriculum design, infrastructural development, and student support system
- There is also a link between the private and public universities through CHE's governing organ, where currently all VCs of public universities are members (7 out of a total of 28 members)
- Resource persons who facilitate in the QA processes of CHE are drawn from industry, public and private sectors, and the universities locally and from outside the country

Moving Towards a Harmonized Legal Framework

- Plans are at an advanced stage to have all universities in the country to be under one legal framework
- A new Universities Bill has been developed and is awaiting consideration to bring the universities under one oversight body in all aspects of QA and accreditation

Towards Systematic QA in HEIs

Will involve the following Strategies:

- Institutionalization of Quality Assurance Framework
- Development of Frame of Reference for Programmes on offer
- Internal and External Support for Programme Design, Development, Delivery and Review
- Institutionalization of an Assessment Framework for Sustainable Management
- Research and Development
- Improvement Plan

Institutionalization of Quality Assurance Framework

Each university to :

- Establish an IQA structure that forms part of the university's organization structure with a Standing IQA Committee
- Develop an IQA policy and mechanisms/processes for implementing the same
- Customize a harmonized student evaluation instrument (developed in collaboration with CHE) and use it for evaluation of all courses
- Put in place Faculty/School based Curriculum Design and Review Committees

Development of Frame of Reference for Programmes on offer

- Programmes on offer should state the attributes in terms of competencies, skills and attitudes
- Attributes from the Frame of References to fit into the National Qualifications Framework
- Identification of National requirements for specialized skills and competencies (Skills Inventory)

Internal and External Support for Programme Design, Development, Delivery and Review

- Programme Needs Assessment through Stakeholders' involvement
- Programme: Title, ELOs, Content, Organization, Benchmarking
- Academic Leadership
- Staffing Levels, Relevant Qualifications and Experience
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Didactic Concepts
- Student Assessment
- Programme Self Assessment and Peer Review

Institutionalization of an Assessment Framework for Sustainable Management

- Currently HEIs are seeking and acquiring ISO certification, however there is need to look into the total quality of management for sustainability
- CHE in collaboration with the universities and other partners will develop an assessment framework for sustainable management in the institutions
- The developed instruments will be piloted for validation and adopted through stakeholder participation.
- Each university thereafter will regularly assess the:
 - Leadership in the institution of various units
 - Policies and strategies in use
 - Partnerships and resources available for implementing the university's mandate

Institutionalization of an Assessment Framework for Sustainable Management Cont'd

- People available to carry out the work in the institution
- Processes of that lead to the institution's key performance
- University units do not work independently but are all inter-related
- Self Assessment of university units is necessary as each of these have an impact on the quality of education being offered
- Improvement of the delivery of services on offer in the units will strengthen the quality of products and services (outputs) from the institutions, including relevance of programmes offered and graduates produced

Research and Development

- Formulation of Research policies and agenda in line with vision, mission and philosophy of the individual universities, the national goals, regional and Millennium Development Goals
- Enhances upward mobility for academic staff and aids in national development where research outputs meet the national needs
- Research will also keep the staff and students abreast with current developments in new spheres and generate new knowledge within their disciplines
- Tracers studies to be undertaken by CHE and also the universities to gauge graduate placement in the market and identify niches / gaps for programme design and review

Improvement Plan

- Assessment of university units for sustainable management will yield into areas of weaknesses requiring action for improvement
- Similarly:
 - Assessment and review of programmes; and
 - Tracer Studies will show areas of weaknesses
- An improvement plan for corrective measures for areas requiring improvement should be drawn with timelines for implementation for both the units and programmes

Conclusions

- The envisaged vision may seem challenging on the onset
- Mitigating factors leading to realization of the outlined strategies is that they are somewhat entrenched in:
 - Kenya's Vision 2030 in the mid-term implementation plan
 - The National Strategy for University Education 2007 – 2015 of Republic of Kenya, Ministry of Education (Wandiga Report, 2007)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION