A large, decorative graphic on the left side of the cover, composed of concentric circles of dots in various shades of orange and brown, creating a textured, sunburst-like effect.

# Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non-State)

University Grants Commission

July 2014

# Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines *for* External Training Institutions (State and Non-State)

Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non-State) has been approved by the University Grants Commission and is adopted to use as the Manual of Quality Assurance of External Training Institutions (QA-ETI Manual) which offer instructional training for students registered for external degree programmes with state universities



**University Grants Commission**  
*July 2014*

The Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non-State) was developed for the University Grants Commission by the following authors.

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# Abbreviation

DAU	Degree-awarding University
DE	Distance education
EC	Extension courses
EDP	External degree programmes
EDP-ODL	External degree programmes through Open and distance learning
EQA	External Quality Assurance
ETI	External Training Institution
HETC	Higher Education for the Twenty first Century
HR	Human resource
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statements
SDC	Staff Development Centres
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
UGC	University Grants Commission
UGC- QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the University Grants Commission

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# Foreword

The External Degree Programmes (EDPs) offered by conventional universities, through open and distance learning (ODL) mode has been recognized, nationally and internationally, as a key avenue in higher education and it is widely regarded as a way of expanding access to higher education. Through EDP-ODL system, the conventional universities which will be the degree awarding universities (DAU) are expected to offer selected academic study programmes leading to degrees that have high market demand, through a separate window called External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses (EDP & EC) Division/Centre/Unit. In this arrangement, the EDP & EC Division/Centre/Unit of the DAU is required to provide the students registered for EDPs with curricula of the chosen degree programme, specifications or syllabi of prescribed courses including intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of courses, detailed course contents, essential and recommended readings, assessment methods, and the conditions to be fulfilled for successful completion of a degree and award. The students registered are required to engage in self-study using learning material provided by the DAU in print and/or electronic forms (blended learning) on the prescribed courses of the chosen study programme. If the students wish they could also seek instructional training for prescribed courses from an external training institution (ETI) of their choice to complement their learning.

The EDP system which commenced in Sri Lanka in early 1960s has become a popular avenue for many high school qualifiers and those who pursue careers following completion of secondary education. As a result it has undergone unprecedented expansion over the years. By 2008/09 as many as 11 universities out of 14 were engaged in offering EDPs, providing enrollment to four times than that of the internal compartment with a relatively large output. This system continued unabated up until middle of last decade (2005/06). Graduate unemployment had become a key social issue during the last two decades, and most graduates seeking state employment were found to be from external compartment (EDP graduates). Further, it revealed that most of them were deficient of required knowledge and competencies for employment, and even if they were provided with employment, they failed to perform.

Recognizing the need to bring reforms into the sector, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2008/09 initiated a comprehensive study, and based on the findings and recommendations of the report of the study, decided to introduce far-reaching reforms into the EDP-EC system operated by Universities/Higher Education Institutions (Universities/HEIs). Accordingly, the UGC issued an administrative circular (*UGC Circular 932 of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2010*) for compliance by all Universities/Higher Education Institutions/Institutes. Further, the UGC published a comprehensive guidebook, titled - Handbook on External Degrees and Extension Courses - Qualification Framework, Quality Assurance and Codes of Practice for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by Universities/HEIs, as a comprehensive guide in managing EDP-EC system in order to facilitate the institutionalization of the reforms prescribed, and achieving the standards stipulated by the UGC (UGC, 2010).

The UGC reforms encompass 08 key areas, namely i) Policy Framework, ii) Institutional Organizational Arrangement, iii) Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration, iv) Academic Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree Programmes, and curricula of study programmes and Courses, v) Programme Delivery

and Learner Support Services, vi) Student Assessment and Evaluation, vii) Quality Assurance Procedure of EDPs and viii) Collaboration with partner Institutions. As a means of internalizing the reforms initiated, the UGC sought assistance through the World Bank- Higher Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (WB-HETC) Project. The UGC and HETC jointly launched a grant scheme (UDG-EDP Grant Scheme) and as a part of this initiative, a quality assurance (QA) system as envisaged under the UGC policy reforms package has been developed and being implemented.

The quality assurance system for EDPs which is approved and implemented by the UGC-QAAC covers two institutions, namely the EDP Centres of conventional universities, the DAUs, and external training institutions (ETI) (state and non-state), which provide instructional training for registered students. Corresponding to the two institutions, two manuals have been developed by the HETC for adoption by respective institutions and approved by the UGC for distribution to DAUs and ETIs. The two Manuals are titled:

- i) Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by Universities (QA-EDP Manual)
- ii) Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non State) (QA-ETI Manual)

These two manuals aim to provide guidance for the DAUs and ETIs to promote institutionalization of good practices and standards as a means of improving quality and relevance of EDPs. The manuals will be used by UGC-QAAC from 2014 for review and accreditation of EDP programmes of the DAUs and ETIs offering instructional training for students registered for EDPs offered by DAUs.

The UGC wishes to place on record the contribution made by the World Bank-Higher Education for the Twenty first Century (WB-HETC) in implementing UGC reforms on external degree programmes, Prof. Harischandra Abeygunawardena as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Degrees and Extension Courses and Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy as the HETC Consultant on Quality Assurance in designing a quality assurance system for external degree programmes and extension courses and producing the above mentioned manuals.

The UGC-QAAC in liaison with HETC will commence reviewing EDP Centres as a part of quality assurance system, initially as a pilot run, commencing latter part of 2014. All ETIs which provide instructional training for registered students for EDPs and ECs offered by conventional universities are encouraged to internalize the good practices and standards prescribed in the Manual titled - Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions and submit themselves to the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the UGC (UGC- QAAC) for quality assurance review and accreditation.

Professor SSMK Kshanika Hirimburegama  
Chairperson  
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July 2014

## About the Authors

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# Overview

## What is the purpose of this Manual?

The Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non State) has been developed as a part of the QA-EDP system. It aims to provide guidance for external training institutions (State & Non-state) to promote institutionalization of best practices and standards as means of improving quality and relevance of instructional training provided to the student registered for EDPs in conventional universities. By doing so external training institutions (ETIs) could effectively contribute towards enhancement of quality of EDPs offered by universities to which they are catering for.

Further, this manual also provides brief overview of the following areas as additional information that may be very useful for ETIs to understand their role as partners and to recognize how collectively they contribute to improve the quality of EDPs offered by conventional universities:

- Changing paradigms of higher education
- Emergence open and distance learning (ODL) as an alternate form of higher learning,
- Philosophy and principles of quality assurance process,
- Purpose and procedures of quality assurance process,
- UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines for Offering External Degrees and Extension Programmes by Universities/Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes, and
- Position and Role of and Best Practices and Standards for External Training Institutions, and
- Internal quality assessment (IQA) and external assessment (EQA)

## Who will find the Manual useful?

The Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions is written primarily for the managers and the teaching and support staff of ETIs. It also serves as a supplementary manual for the managers and academic staff members in the EDP units of state universities. Further, the contents of this manual will also be of immense value to the higher education policy makers and regulatory bodies as well. Its content may also prove very useful for the academic faculty members of universities who are called upon from time to time to undertake responsibilities in EDP's. The material may also be useful as a resource base for designing, conducting and evaluation of instructional training offered by the ETIs.

Thus, the utility of the manual is multifold. It can be used by the higher management of ETIs as a tool for strategic planning and management of institutions for continuous improvement of governance and management and quality of academic learning services offered, thus achieving high standards and recognition. By achieving such goal, the ETIs will not only accrue benefits to its educational enterprise but also will assist the efforts by state universities in designing and offering quality and relevant EDPs, offered through open and distance learning mode.

## **How the Manual is organized?**

The Manual consists of three parts and an Appendix:

**Part I: Theoretical Perspectives of ODL, Quality Assurance and UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines**

Chapter 1: Theoretical Perspectives of ODL System and Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Chapter 2: Policy Framework and Guidelines for Offering External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses by Universities/Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes

**Part II: Criteria, Best Practices and Standards for Accreditation**

Chapter 3: Criteria and Best Practices

Chapter 4: Standards for Assessment and Accreditation

**Part III: Guidelines for Quality Assessment of External Training Institutions**

Chapter 5: Procedures of Quality Assessment of External Training Institutions and Guidelines for Preparation of ETIs for Quality Assessment and Accreditation

**Appendix:**

Annex 01: Guidelines for Submitting an Application for Quality Assessment and Accreditation

Annex 02: Survey Format for Evaluating ETI by Students

Annex 03: Glossary

## **PART I: Theoretical Perspectives of ODL, Quality Assurance & UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines**

Part 1 consists of 3 Chapters. Chapter I deals very briefly with changing trends of higher education and the need for broadening access to those who seek higher education irrespective of age, affordability and time availability. It also deals with evolution of teaching and learning methods from conventional class room, teacher centered pedagogy to more students centered learning using variety of teaching and learning methods.

It also emphasizes the need for ensuring quality in external degree programmes (EDPs) offered through ODL methods. It deals with conceptual issues relating to quality and quality assurance, and the importance of regulating quality assurance in EDP-ODL through clear and well defined national and institutional policies and procedures. The chapter highlights some of the common approaches used in assuring quality in higher educational provision in general and provides brief description of the criteria on which higher educational institutions are evaluated for quality. It emphasizes the link between the internal quality assurance and external quality assurance systems and also the need for continuous improvement via internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Chapter 2 deals with the UGC Policy Framework for EDPs and Extension Courses (ECs) which are prescribed through the UGC Circular of 932 of 10th October 2010. It is aimed rectifying shortcomings and defects observed in EDPs offered by DAUs. Further, the Circular has prescribed good practices and standards that all universities should comply, adopt and practice to ensure the quality and relevance of EDPs offered. Moreover, it emphasizes the need for formalizing the partnership between the DAU and the ETI which provide instructional training for those students registered for EDPs.

## **PART II: Criteria, Best Practices and Standards for Accreditation**

Part II consists of two chapters which describe key elements, criteria, best practices and standards/benchmarks that the ETIs should institutionalize in order to make the partnership beneficial to the DAUs, students and themselves.

The criteria, best practices and standards have been developed and agreed through discussions held in a series of national forums conducted by the developers with participation of members of the UGC Standing committees on EDPs & ECs, EDP administrators of universities and external training institutions, academics involved in EDPs, and academics with extensive experience in ODL methods and QA procedures.

Chapter 3 gives the identified 'Criteria' which reflect particular component of ETI, or operation or salient features of the system. Six Criteria have been identified under two broad elements. Brief descriptions of best practices and /or processes those that would augment their quality and contributes to the success of attaining quality learning experiences are given.

In Chapter 4, the best practices are looked at in terms of ‘Standards’ in the EDP-ODL context as they relate to the six Criteria. Standards of assessment and accreditation constitute the basic document of the assessment and accreditation process forming the base of essentials against which an institution studies and evaluates itself. Standards form the level of requirement and conditions that must be met by ETIs to be certified or accredited by the UGC-QAAC. In order to minimize the subjectivity in external review assessment and to facilitate the use of the ‘Standards’ in assessments, examples of source of evidence and 4-point scale score guide are also given.

### **PART III: Guidelines for Quality Assessment of External Training Institutions**

Chapter 5 deals with key steps in the process of quality assessment and accreditation, and the preparation of a Self-evaluation Report (SER) by the institution as of the guidelines formulated by the UGC-QAAC. The preparation of SER is a key aspect of quality assessment and SER serves several functions, both for the ETI and reviewers. For the ETI, the preparation of SER is a self-corrective exercise as it requires the ETI to put in place necessary internal quality assurance infrastructure (such as internal quality assurance cell - IQC), and adopting and internalizing good management practices and standards in all key areas of the ETI. For the review team it provides an accurate account of the status, functions and performance of the ETI with respect to the quality criteria prescribed by the QAAC.

#### **Appendix:**

As there is always a risk in overlooking details of important aspects when trying to present complicated information in a concise manner, additional information is given as Annexes in the Appendix.

Annex 01 provides pertinent guidelines on the preparation of the SER an organized and systematic way. It gives a suggested format for collection of basic data about the institution, programmes, learning material, learner support services, assessments and key indicators of criteria and the guidelines for writing SER.

Annex 02 provides a Survey Format for Evaluating ETI by students. The sample questionnaire and elements provided therein are only suggestive and may be adapted to suit the institution’s needs. The data collected will also form an important feedback from students for quality enhancement of the institution and programmes.

In addition, the key terms used in this QA Manual are defined and compiled as a Glossary in Annex 03 so as to avoid ambiguity as the terms are interpreted in a variety of ways in different documents and countries.

# PART I:

## Theoretical Perspectives of ODL, Quality Assurance and UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines

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Traditional universities with their classroom teaching are continuously being challenged by multitude of factors, namely - increasing demand for access to and participation in higher education, changing student profile, and increasing in emphasis on lifelong learning, while they are being pressed hard to sustain their core functions with limited resources and facilities. In this context, the ODL has been widely hailed as the way of overcoming some of these challenges and prepare for the future of higher education because of its inherent advantages, namely - cost-effectiveness, economies of scale, technology mediated delivery methods and ability to reach out for a wider clientele.

**Chapter 1** addresses the adoption of ODL as a practical and constructive way to meet these challenges while pursuing quality concerns through appropriate and reliable evaluation and accreditation mechanism. This includes establishing a quality assurance framework, backed by regulatory framework framed and put in place by a regulatory agency and defining a set of best practices and standards that are needed to institutionalize to assure the public and the students that study programmes, courses and degrees offered using ODL meet acceptable academic and professional standards. It also deals with role of External Training Institutions (whether state or non-state) in EDP-ODL system and the conditions on which the degree awarding university shall maintain a formal relationship or partnership with the external training institutions.

**Chapter 2** deals with the UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines for EDPs and Extension Courses which were prescribed and implemented since late 2010. It also highlights the shortcomings and defects, uses and abuses EDP system and the rationale behind specifying very comprehensive policy framework and guidelines on the theme and the reforms that all universities have to adopt and practice. It also highlights the need for formalizing the partnership between the DAU and ETI which provide instructional training for those students registered for EDPs with DAU through ODL.



# CHAPTER 1

## Theoretical Perspectives of ODL System and Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

### 1.1 Changing Paradigm of Higher Education

It is well conceivable that knowledge societies cannot be constructed without building strong and dynamic high quality higher educational institutions. Creation and expansion of the frontiers of knowledge and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of universities and other higher education institutions, whether state or non-state. Moreover, higher education is regarded as the engine of development in the new world economy. Though it is accepted as a basic individual right, up until recent past, higher education has long been regarded as a privilege of the few. The shackles have gradually been broken, and the higher education in today's 'world of work' is open to all those who seek higher education, irrespective of age and affordability.

Higher education in today's world is considered as an indispensable way of imparting knowledge and skills in diverse disciplines and professions while contributing to individual's personality development; that is,

- learning how to make critical judgment,
- learning how to communicate effectively and intelligently,
- learning how to be flexible and adaptable, and
- acquiring other meta-skills such as numerical and analytical skills, ICT skills, initiative, interpersonal skills, etc.

Therefore, higher education institutions are expected to deliver graduates with these attributes and in order to do so they have to, reorient their organizational structures, procedures and processes, re-tool their functions, revise and update their curricula of study programme and courses, adopt modern teaching, training and assessment methods, and most importantly remain accountable to the society. These dynamic changes continuously challenge the higher education institutions as well as students.

From the learners' perspective, we have seen on an international basis, the arrival of more and more adult learners, many of them part-time, in higher education institutions, making higher educational provision to become more flexible. To accommodate this trend, policy initiatives in the field of lifelong learning through

flexible modes have been promoted by the governments in a number of countries, and these efforts are either initiated and/or strengthened by international agencies. Further, the pressure on resources within institutions has forced on the higher education system to place an increasing emphasis on teaching and learning methods that demand less teacher contact and thus pave the way for more independent learning methods. The financial pressures have also been accompanied by progressive views about learning which see independence as a positive aspiration in its own right and part of a learner rather than a teacher-centered approach.

Inability of expansion of education and training to suit the new demands by the traditional classroom-based conventional mode of education sparked an interest in finding more versatile and cost-effective ways of meeting these needs. Although distance education has been in existence for over a century, ODL emerged formally as an extremely effective option only in the 1960s. Many countries, both developing and developed, are looking at ODL as a major strategy because of its openness, potential ability for resolving problems of access, quality, equity, cost-effectiveness, and its suitability for lifelong learning (UNESCO 2002). The terms conventional and distance education often used independently of each other are now blending together, most often in synergistic manner. Thus, a new learning paradigm has generated the concept of 'seamless' education, meaning education that is not confined to rigid structures: that is the technology is seamless, learning is seamless, learning environment is seamless; economy is seamless.

It is in this context that we need to view the recent reforms brought in by the UGC into the EDP & EC system operated by the conventional universities (UGC, 2010). The UGC policy directive requires the universities to offer their external degree programmes using open and distance learning methods with the choice given to students seek instructional training from a chosen external training institution (state or non-state training institutions). This is extensively dealt in Chapter 2.

## **1.2 Open and Distance Learning (ODL)**

### **1.2.1 General Concepts**

Open and distance learning is an amalgam of two approaches to form an educational strategy that focuses on expanding access to learning. It is characterized by two factors: distance education as a delivery strategy through a variety of media and open learning as a philosophy in which particular value is attached to certain underlying principles, and chief among which are 'learner centeredness', 'flexibility in learning', 'removal of unnecessary barriers to access', and 'recognition of prior learning'. Most ODL systems have a philosophy that aims to remove barriers to education and allow students to study what they want, when they want and where they want. ODL systems typically use technology to mediate learning for e.g. print materials, audio/video cassettes, radio/TV, computer, web, mobile devices etc. It is most effective with a

combination of appropriate methods. There is no single method for providing ODL. It is most effective with a combination of appropriate methods. While there are differences in the audience and purposes for which ODL may be planned, it is indeed becoming part of the mainstream educational system, and is best known today for its adaptability at tertiary level.

*It is now widely accepted that, “.....there is now widespread recognition that the way forward is to make greater use of ODL whether in the form of print-based learning, interactive radio, computer-based learning or web-based learning. These methods offer more education for the same resource, easier access, and higher quality than can be obtained by traditional methods, particularly in countries with poorly enhanced education systems (Moore and Tait, 2002)”.*

Open and distance learning may be available through an institution exclusively created for that purpose such as Open Universities or institutions may offer distance learning programmes to off-campus students alongside on-campus teaching. These institutions are referred to as dual mode institutions. Recently the dual mode approach has expanded exponentially worldwide as more single mode conventional institutions recognize the need to realize returns on existing investments in programme development (Raza and Allsop 2006).

Applicability or application of ODL methods is limited for higher education only by means of resources and infrastructure capability. The primary conditions for the success of use of ODL methods for teaching and learning depends on several factors, and chief of which are: students; course design (including organization of the design process, choice of pedagogical approach, choice and use of media); and course delivery (including tutorial support, faculty development, and training in student assessment). An issue that used to be raised quite regularly in discussions about distance education was what could be and what could not be taught by distance means. For many years there was an assumption that distance education was only suitable for imparting knowledge in the cognitive domain and could not be used either to teach students complex performance and manipulative skills or to inculcate values and attitudes, both of which required contact with people. There is clear evidence that with appropriate use of technologies and teaching and learning strategies distance education can be as effective as face-to-face across a wide variety of subjects and target groups. It is limited only by resources and infrastructure capability of the institution (Moore and Thompson 1997)

Open and Distance Learning in its various forms is increasingly becoming a preferred means of enabling governments and institutions in both developed and developing nations to increase access to education and thereby respond to demands for equity of opportunity to participants in learning and meet the ever changing human-resource needs. Today, ODL methods are used in most countries - “to increase the capacity and cost-effectiveness of education and training systems, to reach target

groups with limited access to conventional education and training, to support and enhance the quality and relevance of existing educational structures, to ensure the connection of educational institutions and curricula to the emerging networks and information resources, and to promote innovation and opportunities for lifelong learning” (UNESCO, 2002: 8). Thus the evolution of distance education has been creating a paradigm shift in the way educators have begun to view teaching and learning. Administrators, faculty, staff and students have begun to realize that in order to successfully implement ODL they had to reassess their methods, means, structures and resources.

### **1.2.2 Collaboration and partnerships**

Organization and management of ODL is necessarily more complicated than running a conventional system. ODL has brought a new division of labour into education and within it a set of options for stakeholders about the location of the separate function such as i) enrolling and registering students, ii) developing, producing, reproducing and distribution of teaching material, iii) tutoring and supporting students, iv) assessing, evaluating and awarding credits. Many of these functions may be undertaken by a single agency as in the case of Open Universities which have the autonomy and authority with wide powers. But most often ODL rests on a partnership between different institutions. This would be more so with dual mode institutions. Various organizational models are possible for partnerships in dual mode universities.

International experience on how to make partnerships work includes:

- i) There need to be clear goals and a clear statement of purpose.
- ii) There need to be governance and funding structure that works.
- iii) Members of a partnership need to see that they have complementary roles and that there are benefits to all.
- iv) Effective partnerships are likely to seek a commitment of resources from all parties.

(adapted from Perraton and Hulsmann 1998)

Therefore, all successful ODL systems should be built on the following four pillars:

- i) well designed, learner-centered, self-instructional materials developed through a variety of media and appropriate to the circumstances
- ii) an administrative system for distributing materials, for keeping track of learners and possibly a production facility for materials
- iii) a support system for learners, provided by the degree awarding university with provision for students to seek instructional training through partner training institutions, and

- iv) clearly defined policy on quality assurance and enhancement and mechanism to enforce it.

### **1.2.3 Deficiencies of Existing Informal Partnership between Degree-awarding Universities and External Training Institutions**

An informal partnership has been in existence from the inception of external degrees by universities in 1960s, between state universities which offer external degrees (hence forth refereed as Degree Awarding University – DAU) and external training institutions (ETIs) which offer instructional training to candidates registered for EDPs. As the partnership has been informal, there has not been much dialogue between the two parties. The DAUs and the ETI have operated more or less independently. Further, there were no guidelines available from any regulatory body to DAUs and ETIs with regard to how a partnership between two institutions could be established and maintained. With increasing number of enrollment and also with commencement of external degrees by many universities, the number of ETIs had mushroomed and in the absence of proper guidelines from a regulatory agency, the standards of operations of such institutions had gradually declined over time.

The system continued unabated up until the graduates in large numbers through the external degree programmes became a social and political issue. Graduate unemployment has been the key issue since late 1960s and in all general elections held thereafter, the unemployment among youth, particularly among graduates, became one of the key issues. Surveys carried out in 2008 on unemployment among graduates revealed that majority (>80%) of unemployed graduates were from external compartment and they all were deficient in knowledge and marketable skills. Prof. Wiswa Warnapala, Minister of Higher Education (2006-2010), has succinctly characterized the situation prevailed in external degree programmes in the following manner:

*“...the failure of the existing system – the system of 15 universities – to absorb the additional numbers of students makes it imperative on our part to promote the open and distance learning mode. Initially, all the established Universities began conducting external degree programmes, and through this established a popular alternative as a form of access to higher education. These programmes were not organized properly in the universities which made use of the large clientele of students and did not provide necessary facilities to acquire knowledge to the large numbers accommodated in them. The students were at the mercy of sub- standard tuition classes and tutorials, which in the process became a lucrative industry that began exploiting students who were in search of a higher education qualification. The intellectual culture, associated primarily with the external student, underwent a change: what was acquired was not knowledge but a certificate with which to find employment. The final product was half-baked and neither scholarly nor intellectual in his/her outlook. This, in my view, is a great deficiency in the system, and it needs to*

*be rectified with an organized system of Distance Education” (In: Higher Education Policy in Sri Lanka: New Perspectives and Challenges 2009).*

As a follow-up to the criticism directed by the Hon. Minister of Higher Education, the UGC initiated fact finding study in 2009 (UGC Report on EDPs 2010). The study conducted by the UGC revealed that as of January 2010, out of 14 conventional state universities, 11 universities have been offering EDP-ECs, primarily in the streams of liberal arts and humanities, management and information technology. According to UGC statistics, the total annual enrollment is reported to be more than four times that of the internal compartment and total estimated registered students in EDPs to be around 280,000 at the beginning of 2008. The EDP-EC system has been operated by universities through different institutional arrangements and university commitment has been mostly confined to defining curricula, enrollment and registration and finally conducting examinations and awarding degrees.

The survey also reported that almost all private training institutions catering for registered students were primarily motivated to maximize profit rather than providing quality training to their client students. Most of the ‘tutories’ had been operating in ‘makeshift’ arrangements. Most striking findings were that these institutions did not possess any printed curricula and syllabi of courses prescribed by DAUs and the course contents delivered by them were purely based on the experience that tutors had acquired previously either through a similar programme, followed internally or externally. It was also noted that many university academics who were acting as examiners for external degrees in their universities, have opted to provide services as tutors ‘in these loosely organized’ arrangements. Moreover, the learner support services were not in existence and the training offered to students was primarily focused towards preparing students to answer the examinations rather than on providing advanced knowledge and practical training in the chosen field of discipline.

#### **1.2.4 UGC Reforms in EDP-ODL Sector and Role of ETIs in EDP –ODL system**

Recognizing the need to bring changes into the sector, the UGC decided to introduce far-reaching reforms into the EDP-EC system operated by Universities/HEIs. The UGC issued an administrative circular (UGC Circular 932 of 15th October 2010) for compliance by all Universities/Higher Education Institutions. Further, in order to complement its efforts, UGC prepared a handbook, titled “**Handbook on External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses**” (UGC, 2010), as a comprehensive guide in managing EDP-EC system in order to ensure the adoption and institutionalizing the reforms prescribed, and promote the internalizing the best practices and standards stipulated by the UGC by the universities and external training institutions.

The UGC reforms, prescribed through the UGC Circular 932, have clearly defined the role of external training institutions. It has stated that role of the State/Non-state

Training Institution is very important and it should be formalized through an agreement reached between the two. Through this agreement, the external training institutions are mandated in providing instructional training to students registered as external candidates in a degree programme offered by the external arm of the DAU, on the basis of the curriculum and syllabi defined by it. However, the UGC has also recognized the constraints that may be encountered in transforming the existing ‘informal system’ over time. Recognizing these aspects, the UGC stated in its policy guidelines, that the existing informal partnership between DAU and State and -Non-state ETI would be allowed to continue, while taking steps to formalize the system in a gradual and non-compulsory manner.

### **1.2.5 Envisaged Formal Partnership between Degree-awarding Universities and ETIs**

It is envisaged that in the proposed formalized system, the State/Non-state ETI must preferably seek recognition from the UGC through a chosen DAU. In order for the DAU and the UGC to recognize the State/Non-state ETI as a reliable partner, the quality of services offered by the ETI must be improved and demonstrated. The minimum criteria an ETI must fulfill are given below:

- ETI must be dedicated for providing quality educational services.
- ETI must be operating under written constitution which may in the form of an Act enacted by the Parliament, Ordinance passed by a regulatory authority or Articles approved by Registrar of Companies.
- ETI must be operated through proper organizational structure and the management of the institution must be guided by directives issued by a regulatory authority as circulars/establishment letters and/or by-laws in the case state training institutions or by By-laws and a manual of procedures approved by Board of Management of the ETI.
- ETI must have required infrastructure facilities, learning resources centers and learning material to provide quality learning experience to registered students.
- ETI must have qualified and experienced staff to provide instructions on prescribed curricula and syllabi relevant to the specific degree programmes by the degree-awarding university.
- ETI shall prepare the registered students for the specific study programmes leading to degree/diploma/certificate on the basis of the curricula and syllabi defined by the degree-awarding university.
- ETI shall submit their academic teaching staff periodically for continuing education programmes conducted by the degree-awarding university.
- ETI shall be subjected periodic quality assurance reviews conducted by the UGC-QA Council

Any ETI who wishes to obtain recognition from the UGC, must first establish a formal partnership with a chosen DAU and shall commence institutionalizing the best practices, and reach desirable standards and benchmarks, as prescribed by this Manual titled – “**Manual of Best Practices, Standards and Guidelines for Training Institutions External (State and Non State)**”. In this process, it is envisaged that the institution which intends to seek recognition must interact closely with the chosen DAU and/or DAUs and seek assistance from such institution (s) in improving its procedures and practices in order to learn, adopt and internalize the best practices and attain desirable standards.

Once the external training institution has institutionalized the best practices and reached desirable standards, such DAU could submit an application to the UGC - QA Council through the chosen university for a QA review. The procedure of quality assessment for certification and accreditation and guidelines for preparing an application are prescribed in Part III, Chapter 5 of this document.

Once the QAAC has completed its review, the institutions will be given a report (feedback) on the quality assessment check undertaken. Further, the QAAC will take steps to issue QA certification of accreditation for a prescribed period (usually 3-5 years) to those institutions that have fulfilled the standards prescribed. The accredited institution by UGC-QAAC is required to submit itself for periodic external review by the QAAC in 3-5 year cycles in order to maintain the certification of accreditation. Those institution which have not reached standards would be granted a period of time to fulfill the deficiencies and for submission for a re-assessment.

### **1.3 Open and Distance Learning in Sri Lanka**

Providing education through distance mode has been in existence in Sri Lanka for over seven decades. However, it took a while for the government formally to give serious consideration to the role of distance education as a viable alternative in trying to meet the growing public aspirations for higher educational qualifications. In 1970, the government took steps to establish the Distance Education Branch of the Ministry of Education, External Service Agency of the University of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education.

Another milestone was reached in the field of ODL with the establishment of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) in 1980 as a national university dedicated for ODL to provide university education to qualified secondary school graduates who could not enter conventional universities due to lack of space and provide for lifelong to all citizens (MoE 1980). In addition, over the years, conventional universities, which began offering external degree programmes with the enactment of Ceylon University (Amendment) Act of 1961, that has authorized conventional universities to enroll students for external degree programmes, have also made attempts to embrace ODL modes, since early 2000, in part stimulated by the possibilities of online

learning. Moreover, distance education is also used in Sri Lanka for non-university learning such as for general education, vocational and technical training, and continuing education and in a number of professions through a range of specialist organizations, professional institutes and corporate bodies.

## **1.4 Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

The quality of learning experience provided to the learners both through conventional as well as ODL systems, particularly over last few decades, has become a key concern of all stakeholders of higher education across the globe. With increasing demand, cost and competition, and criticisms over the poor quality of university graduates, the governments, policy makers, governors of higher educational institutions, academic teachers and support staff have begun to place immense importance to improve and prove the quality of learning experience and educational services provided to young men and women who seek higher education. Therefore, assuring the quality of education provision has become an important and fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining credibility institutions among the stakeholders. Accordingly the quality assurance systems have been evolved, and put in place in almost all countries and in all higher educational institutions to ensure the quality of governance and management, teaching and learning services and resources, methods, educational products, and outcomes.

In Sri Lanka this initiative has been taken by the UGC jointly with Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors (CVCD). In early 2000, UGC-CVCD initiative led to establishment a quality assurance system for Sri Lankan Universities/HEIs, and the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the UGC (UGC-QAAC) has become the focal point in this regard.

### **1.4.1 What is quality?**

Everyone agrees the desirability of ‘quality’. There is less agreement, however, as to what is quality. This is because quality does not exist in isolation from its context of use. It is a difficult concept to define, and further it is impossible to define with any degree of universal agreement. It is multidimensional as many factors contribute to its being acceptable or not. Various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from ‘quality’ as a measure for excellence to quality as perfection, ‘quality’ as value for money, ‘quality’ for customer satisfaction, ‘quality’ as fitness for purpose and ‘quality’ as transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). Depending on the definitions selected, ‘quality’ implies a relative measure of fitness of inputs, processes, outputs or learning outcomes.

Thus, a long established principle relating to the matter of ‘quality’ is “fitness for purpose” which recognizes the diversity of contexts; stakeholders (i.e. students, academic and professional interest groups, funding agencies, governments, employers

and society at large); purposes; and needs that tertiary education spans. As fitness for purpose, ‘quality’ is conceived in relation to institutional goals. It allows an institution to demonstrate the achievement of its objectives according to the purpose of its mission. The OUUK expanded this definition to “fitness for purpose at minimum cost to society” (Daniel, 2010), which fits the context of developing countries. Further, The concept of ‘quality’ is often linked with words such as ‘assurance’, ‘enhancement’, ‘assessment’, ‘audit’, ‘accreditation’, ‘academic quality’ and ‘excellence’. These terms are used in a variety of ways in different parts of the world. In order to avoid ambiguity, the terms used in this Manual are defined in the Glossary given in Annex 03 of the Appendix.

### 1.4.2 Quality Concerns for whom and why?

Quality is subjective and is a contextual matter. It may be examined from different analytic perspectives varying as per the needs of different stakeholders in the system (Trindade et al., 2000).

- **For the learners**, the primary stakeholder’s quality covers the entire gamut of an higher educational institution. In the present national and global market of higher education, the students look for recognition of the award or qualification gained, transferability of courses nationally and internationally, and getting value for their money, time and effort.
- **For Governments**, if the country is to benefit from the huge investment made in education, it must be committed to the most cost-effective and the all-round development of students, for efficiency and effectiveness in providing quality education appropriate for the socio-economic development of the country. Countries need reforms in higher education to address new challenges, particularly ensuring quality and relevance of higher education in order to produce the required skilled human capital for the country, and also to retain the trained human resources with in the country.
- **For Public and potential employers**, it gives assurance that the institution/ programme under review is performing in conformity with public expectations, increased transparency and accountability.
- **For Institutions**, it enhances the reputation as a quality higher education institution. It helps to identify its strengths and weaknesses and provide a basis for continuing improvement. It also helps to strengthen its case for reforms and enhanced financial support, and further, it enhances trans-boundary acceptance and recognition of its capacity as a HEI and hence its qualifications and awards.

## 1.5 Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education

### 1.5.1 Principle and Instruments

For a higher educational institution to function, perform and deliver quality products and services to the society, (i.e. in terms of quality and relevance of study programmes, quality of graduates and quality, quality of research and innovations, outreach activities, advisory and consultancy services, etc.), it requires to adhere to nationally prescribed legal framework, establishment procedures, rules, regulations and guidelines and standards/benchmarks. As such it should be governed and managed according to set of rules, regulations, and guidelines and best/good practices prescribed by the said regulatory agency. Further, it should design study programmes, provide training and guidance for registered students, assess and award degrees and certificates according to clearly defined guidelines and standards prescribed by the regulatory agency, academic syndicate of the HEI and quality assurance agency. Further, HEI should engage in research and innovations and function as a resource centre providing outreach activities, advisory services and consultancies of high quality. In order to ensure that institution is treading in right course in these spheres, the overall operation has to be regularly monitored and assessed to check for the degree of compliance by an internal quality assurance and external quality assurance instruments and provided with a feedback to the institutions concerned for corrections and continuous improvements.

As such quality assurance system in higher education is built on a platform consisting two main elements, namely;

- a) National Policy Framework and Guidelines- on governance, establishment management procedures, best/good practices, standards and benchmarks, and quality policy and plan, and regulatory enactments to enforce quality culture and assessments and funds to support implementation of quality policy and programmes, and
- b) Institutional arrangements for quality assessment and certification – for regular monitoring of higher education institutions for compliance with national policy framework and guidelines on governance, establishment management procedures, best practices, standards and benchmarks, and for granting certification and/or accreditation

### **1.5.2 National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines on governance, establishment and management procedures, best/good practices, standards and benchmarks and quality policy and plan, and regulatory enactments and funds to support implementation of quality policy**

There are several authorities and agencies dealing with higher education and the key players are Legislature, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Ministry of Higher Education, National Education Commission, University Grants Commission, Quality Assurance Accreditation Council of the UGC (UGC-QAAC). In addition, Institutional policy frameworks, by-laws and guidelines are prepared and implemented by Governing Councils and Senates of HEIs as regard to academic development and planning, examinations, disciplinary procedures, etc. Therefore, the National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines may include the following:

- Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and as amended subsequently
- UGC Establishments Code and circulars and establishment letters issued by the UGC.
- In the case of EDPs, the policy framework and guidelines prescribed by the UGC through the UGC circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010.
- Best/Good Practices and standards issued for internal study programmes and also for EDPs through ODL by the regulatory agencies (such as Ministry of Higher Education, UGC, UGC – QAAC, etc.).
- By-laws, guidelines and good practices and standards issued by governing Councils and Senates of higher educational institutions and professional bodies
- National Qualification Framework (issued by the Ministry of Higher Education & adopted by the UGC)
- Subject Benchmark Statements (SBSs) prepared for respective disciplines/subjects by QA Agency and HEIs

In addition, to support the implementation of quality policy and programmes, the higher authorities and regulatory agencies (such as Ministry of Higher Education and UGC) must put in place the following:

- i) Progressive legislation or circular instruction to ensure the compliance by the universities and higher educational institutions, and
- ii) Provision of adequate funding to implement quality assurance systems and procedures.

### **1.5.3 Institutional arrangements for regular monitoring for compliance by higher educational institutions and granting certification and/or accreditation**

The UGC-QAAC is currently functioning as the centralized QA agency and its core functions are as follows;

- identifying critical functions for achieving the standards/benchmarks and specification of standards for the critical functions,
- Defining criteria that explain the scope and performance levels that the system is designed to achieve in relation to academic quality and academic standards.
- Designing and prescribing review mechanisms such as internal and external quality assurance mechanisms,
- Provision of systematic monitoring mechanisms to provide effective feedback loops
- Provision of training to academic staff on quality assurance procedures and best practices and standards.

### **1.5.4 Institutional Framework for Assessment of Quality**

It is accepted that in a quality assurance system it is necessary to first assess the functioning, performance and current standards of the institution and such assessment has to be done against its mission, goals and objectives. Evaluation of the operations of an institution is referred to as Institutional Review and that of its study programmes is referred to as Programme Review or Subject Review. In the case of QA-EDP, the institutional review and study programme (s) reviews are conducted together and no attempt is made to separate into two aspects or components. These assessments can be conducted through internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms (self-assessment) or by external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms.

#### **1.5.4.1 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)**

Traditionally, IQA is an integral part of the overall functioning of a higher educational institution to ensure that the institution/programme (s) fulfills its purpose as well as the standards set out by the regulatory bodies. The traditional regulatory methods that have been in existence to ensure quality of higher education hitherto was mostly confined to internal mechanisms. These internal checks and balances are carried out in State Universities through internal ‘Authorities’ and ‘Bodies’ such as the Council, Senate, the Campus Boards, Faculty Boards, Standing Committees of the authorities and bodies and ad hoc Committees established from time to time as prescribed by the pertinent Acts, Enactments and Administrative Circulars with inbuilt checks and balances to oversee the system. Necessary guidelines and regulations are given through establishments circulars by the Regulatory Bodies.

With introduction of quality assurance system to conventional universities, an internal entity commonly referred Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is established and

individual Faculties are linked to the IQAC via internal quality assurance units (IQAU)

A model for such IQAC for ETIs is given in BOX 1. The primary function of the IQAC is to regularly, usually on annual basis to review and monitor the core functions of the institution which are implemented through ‘Committees’ and report to the governing councils for information, and if required to rectify defects, shortcomings, etc. Another function of the IQAC is to spearhead follow-up work emanating from Reports of External Quality Assurance Reviews and report to governing authority on the recommend measures to overcome any deficiencies and then spearheading the implementation of agreed follow-up activities, and then monitoring and reporting the progress achieved.

#### **1.5.4.2 External Quality Assurance (EQA)**

When the system of higher education was relatively small, catering to a few, and not much of competition nationally or internationally, the internal quality assessment methods were sufficient. The situation changed rapidly in the last three decades in an unprecedented manner. With the world becoming a global village, it became essential to assure quality through a reliable national quality assurance mechanism. These changes have resulted in the evolution and worldwide acceptance of the External Quality Assurance (EQA) mechanism as an effective method to ensure quality and standards of education. In this mechanism, the Self-evaluation is the central element and the set of standards and criteria prescribed by the quality assurance agency forms the basis for self evaluation. It is through this self-evaluation report that the external review team tries to understand and evaluate the institution or programme prior to the site visit or on-site evaluation and analyses it validates its claims by visiting the institution. Details of external quality assurance in dealt with in detail in Chapter 5.

#### **1.5.5 Link between National Policy Framework and Guidelines and National and Institutional Education Regulations on Governance and Management, Best Practices and Standards, and IQA and EQA Procedures**

The quality assurance system as stated earlier as a feedback system that is developed to ensure that the higher educational intuition is committed to comply with national and institutional policies, regulations and guidelines and good practices and standards prescribed by the regulatory body or bodies and by doing so the institution is employing all resources prudently, effectively and efficiently in meeting the benchmark; ‘fitness for purpose at minimum cost to the society’.

## **Box 1 - Guidelines for the establishment and operation of internal QA Cell (IQAC)**

### **Objectives**

- To develop an internal auditing system for conscious, consistent, and catalytic action to improve the performance of the ETI and for improving the quality of instructional training offered to students registered in a EDP with a degree-awarding university
- To facilitate internalization of quality culture within the institution
- To enhance and integrate various activities of the institution and institutionalize all the best practices of the units/centers
- To act as a 'catalytic center' to bring about progressive changes in the institution

### **Functions**

- Act as the nodal agency of the administrative entity handling instructional training for EDPs for quality related activities
- Hold monthly meetings to review the quality aspects of instructional training offered for EDPs and address any issues
- Prepare annual work plan
- Devise procedure and instruments for assuring quality
- Conduct internal review of programmes/courses/assessments through
  - monitoring of student recruitment, retention, performance and progress
  - monitoring of student satisfaction with the instructional services, guidance and support services
  - facilitating programme coordinators to conduct programme/course level reviews annually.
- Facilitate self-assessment by collecting data relating to the six criteria prescribed by the UGC-QAAC, analyzing and using the information for reviewing policies, proceedings and programmes and improvements in teaching-learning.
- Document the various programmes/activities leading to quality improvement and dissemination of information to all concerned
- Disseminate information on the various quality parameters of instructional training and student support services for students reading for EDPs
- Organize induction/orientation programmes, workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circle in partnership with the degree-awarding institution
- Prepare a self-reviewed progress report to be submitted annually to the UGC-QAAC, detailing tangible results achieved in key areas which are specifically identified by IQAC in the beginning of the academic year.

IQAC may derive further support from faculties/departments of universities offering EDPs and mechanisms that contribute to the functions listed above.

**Composition of IQAC.** IQAC shall be constituted under the chairmanship of the Chairman/Director of ETI with other representatives as heads of academic departments and administrative units and a few other teachers. Composition may be as follows:

- Chairperson or Director/ETI
- Secretary - Senior member of administrative staff as the secretary of the IAAC
- Member - Representing the Governing Board or Board of Directors
- Other Members - Head of academic and administrative departments/divisions/units and members of teaching staff (preferably Coordinators of EDP Programmes), number depending on the number of programmes offered

### **Intended outcomes**

- Timely efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks
- Provision of high quality instructional training for study programmes prescribed by Degree Awarding Universities as reflected in high student satisfaction, high pass rate at the examinations conducted by the DAU, high graduation rate and high employment rates.

As stated in 1.5.1, for the QA system to operate, two pre-requisites must be completed and put in place. These are;

- National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines on governance, establishment and management procedures, best/good practices, standards/benchmarks as regard to academic activities, quality policy and plan, and regulatory enactments and funds to support implementation of quality policy, and
- Institutional arrangements for regular monitoring for compliance internally by the institution itself (IQA system) as well as by an external agency (i.e. EQA System) established for this purpose for assessment and granting, certification and/or accreditation

The link between the above two pre-requisites is depicted in Fig. 1.1.

As depicted, Fig. 1.1, any higher educational institution, whether state or non-state, has to be established on a legally approved legislative framework or platform such as through an Act passed in the Parliament, or Ordinance approved by the regulatory body empowered through an Act of Parliament or in the case of non-state institution, through registration from Registrar of Companies (who is authorized by an Act of Parliament). For example Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 paved the way to establish the regulatory body for the state university system, the UGC for regulating and overseeing state university system. The UGC perform this function by designing and prescribing the establishment and management procedures as conveyed to HEIs and through instruments/directives such as UGC and Universities Establishments Code, Establishment Circulars and Letters.

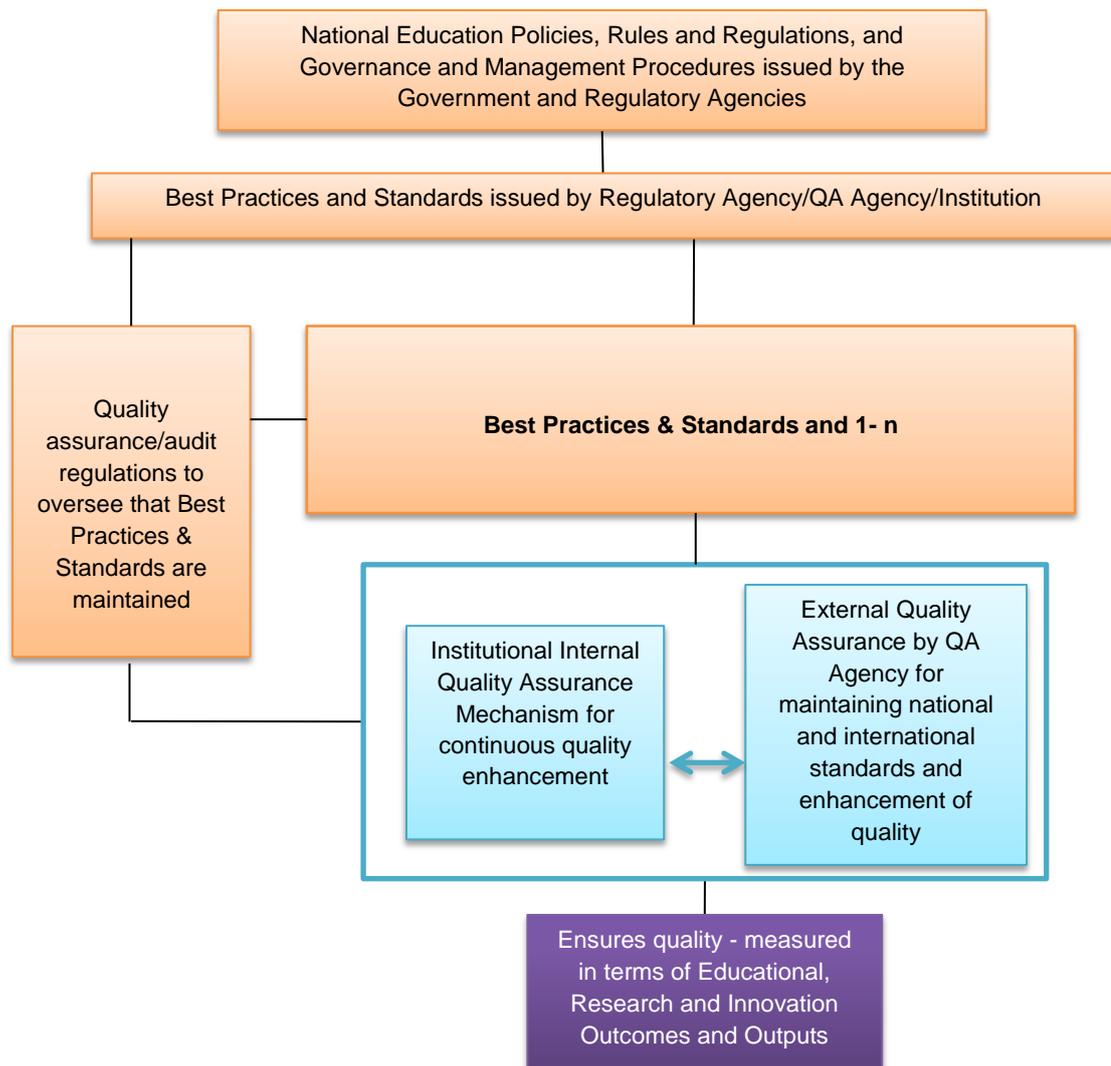
Further, the QAAC established by the UGC is mandated to prescribe best practices and standards with respect to academic development and planning, teaching, training and assessment, research and innovations and outreach activities. Similarly, many other authorities such as National Education Commission, Ministry of Higher Education, and allied agencies through UGC may time to time prescribe regulations and guidelines, and the Universities and Higher Educational Institutions covering all key aspects of higher educational institution

Similarly, in the case of non-state institutions which have been established through registration under Registrar of Companies are guided by the Articles of Association or Constitution that has been approved by the same authority. The by-laws and manual of procedures adopted, thereafter by the Board of Management of such entity will form the foundation on which the institution shall operate to comply with those directives, management guidelines and internalize best practices and standards

As implied in the Fig. 1.1, the QA system which is empowered by the regulatory agency (i.e. UGC in the case of Universities/HEIs) is expected to assess the degree of compliance by the institutions with those rules, regulations, guidelines, and best

practices (for QA purpose these are translated as “Standards”) and assess the quality of their operations and outputs and outcomes and report back to the institutions concerned giving indication on the overall standing of the HEI, and if shortcomings are observed, the recommendations for corrective measures. The above principle and concepts are equally applicable to all state as well as non-state institutions who are seeking recognition from the UGC-QAAC.

**Figure 1.1 – Functional link between National Policies, and National and Institutional Rules and Regulations on Governance and Management, Best Practices and Standards and the Quality Assurance System**



*Adapted from “Manual for Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education (2008): Thailand*

Therefore, the function of IQA and EQA system depicted in this close circuit system is to check periodically the degree of compliance by the institution with those rules, regulations and guidelines and to what extent the institution has adopted and internalize the best practices and standards prescribed by the UGC-QAAC, and report back to relevant authorities and institutions for institutionalising corrective measures.

Further the assessment by EQA system will also serve as reporting system to the public on the quality of the institution.

### **1.5.6 Functional link between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance**

Total quality improvement system (TQI system), is built on two pillars, namely IQA and EQA components. The functional link between the between the two components, the IQA and EQA systems, is illustrated in Figure 1.2. As depicted and implied through close circuit diagram, the IQA is the main element of quality assurance system where it should undertake regular monitoring and reporting to higher management of the institution for appropriate corrective measures for rectification of shortcomings, if exists. The self-assessments undertaken regularly provides, the foundation to prepare the self-evaluation report (SER) for EQA and the SER forms the basis for EQA review teams to undertake assessment for quality. Thus the SER truly reflects the internal functions of the institution, internally monitored through IQA procedures. In this close circuit, the report coming out from EQA is expected to serve as feedback to IQA, and IQA in turn shall spearhead the follow-up actions on the findings, shortcomings highlighted and recommendations made their in. This is a recursive and iterative process and will ensure that the institution is heading in the right path towards continuing improvements in all aspects, and thus enabling to reach the status of ‘centre of excellence’ as a higher education institution, and also to maintain the status, once it is achieved.

## **1.6 Promoting Quality Culture and Continuous Improvement**

Quality assurance does not merely mean a set of procedures to be followed. It is also an attitude or ethos which influences every aspect in an organizational activity. Quality Assurance procedures and the related processes help in attaining the objective of the institution, but the basic question is, how can institution-wide commitment to QA be engendered and how can the staff of the institution be made to imbibe a culture of quality?

Harvey and Green (1993) opine that quality is closely connected to an institution’s culture. It is important for a distance education institution to create and strengthen a quality culture within the institution in order to integrate QA and enhancement activities in everyday practices.

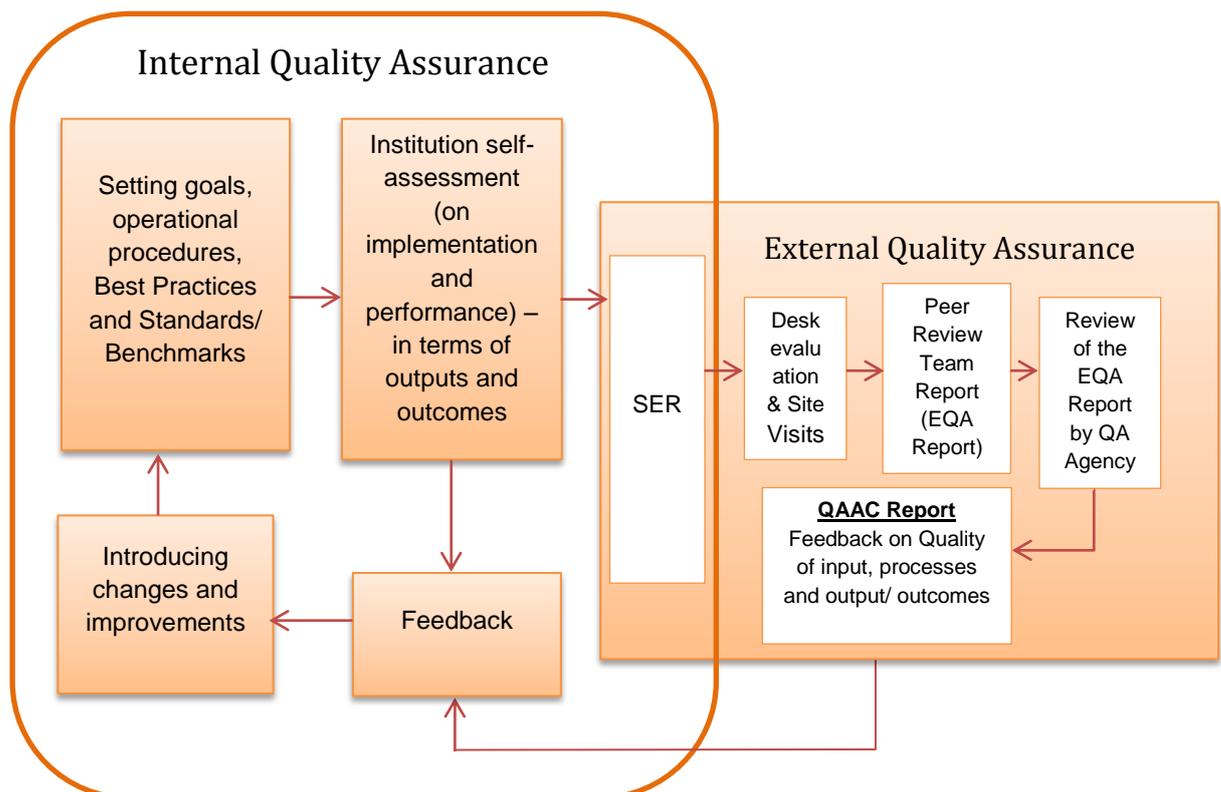
Important benchmarking points for Asian distance education institutions in developing an internal quality culture for continuous quality improvement are:

- The vision, purpose and mission of the institution have to be shared and clear, both within the institution and to external actors, and reflect institutional values for improvement of distance education products and services.

- Leadership and top management should support the quality culture for change and transformation.
- The institution should not focus on inspection or assessment but build quality into its products and services from the start.
- The institution should engage every member in QA activities and in accomplishing the transformation.
- The institution should build a strong and continuous self-improvement system for all the members and systems.
- The institution should encourage collaborative teamwork, benchmarking innovative practices, exploring new ideas as well as quality performance.
- All stakeholder evaluations should be fed into the continuous quality improvement cycle.

(Adapted from Jung et al 2013)

**Figure 1.2: Functional link between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance**



*Adapted from “Manual for Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education (2008): Thailand*



# CHAPTER 2

## Policy Framework and Guidelines for Offering External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses by Universities/Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes

### 1. Background

- i. The External Degree Programmes (EDP), through Open and Distance modes of Learning (EDP-ODL), are considered universally to be a part of higher education and a way of widening access to higher education to the highest number of students possible of all age groups, at an affordable cost and on very flexible conditions. Moreover, the extent of use of provisions of EDP-ODL and the quality and relevance of qualifications acquired through these degree programmes are widely used as criteria for measuring the level of higher education in a country.
- ii. In Sri Lanka, EDP-ODL is also considered as a means of relieving the pressure on conventional universities, as their existing capacity cannot cater to the ever-increasing demand for university education. Thus, EDP-ODL provides a popular, affordable and flexible form of access to higher education for many young men and women who could not enter conventional universities. In addition, EDP-ODL also caters to the needs of adult learners who seek higher education for career advancement.
- iii. Through EDP-ODL, conventional universities are expected to offer selected academic study programmes leading to degrees that have high market demand and developed for the internal students, through a separate window, utilizing the physical and human resources put in place for the internal compartment in each university.
- iv. In the EDP-ODL window, the registered students are expected to engage in self-study using learning material provided in print and/or electronic forms on the prescribed courses in the chosen study programme. In addition, registered students have the freedom to seek tutoring for prescribed courses from a private tutoring service provider. Indeed, this is the popular practice, and there exists a variety of visible and lucrative private informal arrangements, which may range from individual tuition sessions conducted by individual instructors to informally-organized syndicates of instructors or formally established institutions.
- v. However, there have been justifiable and frequent criticisms regarding indiscretion in the selection and learning and evaluation processes and poor quality and relevance of degrees offered by EDPs. Recognizing the need to bring reforms into the sector, in March 2008, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had initiated a comprehensive study into the matter. The UGC at its 809<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2010 approved the findings and recommendations made by the report of the study and has decided to issue directives under i) Policy Framework, ii) Institutional Organizational Arrangement, iii) Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration, iv)

Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree Programmes, Curricula of Study Programmes and Courses, v) Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services, vi) Student Assessment and Evaluation, vii) Quality Assurance and viii) Collaboration to respective universities/higher educational institutions. Accordingly, the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 was issued to all universities/higher educational institutions for information and compliance.

- vi. In addition, the UGC has also issued a comprehensive document titled “**Handbook on Qualification Framework, Quality Assurance and Codes of Practice for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses**”, to facilitate formulation and conducting External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses as prescribed through the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010.
- vii. For the benefit of ETIs, the information provided through in the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 is reproduced. Please note that the annexures mentioned in the text are not included as the information provided in those annexes are of no importance to ETIs.

## **2. Policy Framework and Guidelines for offering External Degrees and Extension Programmes by Universities**

The UGC Circular 932 of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 detailed out the Policy Framework and Guidelines under the following 09 key aspects.

- i) Policy Framework
- ii) Institutional Organizational Arrangement
- iii) Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration
- iv) Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree Programmes, Curricula of Study Programmes and Courses
- v) Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services
- vi) Student Assessment and Evaluation
- vii) Guidelines for Extension Courses
- viii) Quality Assurance
- ix) Collaboration

### **2.1 Policy Framework**

- 2.1.1 The external degree programmes (EDP) through open and distance modes of learning (EDP-ODL) are considered as a way of widening the access to higher education to the highest number possible at an affordable cost, on flexible conditions and be accessible to students of all age groups.

- 2.1.2 Through the EDP-ODL system, conventional universities shall design and offer degrees, diploma and certificate courses, based on market surveys, to cater to current and emerging market demands. This is to ensure that the graduates and diploma and certificate holders produced through the EDP-ODL are highly employable.
- 2.1.3 EDP & EC must be fee-levying and operate without adding any burden to the mother university.
- 2.1.4 All programmes offered through EDP-ODL system must be guided by the following definition:
- Open and Distance Learning refers “to providing learning opportunities in an environment where there is a separation of teacher in time and/or place and learning is achieved through the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic media which requires specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses. Throughout the learning period, two-way communication is maintained allowing learners and tutors to interact with one another in occasional face-to-face meetings. Finally, the learning process and outcome are certified by means of evaluation by a specified institution or agency”.*
- (Source: Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes published by Commonwealth of Learning 2009)*
- 2.1.5 Admission Committee of the Senate in each university shall be responsible for selecting number of students based on the UGC guidelines. The total number of students accommodated into a degree programme, except under special circumstances should not exceed twice the number admitted into the internal compartment for a similar study programme
- 2.1.6 Subject to the guidelines issued by the UGC and the relevant University, EDP & EC must be kept open for foreign students.
- 2.1.7 As a means of adjuvant to material provided through the ODL mode, registered students are free to follow didactic learning through a State/Non-State Training institution of his or her choice.
- 2.1.8 Universities are encouraged to promote State/Non-State training institutions to obtain quality assurance and accreditation certification from a recognized authority.
- 2.1.9 Universities should make all attempts to explore the synergy of State/Non-State inter-institutional partnership in improving quality and relevance of degree and certificate/diploma programmes offered through the EDP-ODL system.

### **2.1.9.1 Role of Degree Awarding University**

- i) The state university is the degree awarding university. It determines and specifies the following:
- Programme structure and regulations of EDP & EC
  - Disciplines of study programmes and credit requirements
  - Curricula of study programmes and courses, course contents, essential readings and assessments
  - Examination procedure and awards

The State/non-state training institutions will conduct the training for registered candidates for the specific study programmes on the basis of the curricula designed by the degree awarding institutions.

- ii) The degree awarding institution is required to print and/or to publish, in electronic or on-line modes, all required information to registered candidates with regard to the following:
  - Specific study programmes and their structure
  - Regulations of EDPs & ECs
  - Disciplines of study programmes
  - Credit requirements, curricula of study programmes and courses (including foundation, core and supplementary courses)
  - Outline of course material of prescribed courses and recommended learning resources.
- iii) Further, the degree awarding institution is required to provide limited face-to-face instructions through 'day classes' at the beginning and middle of the course/programme while the balance is to be delivered through print and electronic media as course materials, computer-based and/or on-line teaching and learning material, tutorials and assignments.
- iv) The degree awarding institutions must not undertake programmes beyond their capacity and offer only programmes which have a high demand in the employment market. They should not attempt to cater to an external student population which is greater than twice the number of students in its internal compartment for a similar study programme.
- v) The internal lecturers who set question papers and/or mark answer scripts should not undertake teaching of the same set of students registered in private training institutions.

### **2.1.9.2 Role of the State/Non-state Training Institution**

- i) The State/Non-state Training Institution's role is limited to providing training to students registered as external candidates in a degree programme offered by the external arm of the degree awarding university, on the basis of the curriculum and course contents defined by the degree awarding institution.
- ii) The existing informal State-Non-state, inter-institutional partnership would be allowed to continue while taking steps to formalize the system in a gradual and non-compulsory manner.
- iii) In the proposed formalized State-Non-state, inter-institutional partnership;
  - The State/Non-state training institution must preferably seek recognition from the chosen university.
  - The University-recognized State/Non-state training institution is required to submit their institution and programme to periodic review by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation council of the UGC (UGC-QAAC)
  - The University-recognized State/Non-state training institutions;

- must have qualified staff to provide instructions on prescribed courses relevant to the particular degree programme,
  - must prepare the registered students for the specific study programmes leading to degree/diploma/certificate on the basis of the curricular defined by the university, and
  - must submit their academic teaching staff periodically for continuing education programmes conducted by the university concerned.
- 2.1.10 The examinations are solely conducted by the university separately from those of held for internal candidates. Degrees/certificate/diplomas are awarded to successful candidates by the degree awarding state university.
- 2.1.11 The degree certificate shall contain a statement indicating that the student has followed an external degree/certificate/diploma programme
- 2.1.12 Resources within the state universities should be optimally used when conducting EDP & EC programmes and should not compromise the quality of internal undergraduate programmes.
- 2.1.13 In the event such facilities not being available within a given University, steps must be taken to make use of facilities available in Regional Study Centres of Open University of Sri Lanka.

## **2.2 Institutional Organizational Arrangement at the UGC and University Level**

The UGC shall guide the proposed transformation of the defective and diverse EDP-ODL units and systems prevailing in universities into one which is uniform, efficient and productive. This will be done by placing EDP-ODL system under the close scrutiny of the UGC for a period of five years. During this phase, all universities shall transform the existing external examination units into fully fledged “Open ad Distance Learning Units” as prescribed by the UGC.

### **2.2.1 At the UGC Level**

- i) The UGC shall coordinate and continue to operate Interim Board for External Degrees (IBED) for a further period of five years. At the end of the 5 –year period, it could be replaced by a Standing Committee on External Degrees and Extension Courses (SC/ED&EC). Alternatively, the EDP-EC system after 5 years could be brought under the purview of the Standing Committee on Education and Distance Education.
- ii) UGC will establish an administrative unit i.e. Open and Distance Learning Coordinating Unit (ODLCU) within the UGC to provide administrative assistance to IBED. The ODLCU will have the services of Deputy/Senior Assistant Secretary who will oversee the functions of the EDP-ODL system

during the transformation phase. He or she will receive guidance from the Chairman of the IBED.

- iii) The IBED shall be chaired by Member of the Commission nominated by the UGC who will directly report to the Chairman/UGC.
- iv) The UGC shall appoint seven external members to the IBED from among those who have rendered distinguished service in educational, professional, commercial, industrial, scientific or administrative spheres. In addition, all the Directors/Coordinators of External Examinations Units in the Universities will become ex-officio members of the IBMED. The Deputy/Senior Assistant Secretary/Assistant Secretary of UGC who oversees the functions of ODLCU will functions as the secretary to the IBED.

### **Terms of Reference of IBED/ (SC/ED&EC)**

**The IBED or SC/ED&EC** shall assist and oversee the efficient and effective delivery of external degree programmes and extension courses services by the universities and higher educational institutes. The specific functions of the IBED are,

- Facilitate the transformation of the units/centers currently operating in universities/ institutes to fully fledged Open and Distance Learning Units/Centers in accordance with the framework and guidelines issued by the UGC.
- Facilitate curricular reforms of existing degree programmes in compliance with the guidelines issued by the UGC
- Review the proposals submitted by Universities/Institutes for establishment of Open and Distance Learning Units/Centers and curricular of EDP and ECs and submit recommendations to the UGC.
- Deliberate on issues, review the existing systems and on-going practices and submit recommendations to the UGC on policies regarding the EDPs & ECs on;
  - the type, structure, credit qualification framework and curricula of the study programmes,
  - intake and entry criteria,
  - method of selection, and
  - quality assurance and accreditation.

### **2.2.2 At the University Level**

- i) Each University shall have an Administrative Entity to handle all matters relating external degree programmes and extension courses.
- ii) Description of model structure for the proposed administrative entity is given in Section 1 of Annexure I. Universities could adopt the salient features in the model for reorganizing their existing “External Examination Division” or “Centre of Open and Distance Learning” or “Centre for Distance and Continuing Education” and submit to UGC for approval. The university has the option to label the ‘External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses Unit (EDECU)’ according to its defined mandate. The alternate names

proposed are Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) and Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE).

iii) The Centre /Unit shall be headed by a Director or Coordinator (depending on a Centre or Unit) appointed by the Council.

a) The Head of the EDECU shall be a teacher who shall be of the rank of Senior Lecturer Grade II or above.

b) He shall be an invited member of the Senate.

Fully functional EDECU could have well defined subdivisions, namely Division of Learning Resources, Division of Training and Division of Examination, each headed by a Coordinator. The required academic qualifications and experience required for consideration for appointment for these posts are same as for the post of Director. The job description for the Director and Coordinators are given in Section 4 of Annexure I.

iv) The Centre shall be governed by a Management Committee (MC) under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor with representatives from Faculties, Centers, Units, general administration and finance. The composition and Terms of Reference of the MC are given in Section 2 of Annexure I.

v) The Faculties, Centers and Units are expected to link with the Administrative Entity through Boards of Studies. The Composition and the Terms of Reference of Boards of Studies are given in Section 3 of Annexure I.

vi) The Centre or Unit must have minimum administrative, financial, secretarial and technical staff on the basis of the cadre determined and provided by the UGC. Any additional staff, as and when required, should be employed on contract or assignment basis with the approval of the Governing Council of the University utilizing earned funds from EDPs and ECs. The administrative aspects of the EDECU are given in Section 5 of Annexure I.

v) The cadre defined by the UGC for a fully functional unit is given in Section 6 of Annexure I. The university shall request cadre provision, as and when required, with a strong justification from the university. The UGC will issue circular instructions for recruitment for new cadre provisions approved by the UGC.

vi) The Centre shall be operated on self financing basis and the cost charged should include the cost for academic training management of the administrative and technical units, located centrally as well as regionally.

vii) Universities / Higher Educational Institution shall develop well documented procedures for operating a Centre or Unit for ODL programmes and for conducting external degree programmes as per policies determined by the UGC.

## **2.3 Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration for EDPs**

### **2.3.1 Admission Criteria**

2.3.1.1 Minimum qualification for entry to an EDP is as follows:

- (a) at least three passes in all three approved subjects in one sitting, and
- (b) a minimum mark of 30% for the Common General Paper.

2.3.1.2 Eligibility of students for consideration for the next stage of selection (as prescribed in Section 3.2) should be determined on the basis of rank order on average Z-Scores obtained by candidates at the GCE A/L Examination.

2.3.1.3 UGC will decide minimum Z-Score required to become eligible for consideration for various courses of study after finalizing the number of students that can be accommodated to each course of study.

2.3.1.4 Each university shall determine and advertise GCE (A/L) subject combinations for relevant courses of study for the respective EDP offered by the university. This information shall be published annually for the benefit of prospective applicants.

2.3.1.5 Any other qualification acceptable to the Senate of the relevant University may be considered for eligibility to be enrolled in a study programme. However, all such instances of applying alternative criteria should be adopted only with the concurrence of the UGC.

### **2.3.2 Methods of Selection and Registration**

2.3.2.1 To select the required number of candidates from among the eligible candidates, the University shall conduct an aptitude test and may also conduct a practical test and/or interview, depending on the degree programme.

2.3.2.2 The intake for each degree programme must be determined by the Senate of the University, in concurrence of the UGC and the Centre/Unit should not admit students in excess of the approved number.

2.3.2.3 The registered students are required to maintain annual registration to retain the studentship.

## **2.4 Programme Structure of EDPs: Types, Structure and Design of Curriculum**

### **2.4.1 Types of Study Programmes**

2.4.1.1 All universities must ensure that the graduates produced by the external degree programmes meet the human resource needs of the country. Therefore, the types of degree programmes must be determined on the basis of findings of employment market surveys.

2.4.1.2 The University shall once in 4 years, assess the quality of output, the mobility and employability of graduates and decide on the continuation of a study programme or refocus the degree programme through curricular reforms to make the study programme more relevant to changing market requirements.

## 2.4.2 Structure of Study Programme

2.4.2.1 All study programmes shall follow the semester-based course unit system and grade point average evaluation and marking scheme

2.4.2.2 The external degree may take the form of General or Special degree as determined by the relevant University.

2.4.2.3 All study programmes should conform into Credit Qualification Framework specified by the UGC based on the recommendations of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC (UGC-QAAC).

- i. The general degree should offer a minimum of 90 credits, to be completed within a period of 3 years (6 semesters of 20-week duration including examination period), with provision to extend up to a maximum of over 6 years, depending on the student's choice.
  - ii. The special or applied science degree should offer a minimum of 120 credits to be completed within a minimum period of 4 years (8 semesters of 20-week duration including examinations) with provision to extend maximum of 8 years, depending on the student's choice.
  - iii. One credit hour is equivalent to 30 hours of contact time (face to face instructions, tutorials lab-classes, if any, on-line or computer-based learning, independent learning and examination). If the student registers for maximum of 15 credits per semester in order to complete the degree programme in six semesters he/she requires 450 hours of study and examination time during a 20 week semester.
  - iv. However, the student has the option of following the course with a lesser work load. Such a student requires to register for a minimum work load of 8 credits per semester (minimum 2 courses). This should consist of at least one core and one supplementary/optional course per semester. Such a student requires a minimum number of 225-250 study hours per semester and would have to forgo the grace period and hence requires to complete the programme within six years.
- 2.4.2.4 All study programmes should follow the following generic structure, where programme should be offered in 3 or 4 levels depending on 3- or 4-year degree programme. The study programme shall consist of a) Foundation Courses, b) Core Courses in principle subject area/s, and c) Supplementary Courses in subjects areas of emerging importance.

**Foundation Courses** – Compulsory for all students and should consist minimum of 20% the study programme. The list of courses may include English Language, Computer Applications, Introduction to Basic Science and Mathematics, and Career Guidance.

**Core Courses:** Optional and compulsory courses should consist minimum of 65% the study programme and would be made available from

a basket of choices. The compulsory courses are defined by the study programme for the general or special degree.

**Supplementary Courses:** These courses should consist minimum of 15% the study programme and will supplement the study programme, based on the students' choice. This basket may include courses that would give a competitive edge in the employment market. The available choice of courses may change with changing times and include introductory courses in Economics, Business Management, Human Resource Management, Education Technology, etc.

### 2.4.3 Design of Curriculum

2.4.3.1 The curriculum specified for the study programme must be developed on the basis of a predetermined graduate profile. This has to be developed by the Department / Faculty.

2.4.3.2 Once the ideal graduate profile is defined, the curriculum must include courses that would facilitate the training of such graduates, adhering to the structure specified in **Section 2.4.2**.

2.4.3.3 Once the courses are determined, the development of course contents must precede the defining of intended learning outcomes

2.4.3.4 Based on the intended learning outcome of the course, the detailed course contents must be defined along with and methods of teaching and learning.

2.4.3.5 Sources of information, supplementary reading material must be clearly defined.

2.4.3.6 Finally, the evaluation methods and specific weightage given for each component must be spelt out clearly.

### 2.4.4 Credit Transfer

2.4.4.1 Within University - It is recommended to explore the possibility of introducing credit transfer schemes to EDPs, enabling the students to claim credits earned in internal or other external degree programmes of the same university

2.4.4.2 Between Universities - Credit transfers related to External Degrees between the Universities should be encouraged

## 2.5 Programme Delivery and Learner Support for EDPs

2.5.1 All registered students should be provided with an orientation programme in the form of a 'day class' at the beginning of the programme (first week of Semester I of the programme) and at the beginning of every semester thereafter. This orientation should provide information about the programme, courses offered, teaching, learning and assessment methods, etc.

- 2.5.2 In this 'day class' all the students must be provided with a list of learning material, available sources and information as regard to computer-based learning material available to them
- 2.5.3 Study material should be made available using innovative technology (regular educational TV programmes, on-line learning sessions, interactive multimedia CDs, video conferencing, etc.).
- 2.5.4 Face-to-face discussions/seminars and other relevant activities should be considered as essential components of the EDPs.
- 2.5.5 Where practicals are considered to be an integral part of an EDP, it is imperative that such practical classes are conducted in a manner similar to those in the internal degree programmes.
- 2.5.6 Wherever hands-on experience in a subject area is considered necessary, providing industrial placement (Apprentice Training) should be explored in both public and private sector institutions.
- 2.5.7 In addition to the instructional sessions and materials provided by the University, the students are free to follow instructional training in a private institution of their choice.

## **2.6 Student Assessment and Evaluation for EDPs**

### **2.6.1 Assessment System**

The assessment system should consist of formative and summative components. Final evaluation should be a combination of summative and formative assessments

- A) Formative assessments- up to 40%
  - i) Continuous assessments (such as Quizzes, Discussion forums, Take home assignments and projects should be introduced)
  - ii) Completion of continuous assessment must be made mandatory to sit the final examination
  - iii) Minimum percentage of marks should be compulsory to proceed to the final examination
- B) Summative Assessment (*Final Examination/end-semester/end of the year examination*) - Minimum should be 60% of total marks

### **2.6.2 Appointment of Examiners**

2.6.2.1 Board of Examiners should be appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the EDECU and the relevant Faculty Board for each examination consisting of Chief Examiner and other Examiners for setting questions and other tests, scrutinizing questions and question papers and other tests, moderating and invigilating examinations and other tests and marking examination papers and evaluating other tests, as appropriate.

2.6.2.2 Appointment criteria shall include the following;

- i) No person engaged in conducting private classes/ tuition to External Degree students should be appointed as Examiners.
- ii) A statement must be obtained from each Examiner declaring their non-involvement in the teaching of External Degree students
- iii) Qualifications of the Examiners must be disclosed in the information presented to the approving authority (Faculty Board/Senate/Council).

### **2.6.3 Marking of Scripts**

- 2.6.3.1 Marking shall be either individual or conference marking depending on the number of answer scripts to be scrutinized. Conference marking is considered better and should be given first preference in view of the need for releasing results early.
- 2.6.3.2 Chief/Setting Examiner shall ensure that the model answers and marking scheme for the entire question paper is handed in together with the question paper.
- 2.6.3.3 The number of answer scripts to be marked by each examiner shall be subject to the guidelines to be drawn by the EDECU.
- 2.6.3.4 As a policy, second marking shall not be practiced. However, it is recommended to carryout random marking of best and worst answer scripts by an Examiner nominated by the Chief Examiner. In the event of a significant discrepancy in marks the matter should be referred to the Board of Examiners for corrective action.

### **2.7 Guidelines for Extension Courses**

- 2.7.1 Extension courses of the ODL system refer to both certificate level and diploma level programs to be offered using a blended mode delivery, namely use of both face to face instructions and self-learning using printed learning material complemented by on-line and computer-based learning resources.
- 2.7.2 Curricula of programmes and courses/modules for certificate level and diploma level programs via the ODL system should be developed under the course unit system, and should essentially include an assessment/examination component by the university in compliance with standards and norms issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.
- 2.7.3 Programmes, courses/modules, course/module contents and admission criteria for certificate and diploma courses shall be proposed by the Board of the Study of Department/Faculty/Centre, in accordance with guidelines issued by the university and in compliance with standards and norms issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.
- 2.7.4 Selection of candidates for certificate/diploma courses should be based on the university approved criteria prepared and adopted according to guidelines issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.

## **2.8 Quality Assurance**

### **2.8.1 Policy for Quality Assurance (QA)**

- 2.8.1.1 It will be the responsibility of the UGC to ensure Quality Assurance of the EDPs in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC.
- 2.8.1.2 Tools necessary for QA such as Standards and Performance Indicators will be developed for EDP-ODL system.
- 2.8.1.3 Guidelines regarding the frequency of quality assurance reviews to be conducted, procedures, regulations and guidelines for monitoring, evaluating and implementing procedures for QA will be established
- 2.8.1.4 Internal QA processes will articulate the external review processes as laid down by the QA Council of the UGC.
- 2.8.1.5 Through the use of Standards and Performance Indicators, Universities and Higher Educational Institutes offering External Degree Programmes will be encouraged to practice self assessments for continuous improvements and quality sustenance.

## **2.9 Collaborations**

- 2.9.1 Collaboration with other state and private institutions/ organizations in conducting EDP & EC is encouraged, as it ensures optimal utilization of physical, technological, intellectual and human resources available in the country to improve the quality of the system
- 2.9.2 Wherever possible, collaborative relationships between Departments/ Faculties/ Universities/ other Institutions (National and International) should be established for;
  - i. Sharing of developed course material
  - ii. Jointly developing new courses/ programmes
  - iii. Sharing facilities such as laboratories, learning centres, IT centres, facilities at the Open University of Sri Lanka, National Online Distance Education Services (NODES) available through the Ministry of Higher Education
  - iv. Jointly delivering programmes
- 2.9.3 Rules, regulations, MOUs, TORs etc. necessary for such collaborations to be drawn up by the respective institutions in compliance with guidelines issued by the UGC.



## PART II

# Criteria, Best Practices and Standards for Accreditation

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It has been well recognized and documented by several educationists that ODL has conceptual, methodological, pedagogical and organizational differences from traditional teacher-centered, face-to-face mode, and these differences are need to be recognized and addressed in the quality assurance procedures. Thus, although ODL is treated the same as face-to-face mode in principle and level of rigor in the quality review processes, its unique characteristics are recognized in the methods used for reviews.

These ‘Criteria’, ‘Best Practices’ and ‘Standards’ are ‘home grown’ derived by customizing criteria, the best practices and standards prescribed by the manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programme and Extension Courses offered by Universities.

**Chapter 3** Experiences of benchmark institutions in the field of ODL have contributed to the broad consensus as to what contributes to best practices/ processes in ODL. This chapter gives brief description of best practices and/or processes with respect to the six ‘Criteria’ that could contribute to the success in attaining quality learning in the ETIs. The best practices presented here are not exhaustive. They are only representative of the different criteria standards given in this manual.

In **Chapter 4** these best practices are looked at in terms of ‘Standards’ in the ODL context as they relate to six ‘Key Areas’ or ‘Criteria’. In order to minimize subjectivity in review/peer assessment and to facilitate the use of the ‘Standards’ in assessments, example of sources of evidence and score guide are provided.



# CHAPTER 3

## Criteria and Best Practices

Once the institution has a clear policy on quality assurance it must then identify the “Key Areas” or “Criteria” which reflect particular component of an ETI on operation or salient features of the instructional training, guidance and assessment offered by ETI to the registered students of the EDP. For each of the six criteria quality principles for quality assurance are stated as “Best Practices”.

In the context of quality assurance of ETIs, whether state or non-state, two broad elements have been identified,

- a) Organizational Aspects, and
- b) Instructional Training Aspects

The two elements are further characterized by defining six criteria as listed below:

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>Organizational Aspects</b>	Governance & management
	Physical resources and educational environment
	Human resources and competencies
<b>Instructional Training Aspects.</b>	Learning resources design and development
	Programme delivery and assessment
	Learner support services

### Best Practices

Best Practices are quality enhancing academic/administrative/infrastructural strategies adopted by higher educational institutions. These may be looked upon as sign posts that lead towards the goal of excellence. Best practices should become part of the working culture of everyone in the ETIs. The overall purpose and intent of the best practices can be summarized as follows:

- An understanding of the fundamentals that lead to success;
- Focus on continuous improvement efforts;
- Management of the overall change process to close the gap between an existing practice and that of the best.

These ‘Criteria’ and ‘Best Practices’ are ‘home-grown’ and derived by customizing the criteria and best practices prescribed by **the Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programme and Extension Courses Offered by Universities.**

## **Criterion 1: Governance and Management**

- Institution (ETI) is established and operated under a properly constituted legal framework such as an Act passed by the Parliament or Ordinance passed by a statutory body, and gazetted subsequently or under the registration obtained from the Registrar of Companies with clearly defined mandate to function as an educational enterprise.
- Institution (ETI) is managed under the rules, regulations and guidelines enacted through an Act passed in the Parliament or Ordinance approved by a statutory body and guided by guidelines and procedures prescribed by the authorized statutory body or in the case of a company by the Articles of the Association and by- laws.
- Institution (ETI) has proper organizational structure, governance and management systems, and adequate academic and financial capacity in place to function as an educational training institution and has put in place a mechanism for reappraisal of plans and budgets in the light of performance and changes in circumstances.
- The institution (ETI) is fully aware of the guidelines prescribed by the UGC for state universities in designing and offering the External Degree programs and extension courses, through the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 and the UGC Handbook on External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses (UGC, 2010), particularly under the following topics:
  - Policy Framework
  - Institutional Organizational Arrangement
  - Admission Criteria
  - Programme Structure
  - Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services
  - Student Assessment and Evaluation
  - Quality Assurance
  - Collaboration.
- Institution (ETI) is committed to function as an educational training institution and as a reliable partner to contribute to EDPs offered through ODL mode by the state universities. It is manifested in the form of;

- **Objects** – institutional mission statements, aims and objectives, recognition of importance of learning not teaching as a quality measure, QA policies and procedures which provide a direction and a path for the staff, etc.
- **Practices** – adherence to articles of the constitution, by-laws of the organization and manual of procedures, and their meticulous implementation, careful staff selection, staff sensitization and capacity building programmes for staff, and efficient monitoring systems including quality audit practices.
- **Values** – commitment to satisfy the learners expectations, assist learners towards satisfactory progression in the courses and programmes, and fairness in setting student fees and zero tolerance for unethical conduct and behavior.
- Formal collaborative relationships is in place with the degree awarding state universities to share the educational information material (i.e. curricula, detailed course syllabi, learning guides and material, etc.), expertise, infrastructure, human resources, services and institutional culture.
- Institution (ETI) provides clear information about itself, its programmes and courses, to all stakeholders both in print and via its website. The publications are available in the form of handbooks / prospectuses / guidebooks, etc., which clearly list and describe in details of the EDPs to which the instructional training is offered, and courses including the delivery system used, pre-requisites for enrollment, expected learning outcomes, completion requirements, student support services and any other requirements. These publications are disseminated and communicated to students prior to registration. Each applicant submitted for enrollment is fully informed as to the nature of the training provided and made to understand the responsibilities and demands of the programme.
- Institutional management and administration effectively oversees the instructional training provided to registered students for EDP-ODL programmes to ensure that they are in alignment with the knowledge and competencies stated by the graduate profiles, curricula blueprints and course blueprints that have been designed by degree awarding universities.
- An appropriately designed, developed and well maintained student record system is put in place and the institution ensures the reliability, confidentiality, safety and security of student information and student financial transactions.
- Institution (ETI) has an adequate and a transparent mechanism for recruitment, particularly the tutoring staff and technical staff and concern for their continued advancement in acquiring the required competencies to become efficient tutors and technical staff and also to provide efficient and effective learner support services.
- Performance appraisal system is in place for staff with the aim of identifying training needs and then providing continuing education programmes for improving their commitment and performance.

- Institution (ETI) has fair expeditious grievance redress mechanisms at all levels.
- A quality culture is nurtured within the institution (ETI) and this driven through the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system. Internal QA processes are interconnected with external QA processes. There is a clear cycle of planning, development, documentation, reporting, follow-up action, and review of policies and procedures, if required within the institution.

## **Criterion 2: Physical Resources and Educational Environment**

- Institution (ETI) provides and maintains sufficient and appropriate facilities (*i.e. building space to house lecture and tutorial rooms and common amenities, learning resource units, equipment, financial and human resources, etc.*) to support instructional training for EDPs and other training programmes and these resources are reflected in the long-term plans and budget of the institution.
- Institution (ETI) provides adequate facilities for teaching and training such as a) classrooms fitted with necessary teaching aids (*such as chalkboards, magi boards, multimedia projectors, computers and screens, etc.*), b) laboratories and c) learning resources such as a library and computer facility which are manned by experienced support personnel.
- Institution (ETI) provides learner support services through in-house educational resource centers/units such as library and ICT facility that are manned by tutoring, technical and support staff, and house all materials that support learners' educational experience such as relevant and current texts, multimedia and/or electronic resources which are made readily accessible to learners. Further, effective mechanism is in place for maintenance and optimizing use of resources for effective teaching learning process.
- Adequate and sufficiently qualified and skilled tutoring, administrative, technical staff are employed to provide learner support services as and when the students are in need of guidance.
- Institution's (ETIs) budget includes adequate provision for maintenance of facilities and continuous updating of appropriate technology used in the provision of learner support services and resources.
- Institution (ETI) evaluates the adequacy and accessibility of the resources and services for learners on an on-going basis to make improvements.

### **Criterion 3: Human resources and competencies of tutoring staff**

- Institution (ETI) has put in place an appropriate recruitment procedure for the recruitment of suitable personnel for teaching, tutoring, technical and management staff.
- Institution (ETI) has adequate and sufficiently qualified and skilled tutoring, administrative, technical staff on long-term, fulltime and part-time basis and contractual basis in appropriate proportions to ensure the instructional training provided is delivered by experienced staff.
- An effective human resource development programme is in place to train, re-train and motivate teaching and tutoring staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to the application of appropriate new technologies in teaching and learning.
- Teaching and tutoring and technical staff are fully aware of modern teaching and training methods and they indeed have adopted appropriate tools and techniques in conducting instructional training.
- Teaching and tutoring and technical staff are competent in providing learner support and provide counseling for students who are in need of additional guidance.
- Performance of teachers and tutoring staff is monitored through peer reviews and student feedback and confidential reports are provided to them for self-correction.

### **Criterion 4: Learning resources design and development**

- The study programmes types, and curricula of respective study programmes offered by the institute are in close alignment with the study programmes and curricula prescribed by the Degree Awarding Universities which have been developed according to the guidelines prescribed by the UGC Circular No. 932 and UGC Handbook on External Degree Programs and Extension Courses.
- Each study programme offered by ETI has a programme team and organizer/coordinator to co-ordinate the design and development of course contents as specified by the curricula of respective degree programmes by Degree Awarding Universities.
- Detailed course contents for each course offered for a study programme are developed in alignment with the curricula and course blue prints provided by the degree-awarding university.

- Educational material for the courses offered in a given semester is printed and issued to all registered students at the commencement of each semester. This material is also available in electronic forms as well.
- “Course Team” approach is followed in design, development and delivery course material. Team includes faculty who play an important role in developing the content and overseeing the teaching and learning material development – such as programme and instructional designers, graphic designers, content editors, language editors, media developers, tutorial and technical staff whose roles and responsibilities are clearly specified before commencement of the tasks. Further, the institution assigns responsibility for assuring the quality of the course materials at various levels/stages of production and delivery to appropriate committees.
- The institution (ETI) provides prior training and necessary inputs to the staff involved in instructional design and development. Standard formats/templates for instructional design and development, are in place and are used by the ‘course team’ for effective and efficient design and development of teaching and learning material.
- Course design for prescribed courses meets the criteria of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating, self-evaluative and self-learning. It also provides following specifications of respective courses – course aim/objectives, ILOs, course outline, teaching and training methods, assessment methods and essential and recommended readings.
- Courses prescribed for study programmes are designed based on learner-centred principles with appropriate teaching learning strategies, teaching methods, learner-centered activities and assessment strategies. Use of appropriate ICT tools, and contact sessions determined as part of the course design process and are clearly stated in the course guide book, and communicated and discussed with learners.
- Each individual course has a designated number of study hours for which the students have to engage such as review of study guides, reading assignments, self-learning exercises, tutorials, lab work, project work, and preparation and sitting for examinations.
- Individual course design integrates assessment methods to teaching and learning strategy to enable students to achieve stated learning outcomes.
- Students are provided with details of the relevant study programme (Study Programme Package) which includes study programme description including curriculum of the study programme which spells out graduate competencies and intended learning outcomes, curriculum layout which provides the spread of the courses over the 3-4 year degree programme, courses prescribed (*i.e. foundation, core, optional, supplementary, etc., assessment /examination methods*) and also for each course, the course specification or syllabus (*i.e. course title, credit hours objectives, ILOs, synopsis of the course, course outline, assessment methods, teaching*

*and learning strategies, and essential and recommended readings*). It must also prescribe requirements to be fulfilled for successful completion of the study programme and annual calendar of activities. This is made available both off-line and online to all registered students, prior to commencement of the programme.

## **Criterion 5: Programme Delivery and Assessment**

- Institution (ETI) has academic calendar designed in close alignment with academic calendar, semesters and examination set out by the degree awarding university. This is given in print form to all registered students and posted in the web.
- Institution (ETI) adheres to the time tables sets out at the commencement of the academic year and semester.
- Institution (ETI) delivers the learning instructions and exercises in accordance with the curricula and course syllabi prescribed by the degree awarding university.
- Institution (ETI) pays due recognition to the assessments as the key motivator to learning and makes it as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, with continuous formative and summative assessments with timely provision of feedback thus contributing to a supportive and rigorous learning environment throughout the course of study.
- A procedure is in place for selection and orientation of examiners on an approved marking scheme to ensure consistency of assessment and marking.
- Mechanisms are in place for monitoring assessment practices and their impact on student learning experiences and outcomes.
- Assessment/examination results are documented and communicated without delay to all learners adhering to the scheduled timelines.
- Accurate record keeping of learner's attainments, which includes results/ marks of individual courses and final awards, is maintained and procedures are in place to ensure the confidentiality and security of records.
- Institution (ETI) has a policy and mechanism to regularly monitor student progress throughout training process (*throughout the study programme and individual courses*) to provide managers with data on which they could decide whether they need to intervene with the training provided so as to avert problems.

## Criterion 6: Learner support Services and progression

- Learner support system (*i.e. comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personnel counseling, online help, etc.*) using a range of media is available throughout the study period for registered students. Learner support system targets at ensuring retention and providing preventative support.
- Potential delivery strategies (*i.e. through print, audio-video tapes, radio and TV, teleconferencing, computer-based instructions, computer conferencing, online learning, etc.*) are identified based upon nature and needs of learners, learning objectives and instructional methods in the context of the economic and logistical feasibility of different options.
- Institutional handbook, study programme prospectuses, course guides and other publications clearly describe study programmes and courses, including entry requirements, prior knowledge and skills required for pursuing the programme/course, expected learning outcomes, course outlines or synopses, essential and recommended readings, learner support services, assessment information, completion requirements, resource implications, time schedules and access to media and technology. This information is clearly specified prior to entry to enable prospective students to make an informed choice regarding programmes/courses that are made available to registered students.
- The institution (ETI) documents through formal institutional surveys to ensure that learners are satisfied with the instructional and educational courses and services provided (*whether course materials were current and comprehensive, whether grading methods and procedures were prompt and fair, and whether the tutoring staff members have performed adequately*).
- Institution (ETI) has formal and informal mechanisms to obtain feedback from learners on efficiency and effectiveness of its processes, and the results and findings are used in the decision making process and planning of its programmes.
- Institution (ETI) establishes standards/ benchmarks for enrollment, student progression and retention, graduation and employment rates and then regularly undertakes assessments on such parameters and publicizes the results for the information of the students & public.

# CHAPTER 4

## Standards for Accreditation

Each of the six criteria listed in Chapter 3 is expanded into number of specific “Standards”. The “Standards” are derived from best practices, reflecting the best practices in terms of measurable parameters. “Standards” are usually established by an authority (as a rule or principle) or by consent of key stakeholders as a basis of comparison, and adopted formally for assessment and comparison. “Standards” are a rigid set of guidelines that define exactly how a task should be carried out and completed. Generally there is not much room for variance.

In this chapter general principles of each criterion are given as “Scope” at the top of each “Criterion”. To facilitate the application and use of “Standards” in external/internal quality assurance, examples of sources of evidence, a score guide on a 4-point scale with descriptors against each standard are given. During the quality assessment review, the reviewers will examine the degree of compliance by the ETI with recommended “best practices” and the degree to which the “standards” or “bench marks” have been achieved.

In general, standards in education are subject to continued re-interpretation and re-negotiation between stakeholders. This means that the review of the standards themselves at regular intervals needs to be part of the process for assuring quality.

### **Criterion 1: Governance and Management**

Scope: Institution is established and operated under a properly constituted legal framework such as an Act passed by the Parliament or Ordinance passed by a statutory body or under the registration obtained from the Registrar of Companies with clearly defined mandate to function as an educational enterprise. The legitimacy of the external training institution to engage in a higher educational enterprise is engrained in the constitution on which the institution is legally established. Organizational aspect and management procedures are formulated based on standard management principles and procedures ensuring accountability, continuity, and transparency. The alliance with National Policy Framework and Guidelines issued by the regulatory body, the UGC is to be demonstrated by integrating the relevant aspects within the governance and management of the institution. The capacity of the external training institution to conduct instructional training for the academic study programmes offered by state universities is manifested in institutional administrative policies and procedures, and availability of appropriately qualified personnel, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities, financial stability and resources adequacy for the proper operation of the institution.

The focus of this Criterion is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.1 Institution (ETI) is established and operated under a properly constituted legal framework such as an Act passed by the Parliament or Ordinance passed by a statutory body or under the registration obtained from the Registrar of Companies with clearly defined mandate to function as an educational enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act passed by the Parliament or</li> <li>• Ordinance passed by the regulatory body or</li> <li>• Constitution/Articles of Association approved by the Registrar of Companies</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
1.2 Institution (ETI) is managed under the laws, rules & regulations enacted through an Act passed in the Parliament or Ordinance approved by an statutory and guided by guidelines and procedures prescribed by an statutory body or in the case of a company under a written Articles of Association and by- laws.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishments Code issued by the regulatory body or</li> <li>• By-laws approved by the Board of Management of the Institution</li> <li>• Manual of Procedures</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
1.3 Institution (ETI) has proper organizational structure, and adequate management, administrative, academic and financial capacity and procedures in place to function as an educational training institution and a mechanism for reappraisal of plans and budgets in the light of performance and changes in circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organogram with description powers, authorities and duties vested for each branch/division and officers</li> <li>• Circular and establishment letters issued by the regulatory body and/or Manual of Procedures approved by the Board of Management</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
1.4 The institution (ETI) is fully aware of, and committed to adhere to the guidelines prescribed by the UGC to state universities in designing and offering the External Degrees, through the (through its Circular No. 932 of 10th October 2014 & "Handbook on External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses").	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of possessing the UGC Circular No. 932 and UGC Handbook on External degrees and Extension Courses</li> <li>• Evidence of adoption of the guidelines prescribed by the UGC through its Circular No. 932 and accompanied handbook</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Strategic/Cooperate Plan</li> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> </ul>	
1.5 Institution (ETI) is committed to function as an educational training institution and reliable partner of DAU and contribute to EDPs offered through ODL mode by the state universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles of Association &amp; By Laws</li> <li>• Institutional Strategic/Cooperate Plan</li> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Internal Circulars</li> <li>• Manual of Procedures</li> <li>• Minutes of Meetings of the Board of Management and Committees</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○</p>
1.6 Formal collaborative relationships is in place with the degree awarding state universities to share the educational information material (i.e. curricula of EDPs, detailed course syllabi, learning guides and material, etc.), expertise, infrastructure, human resources, services and institutional culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed Memorandum of Understanding and/or Agreement of Partnership between the degree-awarding university and ETI</li> <li>• Possession of Curricula and syllabi of study programmes to which the instructional training is offered</li> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Course material and study guides</li> <li>• Academic calendar and time tables</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○</p>
1.7 Institution (ETI) provides clear information about itself, its programmes and courses, to all stakeholders both in print and via its website. The publication are available in the form of handbooks/ prospectuses /guidebooks etc. which clearly list and describe in detail the EDPs to which the instructional training is offered, and courses including the delivery system used, pre- requisites for enrollment, expected learning outcomes, completion requirements, student support services and any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Course material and study guides</li> <li>• Academic calendar and time tables</li> <li>• Availability of the above documents in print and electronic modes</li> <li>• Staff and student - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b></p> <p>○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>other requirements. These publications are disseminated and communicated to students prior to registration. Each applicant submitted for enrollment is fully informed as to the nature of the training provided and made to understand the responsibilities and demands of the programme.</p>										
<p>1.8 Institutional management and administration effectively oversees the instructional training provided to registered students for EDP-ODL programmes to ensure that they are in alignment with the knowledge and competencies stated by the graduate profiles, curriculum blueprint and course blueprints that have been designed by degree awarding universities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparison between Curricula and syllabi of study programmes offered by degree awarding institution and courses and course material offered by the ETI</li> <li>• Availability of above document in print and electronic forms to students as a handbook/prospectus</li> <li>• Students – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	○	○	○	○
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○	○	○	○							
<p>1.9 An appropriately designed, developed and well maintained student record system is put in place and the institution ensures the reliability, privacy, safety and security of student information and student financial transactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Records of student information - registration, progression, examinations and graduation</li> <li>• Electronic database or MIS</li> <li>• Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	○	○	○	○
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<p>1.10 Institution (ETI) has an adequate and a transparent mechanism for recruitment, particularly the tutoring staff and technical staff and concern for their continued advancement in acquiring the required competencies to become efficient tutors and technical staff and also to provide efficient and effective learner support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual of procedures for recruitment</li> <li>• Schemes of recruitment and career advancement</li> <li>• Evidence of continuing education programmes provided</li> <li>• Academic, tutoring and support staff – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	○	○	○	○
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○	○	○	○							
<p>1.11 Performance appraisal system is in place for staff with the aim of identifying training needs and then providing continuing education programmes for improving motivation and performance. And</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual of Procedures</li> <li>• Documented policy on grievance redress mechanism for academic, tutoring and support staff</li> </ul>	<table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td><b>0</b></td> <td><b>1</b></td> <td><b>2</b></td> <td><b>3</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> <td>○</td> </tr> </table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	○	○	○	○
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<p>also the institution has put in place a grievance redress mechanisms at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	
<p>1.12 A quality culture is nurtured within the institution and is driven through the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system. Internal QA processes are interconnected with external QA processes. There is a clear cycle of planning, development, documentation, reporting, follow-up action, and review of policies and procedures, if required within the institution.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of possessing the UGC Manual of Best Practices and Standards for ETIs</li> <li>• IQA Manual of the Institution</li> <li>• Evidence of functional IQA system –Names and titles of members of IQA Committee, Minutes of the IQA Meetings, etc.</li> <li>• Minutes of Board of Management Meetings</li> <li>• Staff - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b>  ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

## Criterion 2: Physical Resources and Educational Environment

Scope: The institution (ETI) has adequate and appropriate facilities to conduct quality instructional training for students registered for external degrees, based on the curricula and syllabi prescribed by the degree awarding university/HEI. Institution's operational and future financial plans recognize and support adequacy, appropriateness and optimal use of facilities including adoption of new technologies for teaching-learning, management and administration.

The focus of this Criterion is captured in the following 'Standards':

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
2.1 Institution (ETI) provides and maintains sufficient and appropriate facilities ( <i>i.e. infrastructure, equipment, financial and human resources</i> ) to support instructional training for EDP and other training programmes and these are reflected in the long term plans and budget of the institution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of physical facility with adequate space and resources to function as an external training institution of EDPs</li> <li>• Building plan and maintenance schedules</li> <li>• Institutional strategic plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
2.2 Institution (ETI) provides adequate facilities for teaching and training such as a) classrooms fitted with necessary teaching aids ( <i>such as chalkboards, magi boards, multimedia projectors, computers and screens, etc.</i> ), b) laboratories and c) learning resources such as a library and computer facility which are manned by experienced support personnel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of teaching facilities. and teaching aids and tools</li> <li>• Availability learning resource centers – library/reading rooms, computer unit, laboratories, etc.</li> <li>• Availability of staff assigned for educational resource centers/units</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
2.3 Institution (ETI) provides learner support services through in-house educational resource centers/units such as library and ICT facility that are manned by tutoring, technical and support staff, and house all materials that support learners' educational experience such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of teaching facilities. aids and tools</li> <li>• Availability learning resource centers – library/reading rooms, computer unit, laboratories, etc.</li> <li>• Availability of staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>relevant and current texts, multimedia and/or electronic resources which are made readily accessible to learners. Further, effective mechanism is in place for</p>	<p>assigned for educational resource centers/units</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inventory of Resources stocked in resource centers</li> <li>• Availability of operational hours of centers and user guides</li> <li>• Maintenance of record on the extent of utilization of resource centers/units</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	
<p>2.4 Adequate and sufficiently qualified and skilled tutoring, administrative, technical staff are employed to provide learner support services as and when the students are in need of guidance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff profile including qualifications and competencies</li> <li>• Staff and students – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>2.5 Institution’s budget includes adequate provision for maintaining and continuous updating of appropriate technologies used in provision of learner support services and resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual budgets</li> <li>• Annual financial reports</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>2.6 Institution (ETI) evaluates the adequacy and accessibility of the resources and services for learners on an on-going basis to make improvements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report of feedbacks obtained</li> <li>• Staff and students – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

### Criterion 3: Human Resources and Required Competencies

Scope: The institution (ETI) has put in place sufficient human resources for course design and development, preparation of educational resources, and conducting instructional training, provide learner support services and guidance and assessment. The institution adopts a proper recruitment procedures based on well-developed scheme of recruitment and operates with sufficient number of teaching staff is on long-term employment contract. The staff is provided with regular training on required competencies – such as lesson planning, preparation of learning resources in print and electronic forms, conducting teaching and training, provision of student guidance and counseling, and their performances are regularly reviewed through peer evaluation and through students’ feedback.

Focus of this criterion is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

<b>Standards</b>	<b>Sources of Evidence</b>	<b>Score guide</b> 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
3.1 Institution (ETI) has put in place an appropriate recruitment procedure for the recruitment of suitable personnel for teaching, tutoring, technical and management staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual of procedures</li> <li>• Schemes of recruitment</li> <li>• Profile of existing staff</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
3.2 Institution (ETI) has adequate and sufficiently qualified and skilled tutoring, administrative, technical staff on long-term, fulltime and part-time basis and contractual basis in appropriate proportions to ensure the instructional training provided is delivered by experienced staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current human resource profile</li> <li>• Qualification profile of individual staff</li> <li>• Students and staff - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
3.3 An effective human resource development system is in place to train, re-train and motivate teaching and tutoring staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to the application of appropriate new technologies in teaching and learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports on annual professional development/continuing education programmes conducted</li> <li>• Records of participation</li> <li>• Institutional budget allocation for staff development</li> <li>• Minutes of the CPD Programme Committee</li> <li>• Students and staff – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>

<p>3.4 Teaching and tutoring and technical staff are fully aware of modern teaching and training methods and they indeed adopt appropriate tool and techniques in conducting instructional training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types of teaching training/learning methods adopted</li> <li>• Records of participation in CPD programmes</li> <li>• Extent of use of blended modes of training- conventional, ODL, ICT-based methods</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Students– through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
<p>3.5 Teaching and tutoring and technical staff is competent in providing learner support and provide academic counseling for students in need of additional guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of learner - support services, minutes of coordinating meetings, etc.</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>
<p>3.6 Performance of teachers and tutoring staff is monitored through peer reviews and student feedback and confidential reports are provided to them for self- correction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of performance evaluation</li> <li>• Records of past evaluations conducted and confidential reports issued to staff</li> <li>• Staff &amp; students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>0   1   2   3</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">○   ○   ○   ○</p>

## Criterion 4: Learning Resources Design and Development

Scope: Institution has fully adopted the curricula and syllabi prescribed by degree awarding universities, and hence, the role of the external training institution is limited to designing of course material, lessons, practicals, and preparation of learning resources (i.e.. printed material such course guides, handouts, detailed lecture notes, computer-based learning material, on-line learning material, etc.) and conducting training accordingly. During the course design, adequate emphasis is given in promoting learner-centered learning. Preparation of learning resources is done through team approach with participation subject matter specialists, instructional designers, graphic designers, content editors, language editors, media developers, tutorial and technical staff whose roles and responsibilities are clearly specified before commencement of the tasks.

Focus of this criterion is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
4.1 Detailed course contents for each course offered for a study programme are developed in alignment with the curricula and course blue prints provided by the degree-awarding university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possession of curricula and syllabi prescribed by DAU</li> <li>• Comparison of the courses and course material offered by ETI and curricula and syllabi prescribed by DAU</li> <li>• Handbook of the Institution</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Staff &amp; students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
4.2 Educational material for the courses offered in a given semester is printed and issued to all registered students at the commencement of each semester. This material is also available in electronic forms as well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Course material</li> <li>• Study guides</li> <li>• Availability in print and electronic forms</li> <li>• Staff &amp; students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
4.3 Each study programme offered by ETI has a programme team and organizer/coordinator to coordinate the design and development of course contents as specified by the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional arrangement for managing study programmes</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>curricula of respective degree programmes by Degree Awarding Universities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinators, co-coordinators and content developers</li> <li>• Documented procedures of learning material development for programmes &amp; courses</li> </ul>	
<p>4.4 ‘Course Team’ approach is followed in design, development and delivery course material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional arrangement for managing study programmes</li> <li>• Coordinators, co-coordinators and content developers</li> <li>• Technical experts and expertise for lesson planning, instructional design, language edition, media development, tutors, technical staff, etc.</li> <li>• Documented procedures of learning material development for programmes &amp; courses</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>4.5 The institution (ETI) provides prior training and necessary inputs to the staff involved in instructional design and development, and standard formats/templates for instructional design and development are in place and are used by the ‘course team’ for effective and efficient design and development of teaching and learning material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPD schedule and evidence of participation</li> <li>• Guidebooks, instructional material and formats for instructional material design and development</li> <li>• Evidence of ‘course team’ approach in instructional design and development</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>4.6 Courses prescribed for study programmes are designed based on learner-centred principles with appropriate teaching learning strategies, teaching methods, learner-centered activities and assessment strategies. Use of appropriate ICT tools, and contact sessions determined as part of the course design process and are clearly stated in the course guide book, and communicated and discussed with learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course material and study guides available in print and electronic modes.</li> <li>• Perusal of material provided as learning resources and learner guides</li> <li>• Staff and students – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>4.7 Each individual course has a designated number of study hours for which the students have to engage such as review of study guides, reading assignments, self-learning exercises, tutorials, lab work, project work, and preparation and sitting for examinations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course material and study guides available in print and electronic modes</li> <li>• Perusal of material provided as leaning resources and learner guides</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b>  <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></p>
<p>4.8 Individual course design integrates assessment methods to teaching and learning strategy to enable students to achieve stated learning outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course material and study guides available in print and electronic modes</li> <li>• Perusal of material provided as leaning resources</li> <li>• Staff and students – through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b>  <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></p>
<p>4.9 Learning resources such as library, laboratory facilities and ICT facilities necessary for effective learning are made accessible for learners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of available of library, laboratory and ICT facilities</li> <li>• Proof of usage of the facilities by students</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b>  <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/></p>

## Criterion 5: Programme Delivery and Assessment

Scope: Institution (ETI) is well prepared to offer instructional training for EDP students registered with degree-awarding universities. The courses and instructional material are designed for instructional training according to the curricula of study programmes and syllabi of prescribed courses provided by the degree-awarding universities. The assessment, both continuous and summative forms are conducted to assess the progression of students in the courses they follow and degree of assimilation of knowledge, which will be of immense value to the students and the results and feedback are given within shortest possible time after the completion of assessment / examination. The institution provides all information regarding the programme and courses offered (programme prospectus/study guide package) to registered students at the time of registration and then details of courses (i.e. course package which includes course material, learning guides, learning resources, etc.) are given to them at the commencement of the semester/term at which time the particular course(s) is offered. In addition, students are given access to all learning resource through the resource centers and student guidance is provided on regular basis as well as on ad hoc basis, as and when requested. The academic calendar is designed in close alignment with academic semesters and examination set out by the degree awarding university/universities. This information is given in print form to all registered students and also posted in the web.

The focus of this Criterion is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide
5.1 The study programme types, and curricula of respective study programmes offered by the institution are in close alignment with the study programmes and curricula prescribed by the Degree Awarding Universities which have been developed according to the guidelines prescribed by the UGC Circular No. 932 and UGC Handbook on External Degree Programs and Extension Courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Possession of relevant documents - UGC Circular on EDP &amp; ECs, UGC Handbook on EDP &amp; ECs, Curricular and syllabi prescribed by DAUs, etc.</li> <li>• Review of Institutional handbook, Study Prospectuses for degree of alignment</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p>0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good</p> <p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>5.2 Institution (ETI) has academic calendar designed in close alignment with academic semesters and examination set out by the degree awarding university. This is given in print form to all registered students and posted in the web.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional academic calendar</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Comparison between the Calendar of DAU and ETI</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.3 Institution (ETI) adheres to the time tables set out at the commencement of the academic year and semester.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Calendar of the institution</li> <li>• Review of Institutional handbook, Study Prospectuses for degree of alignment</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.4 Institution (ETI) delivers the learning instructions and exercises in accordance with the curricula and course syllabi prescribed by the degree awarding university.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procession of curricula and syllabi prescribed by DAU</li> <li>• Comparison between the courses and course material offered and curricula and syllabi prescribed by DAU</li> <li>• Handbook of the Institution</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.5 Institution (ETI) pays due recognition to the assessments as the key motivator to learning and makes it as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, with continuous formative and summative assessments with timely provision of feedback thus contributing to a supportive and rigorous learning environment throughout the course of study.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Study Guides</li> <li>• Assessment forms</li> <li>• Records of assessments conducted and material evidences</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.6 A procedure is in place for selection and orientation of marking examiners on an approved marking scheme to ensure consistency of marking.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidebook on examinations</li> <li>• Marking schemes</li> <li>• Records of markings conducted</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>5.7 Mechanisms are in place for monitoring assessment practices and their impact on student learning experiences and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of having a committee for academic affairs</li> <li>• Proceedings of committee meetings</li> <li>• Feedback from students on assessments</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.8 Assessment/examination results are documented and communicated without delay to all learners adhering to the scheduled timelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data on examination schedules, and dates of release of examination results</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.9 Accurate record keeping of learner's attainments, which includes results/ marks of individual courses and final wards marks, is maintained and procedures are in place to ensure the confidentiality and security of records.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student records</li> <li>• Institutional procedures in handling students records</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>5.10 Institution (ETI) has a policy and mechanism to regularly monitor student progress throughout training process (<i>throughout the study programme and individual courses</i>) to provide managers with data on which they could decide whether they need to intervene with the training provided so as to avert problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic and Student Counseling Mechanisms and proceedings of committees</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

## Criterion 6: Learner Support and Progression

Scope: Institution (ETI) is fully committed to support learners throughout their stay with the institution. Interactive instructional techniques that engage learners in self- directed learning are offered to students throughout the duration of their study by providing a range of opportunities for obtaining tutoring at the center through various forms of appropriate technologies. Learners are aware of and have access to effective and well-resourced teaching and training services. Mechanisms are also in place to identify those who are in need of guidance and counseling and offer such services as and when required.

Focus of this criterion is captured in the following ‘Standards’:

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
6.1 Learner support system ( <i>i.e. comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personnel counseling, online help, etc.</i> ) using a range of media is available throughout the study period for registered students. Learner support system targets retention and provides preventative support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Institutional mechanism for student counseling and guidance</li> <li>• Proceedings of students counseling sessions provided</li> <li>• Staff and students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
6.2 Potential delivery strategies ( <i>i.e. print, audio-video tapes, radio and TV, teleconferencing, computer-based instruction, computer conferencing, online learning, etc.</i> ) are identified based upon nature of learners, learning objectives and instructional methods in the context of the economic and logistical feasibility of different options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Handbook</li> <li>• Evidences of multiple delivery methods</li> <li>• Availability resource centers/units and learning material in diverse forms</li> <li>• Students and staff - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
6.3 Institutional handbook, study programme prospectus, course guides and other publications clearly describe study programmes and courses, including entry requirements, prior knowledge and skills required for pursuing the programme/course, expected learning outcomes, course outlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Handbooks</li> <li>• Study Prospectuses</li> <li>• Students and staff - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>

<p>or synopses, essential and recommended readings, learner support services, assessment information, completion requirements, resource implications, time schedules and access to media and technology.</p>		
<p>6.4 The institution (ETI) documents through formal institutional surveys to ensure that learners are satisfied with the instructional and educational courses and services provided (<i>whether course materials were current and comprehensive, whether grading services were prompt and fair, and whether tutoring staff have performed adequately</i>).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feedback formats and Survey formats</li> <li>• Student feedback reports and Survey reports</li> <li>• Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>6.5 Institution (ETI) has formal and informal mechanisms to obtain feedback from learners on efficiency and effectiveness of its processes, and the results and findings are used in the decision making and planning of its programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student feedback reports and Survey reports</li> <li>• Proceedings of meetings - Board of management, Committee of Academic Affairs, Committee of Student Counseling, Committee of Grievance Redress, etc.</li> <li>• Students and staff - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>
<p>6.6 Institution (ETI) establishes benchmarks/standards for enrollment, student progression and retention, graduation and employment rates and then regularly undertakes assessments on such parameters and publicizes the results for the information of the students and public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional benchmarks and targets</li> <li>• Student enrollments</li> <li>• Student progression and retention rates</li> <li>• Employability survey reports</li> <li>• Students - through inquiry</li> </ul>	<p><b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○</p>



## PART III

# Guidelines for Quality Assessment of External Training Institutions

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**Chapter 5** deals with the procedure and methods of quality assessments (*performance evaluation of an institution or programme*) and accreditation (*certification and recognition given on the basis of such assessment*). The process of assessment is designed as a holistic, objective, systematic, data- based or evidenced- based and transparent method which can contribute to continuous institutional improvement in governance and management and performance of the institution.

The assessment will be based on the evidence-based information, and hence the self-evaluation report (SER), must be prepared according to guidelines and formats prescribed by the QAAC Council (*as prescribed in the Annex 1 of the Appendix of this Manual*).

Having reviewed the SER furnished by the ETI (**desk review**), the reviewers assigned for the QA review will visit the external training institution under review (on-site review), and they will look for evidences provided under six criteria for validation to make a judgment on the performances and hence on the standing of the institution.

**Chapter 5** also includes evaluation scheme for calculating both standard- wise score, criteria-wise score, and method of determination of overall grade (institution and Programme (s) score).

The report on the quality of governance and management and education services education offered will be of immense significance to the external training institution in planning its development plan for the future and also for mid-course corrections of any deficiency for continuous improvement of overall efficiency and productivity of the institution, and also the for the reputation of the institution as an ETI for EDPs offered by State Universities.



# CHAPTER 5

## Guidelines for Quality Assessment of ETIs and Accreditation

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of quality assessment is to validate the governance and management and functional systems of an institution. It includes all the inputs, processes, activities, internal monitoring mechanisms and feedback systems, outputs and outcomes and future improvement strategies to ensure that institution is doing what it says it is doing, and in the way it has specified in its mission, goals and objectives. In the case of higher education institution, it is essentially about establishing and managing operational and academic standards and ensuring regular reviews with the following questions in mind:

- **What do we do?** (What products and services are offered or should be offered?)
- **Whether what we do is in agreement with the national policy framework and guidelines as prescribed in the UGC Handbook on External Degree and Extension Courses (2010)** (Whether we comply with the prescribed policy and guidelines?)
- **How well we do it?** (Whether we have reached the prescribed standards/ benchmarks?)
- **How do we know?** (What monitoring systems and techniques are in place and whether we use such report regularly for quality improvement?)
- **What do we do to improve it and demonstrate the improvements?** (What we should do to address the deficiencies or solve the problems?)

These questions are also equally applicable to External Training Institutions (ETIs), and hence adopted the same with modifications to suit the purpose of quality assessment of ETIs.

Pre-requisites for operating a QA system in higher education are:

- Legal and Institutional Framework for institutions to operate as providers of higher educational (**Chapter 1**)
- National Policy Framework and Guidelines (**Chapter 2**, as presented by a regulatory body - e.g. UGC)

- Best Practices which are signposts that leads towards the goal of excellence (**Chapter 3**)
- Standards prescribed by a regulatory body and/or by a quality assurance agency (**Chapter 4**)

The quality assessment taken as a holistic framework consists of two components and the total quality improvement and assessment will not be realized unless and until these two components are fully established and operated:

- i. External Quality Assessment (EQA) mechanism conducted by an external agency which is based on self-analysis and external assessment by outside reviewers
- ii. Internal quality assessment (IQA) or self-assessment mechanism which is established within the institution as a continuous internal mechanism that promotes the growth and sustenance of quality culture within institutions (**for further details refer 1.6 of Chapter 1**).

## **5.2 Procedures and Processes of External Quality Assurance (EQA)**

In line with the international trend, the process of external assessment is carried out through four stages as follows:

- Stage I:** Development of nationally formulated criteria and standards through stakeholder participation on which to base the assessment process (by the QA Agency).
- Stage II:** Preparation of a self-evaluation report (SER), by the institution seeking quality assessment from QA agency on the pre-determined criteria for assessment (as defined by the QA Agency).
- Stage III:** Validation of the SER by a Team of Reviewers who would visit the institution, and submission of recommendations of assessment outcome to the QA Agency.
- Stage IV:** Scrutiny and approval of the Review Report by the Council of QA Agency.

## **Stage I: Development of Criteria and Standards**

As described in Chapter 3, for quality assurance purpose, through national consultations and consensus involving all the relevant stakeholders, the standards for assessment and accreditation prescribed for ETIs, are categorized under two elements, namely;

- a) Organizational Aspects, and
- b) Instructional Training Aspects.

For each element, criteria for assessment purposes are listed and standards are defined and prescribed.

### **A. Organizational Aspects**

This element consists of following criteria;

- i) Governance & management
- ii) Physical resources and educational environment, and
- iii) Human resources and competencies.

### **B. Instructional Training Aspects**

Instructional training element consists of following criteria:

- i) Learning resources design and development,
- ii) Programme delivery and assessment, and
- iii) Learner support services & student progression

Brief descriptions of good practices and/or processes with respect to above mentioned two elements and 6 criteria that contribute to ensuring the provision of quality learning experience by the ETIs are given in Chapter 3. For quality assurance purposes, it is presumed that if the information and data inputs from the institution under these criteria are collected, collated and analyzed and presented according to the format prescribed by the external QA Agency (i.e. format prescribed by the self-evaluation report by the QA Agency), such document would give adequate details on all the aspects of the ETI and key features of programmes offered. Further, such document will provide information based on which a judgment could be made on institutional arrangements, policies, practices, programmes, resources and performance in terms of the quality of teaching and learning and assessments, and outputs and outcomes.

## **Stage II: Preparation of Self-evaluation Report by the institution**

The foremost important step in the process of assessment and accreditation is self - evaluation and the preparation of the self-evaluation report (SER) by the ETI. As such the SER report must be prepared strictly according to the guidelines formulated by the

QA Agency (i.e. as prescribed in Annex 1 of this Manual). The Format of SER is given in **Box 4 of Annex 1**.

Self-evaluation is envisaged as the backbone of the process of assessment and accreditation. Self-evaluation is intended to be a tool for critical reflection on the degree of compliance by the ETI with the,

- Articles of the Act passed by the Parliament or Ordinance passed by a Statutory Body and manual of Procedures approved by the Governing Council in the case of state ETIs.
- Articles of the Association approved by the Registrar of Companies, and by-laws and manual of procedures adopted by the Board of Management of the ETI in the case of non-state ETIs
- National Policy Framework and Guidelines on EDPs and ECs prescribed by the UGC,
- Qualification credit framework and descriptors prescribed by the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and adopted by the UGC,
- Best practices and standards prescribed the UGC-QAAC, and
- Curricula of study programmes and syllabi, courses and other relevant guidelines provided by the degree awarding universities.

Further, SER is expected to provide evidences on the inputs, institutional practices, facilities, teaching and training methods, student progress and achievements, and finally the quality of outputs/outcomes. Therefore, SER is the base document that will provide data, information and relevant documents through which the review process will identify its strengths and weaknesses, and make a judgment on the effectiveness and efficiency of the ETI.

SER preparation is an internal exercise by the institution and as such that is expected to be done with utmost care, honesty and integrity. The institution needs to present the factual details of all aspects of its functioning, namely, the inputs, processes, and the outputs/outcomes, in a meaningful manner. The SER enables the external Review Team to understand the institution and peruse information and evaluate the ETI, based on the information provided (Desk Evaluation), prior to their visit to the institution. As the entire process of assessment would be based on this document, it should be prepared with utmost care so as to avoid exclusion of essential data and information and also to ensure the accuracy of the information provided.

The guidelines for submitting an application for quality assessment and recognition is given in Annex 1 and format for preparing SER is given in Annex 1.1 and 1.2. A sample questionnaire for collecting feedback from students for the Self-evaluation Report is included in Annex 2, which could certainly be modified, if required

to suit the institutional needs for obtaining and providing adequate and relevant information in an organized and systematic manner. This process requires the institution to have an effective data collection and analysis capability, both to conduct the initial assessment and to undertake continuous monitoring. The ETI that provides instructional training for EDPs would have to give a determined effort to collect and collate the information for the preparation of the SER.

The guidelines for writing SER are given in the Annex 1. The SER should be presented in two parts, namely;

**Part I:** Institutional Profile, and

**Part II:** Criteria-wise Report.

Part I of SER contain the data about the institution and the data and information presented in Part 1, form the basis for developing the Part I of SER. The Institution is expected to analyze the data collected in Part 1 and present a narrative and summative analysis of its functions including its strengths and weaknesses under the six criteria in the Part II of SER.

As explained in Chapter 4, QA Agency assesses the institution and programmes it offers and grades them on the basis of the six criteria. Therefore, under each one of the six criteria listed in Annex 1, there are key indicators on which the institutions are expected to provide data and the narration in the SER.

It is recommended that as many staff as possible get involved in the preparation of the SER. A contact person should be assigned to each criterion in the SER. This would also help the review team to determine whom to interview during the on-site visit. Adequate publicity about the site visits should be given to all relevant staff and students.

The SER should be accompanied by supporting documents for all statements made along with the required number of copies. The institution must provide appropriate instruction and passwords as necessary for full access to the institution's website and on-line courses /activities to allow the reviewers to review the appropriate sites before the on-site visit.

The original bulky documents should be arranged criterion-wise as far as possible and placed in the review team meeting room. A staff member appointed to liaise with the QAAC-UGC and to facilitate the Review Team in locating the relevant documents during the review conducted on-site.

### **Stage III: Site visit of the Review Team for validation**

As soon as the institution submits its SER, the QA Agency will identify a Team of Reviewers. The review team visits the institution during the days mutually agreed upon. The team seeks for confirmatory evidences to validate the claims made in the

SER through checking the institutional reports, records, policy documents, monitoring and review mechanisms, and proof of implementation of feedback outcomes. They also interact with learners, the top management, heads of departments, teaching and academic support staff, administrative and support staff to find out their opinion on the various processes and practices.

It is the responsibility of the QAAC-UGC to assure and instill confidence among the management, staff and students of the ETI that the QA assessment is carried out in objective, reliable and transparent manner and the report furnished is a fair reflection of the status and standing of the ETI. In addressing this, to minimize the subjectivity in review assessment, efforts have been made to develop standards and score guide (Chapter 4). The reviewers will match the criteria, standards and sources of evidence with the information provided in the SER, together with additional information received through interaction during on-site visit (Chapter 4). Using the score guide they will evaluate the performance in terms of Institution and Programme (s) Score.

### **Procedure for use of standards for assessment of the Institution:**

This procedure will describe how the standards of the six criteria, the evidence given against each standard by the institution and the score guide are used in arriving at the final assessment of performance of an institution (Quality Assurance) by the external peer review team. The institution may also use this procedure in self assessment of their performance.

The procedure is described in a five (5) steps.

Step 1: The evidence given against each standard by the institution are carefully and objectively analyzed and assessed.

Step 2: Based on the evidence, assessment of the extent to which each standard has been achieved by the institution is recorded by placing a tick in the appropriate circle against each standard on a 4 point scale from 0-3 (Table 5.1)

**Table 5.1 – Score Guide for each standard**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
0	Inadequate
1	Barely Adequate
2	Adequate
3	Good

Each standard will receive a score from 0-3 (**standard –wise score**)

Step 3: Performance of each Criterion is derived by totaling the scores gained in all the standards in respect of the Criterion. The value obtained is the '**raw criterion-wise score**'.

## Differential weightages of Criteria

Recognizing the variance in their relative importance in the learning experience, different Criteria have been allotted differential weightages on a thousand scale. The weightages given in Table 5.2 will be used for calculating the ‘actual criterion-wise score’.

**Table 5.2 – Differential weightages of criteria**

No.	Assessment/Accreditation Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale
1	Governance and Management	150
2	Physical resources and educational environment	100
3	Human resources and competencies	250
4	Learning resources design and development	150
5	Programme delivery and assessment, and	200
6	Learner support services & student progression	150
	Total	1000

Step 4: Based on the weightages listed in Table 5.2 and the formula given in Box 2, the ‘raw criterion-wise score’ is converted into an ‘actual criterion-wise score’. Taking Criterion 1 which has 12 standards as an example, and a value of 20 for the raw criterion score given by the review team, the actual criterion-wise score for Governance and Management (Criterion 1) is 83 (Box 2).

### **Box 2 - Formula for converting ‘raw score’ to ‘actual score’ on the respective weighted scale**

$\frac{\text{Raw criterion-wise score}}{\text{Maximum score for each criterion}} \times \text{weightage in a 1000 point scale} = \text{‘actual score’}$

Maximum score for each criterion

(= total number of standards for the respective criterion x 3 which is the maximum score for any standard)

**Example: Criterion 1 with weightage of 150 (Table 5.2) and 12 standards**

Assuming raw criterion-wise score (given by the peer team) = 20

Maximum Score = (12 standards x 3) = 36

Weightage in a 1000 scale = 150 (as in Table 5.2)

Actual criterion-wise score =  $\frac{20}{36} \times 150 = 83.3 \approx 83$

Step 5: The Institution-wise score is derived by totaling all the ‘actual criteria-wise scores’ of the six criteria and converting the total to a percentage as exemplified in Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 – Institution Score Conversion to percentage**

No	Criteria	minimum weighted score*	actual criteria-wise score
1	Governance and Management	60	83
2	Physical resources and educational environment	40	40
3	Human resources and competencies	100	100
4	Learning resources design and development	60	60
5	Programme delivery and assessment	80	100
6	Learner support services and student progression	60	50
	<b>Total</b>		<b>433</b>
	<b>% Institution-wise score</b>		<b>43.3</b>

\*Represents 40% of the values given in Table 5.2

Institution-wise score is graded as shown in Table 5.4

**Table 5.4 - Grading of overall Institution performance**

Institution score%	Grade	Performance descriptor	Interpretation of descriptor
$\geq 80$	A	Very good	High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an institution; should move towards excellence.
65-79	B	Good	Level of accomplishment of quality above the minimum level expected of an institution; room for improvement.
50-64	C	Satisfactory	Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of an institution; requires improvement.
$\leq 49$	D	Poor	Needs significant degree of improvement in quality

#### **Accreditation outcomes based on the institution score**

Accreditation cycle is five years. For accreditation of institution, if the institution score is not less than 50%, provided that the criterion-wise score for each of the six criteria is not less than 40%, institution gets ‘**Accredited**’ status for five years. Accredited institution will be graded as in Table 5.5. If the institution score is in the range of 40-49%, provided

that the criterion-wise score for each of the six criteria is not less than 40%, the institution will be given ‘**Provisional Accreditation**’ status.

*For an institution to receive an accreditation status, the following conditions are applicable.*

- i) Overall institution Score should be greater than or equal to 50%  
and
- ii) A score equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for all 6 criteria (Table 5.3).

*For an institution to receive a ‘Provisional Accreditation’, the following conditions are applicable.*

- i) Overall institution Score should be in the Range of 40% to 49%  
and
- ii) A score equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for all 6 criteria (Table 5.3).

If the institution score is less than 40% the institution receives the result ‘**Not Accredited**’.

Failure to demonstrate compliance with Accrediting Standards throughout the period of accreditation, may result in an institution being removed from the accreditation list (i.e. ‘**Withdrawal of Accreditation**’)

Grade of accredited institution will be A, B or C as in Table 5.5

**Table 5.5 – Grading of an accredited institution**

<b>Institution score %</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
>80	A	Very good
65-79	B	Good
50-64	C	Satisfactory

### **Summary of outcomes**

- Accredited
- Provisional accreditation
- Not accredited
- Withdrawal of accreditation

Accreditation outcome for the example referred to Table 5.3 is given in Box 3.

**Box 3: Outcome of accreditation**

*Institution Score is 43 as per table 5.3*

*Outcome - 'Provisional Accreditation'*

An institution with an outcome of 'Provisional Accreditation', 'Not Accredited' and 'Withdrawal of Accreditation' may request for re-accreditation after one year beginning on the date the UGC-QAAC informs an institution of the outcomes of accreditation having made significant improvements in all the 'Criteria'

At the end of the visit the Peer Team will discuss issues of concern which find a place in the draft report, with the Head of the institution for his/her observations and response. The report without the confidential part (Steps 1-5) will be shared with the institution and the highlights of the same will be discussed with the representatives of the institution during the exit meeting. The final report signed by the Peer Team and the Head of the Institution will be passed on to UGC-QAAC along with the confidential recommendation of the team by the Chair of the Peer Team. The Peer Team Report on the states of external degree programmes usually highlights the positive aspects, deficiencies and make recommendations to the institution for improvements. Successful evaluation results in a certification commonly referred to as accreditation.

The decision of the UGC-QAAC will be final and it will be communicated to the institution in due course.

#### **Stage IV: The scrutiny and the approval of the Review Team Report by QA Agency**

Quality Assurance Agency having perused the report confirms the status of assessment and forwards it to the respective ETI. Review Team Report is a summary of strong and weak points about the ETI and presents concerns as to the institution's compliance with accrediting standards. The report may include additional findings, and requests for information and inquiries. When the UGC-QAAC has determined that an ETI is out of compliance with an accreditation standard or requirement it will provide the institution appropriate notice and an opportunity to respond within a stipulated time period. The institution will be deemed to have demonstrated good

cause if it has shown that during the period of review significant progress has been made towards achieving full compliance with accreditation standards and towards meeting all requirements set forth by UGC-QAAC. The institution may reapply no sooner than twelve months from the date on which the denial of accreditation became effective.

Since what is really important in this exercise is that post-assessment actions should lead to improvement, and therefore the institutions are expected to comply with all the recommendations made by the Review Team in the review report.

The flow chart depicting the steps in the external quality assessment process is given in Figure 5.1.

### 5.3 Using the standards as a tool for self-review for continuous improvement

Self-assessment of an institution/criteria has the following steps:

- **Standard-wise judgment**
  - **Criterion-wise judgment**
  - Calculation of overall **Institution (s) Score**
- I. The first step is to collect data and information about the operation/activity under each of the six criteria to be reviewed. Sources of evidence against each standard in Chapter 4 will help in indicating the types of data to be collected and recorded. The institution should have an effective data collection and analysis capability both to conduct an initial assessment and to make continuous monitoring of the aspects and processes identified for improvement.
  - II. Standards are applied to the corresponding operation/s of a particular criterion. Carefully and objectively analyze the evidences (indicated in Column 2 of Chapter 4) and/or other relevant evidences provided by the institution in respect of that standard.
  - III. Performance of each standard of a Criterion is recorded by ticking the relevant circle on the 4-point scale (Table 5.1) given against each of the Standard (column 3 of Chapter 4) and reading the corresponding score (**Standard-wise score**).
  - IV. Performance of each Criterion is derived by totaling the scores gained in all of the Standards in respect of that Criterion. The value obtained is the “**Criterion-wise Score**”.

- V. The **Institution Score** is derived by totaling the “**Criteria-wise Scores**” of all of the six criteria.

This will enable the institution to evaluate its performance objectively and identify the areas where improvement is required. Any inaccuracy or inconsistency in the identification and definition of standards or the appropriate sources of evidence will become apparent when they are actually used for assessment of the process.

**Figure 5.1 - Steps in the External Quality Assessment Process**

Timeline	Action by	Task
3-6 months prior to the site visit	QAAC/ Institution	Committee to be appointed at a high level to coordinate the collection and analysis of data and appoint a coordinator of the committee to liaise between the institution, QA Agency and the Review Team. QA Agency official visits the institution to meet institutional representatives and brief the review process.  ↓
	Institution	Preparation of the SER  ↓
Stipulated by QA Agency	Institution	Submission of SER and preparation for on-site visit  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 15%;">Submit SER to QAAC</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 15%;">Working space arrangement for Peer /Review Team</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 15%;">Display supporting documents in the identified room for all stakeholders</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 15%;">Publicity to all departments/staff and students</div> </div>
		Immediately after submission of SER
One month from the submission of the SER	Peer Review Team /	Site visit  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Conduct on-site review (2-5 consecutive days)</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Scrutinizes documents and calls for additional information, if required</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Interaction with the various functionaries</div> </div>
One month after the site visit	Peer review Team /	Preparation of Peer/Review Team's Report  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Peer /Review Team prepares QA report</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Chair of Peer / Review Team hands over the report to Head of Institution through the QA Agency</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 30%;">Finalization of report after feedback from the institution</div> </div>
	Peer Review Team /	Submission of Report by Chair of Review/Peer Team to QA Agency
Two weeks from the date of receipt of final report	QA Agency	QA Agency decides on status of assessment and informs institution



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# Appendix

## Annex 1

### **Guidelines for Submitting an Application for Quality Assessment and Accreditation**

The application by a higher educational institution seeking recognition from a Quality Assurance Agency has to be submitted in the form of a self-assessment report prepared. The self-assessment report, commonly referred as self-evaluation report (SER) should clearly reflect the current status and performance of the institution and accordingly, the SER shall be prepared in accordance with criteria, standards and key indicators specified by the Quality Assurance Agency.

In order to ensure that the institution provides all information and data required for quality assessment are provided in organized manner, a standard format is designed and prepared, and is given herewith.

#### **Box 4: Format of the SER**

- The report should be printed on A4 size white paper and copied on both sides (duplexed)
- The pages should be numbered consecutively with the institution's name and date of report at the top or bottom of each page as a header or a footer.

The report should contain the following:

- i. Cover page should include the name of the institution, address, phone number, URL of the institution's website; with declaration, "the data submitted herewith are certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief". This sentence should be followed by the name, title, signature of the Vice-Chancellor and the date of submission.
- ii. Table of contents
- iii. Executive Summary should highlight the potential of the institution and its plans to develop it. It should also reflect the strategy and efforts for the future line of action for achieving greater efficiency, accountability, and quality in all spheres of activity. Constraints that hamper the institution's development may also be included.
- iv. Introduction - should describe the distinctive characteristics of the institution and EDPs and ECs, goals of the educational policy of the institution administrative entity handling EDPs, its thrust areas and other relevant details including the mission statements. It may explain how the report has been prepared, to what extent it has been participatory and also state the individuals and groups who were involved in the process.
- v. Part 1 - Profile of the institution to be provided according to the template.
- vi. Part 2 - Criteria-wise evaluative report to be prepared around the criteria and key performance indicators given under the six criteria provided in **Annex 1.1**.
- vii. Length of the report to be in the range of 25-30 pages.
- viii. Appendix to include copies of all supporting documents. Documents should be properly numbered, labeled and referenced and a Table of supporting documents to be appended.

## **Annex 1.1 - Part I: Institutional Profile**

### **A. Governance Information**

1. Name and address of the External Training Institution/Equivalent, seeking recognition:

.....  
.....  
.....

2. Name of the Unit/Centre/Division (within the ETI), providing Instructional training for EDPs and ECs (if relevant):

.....  
.....

3. Status of the Institution (national university, state owned institution, private, etc):

.....

4. Establishment of the ETI/Equivalent

i. Date of establishment: (Month & Year):.....

ii. Legal framework of the ETI/Equivalent - Act/ Ordinance/Articles approved by Registrar of companies/None:.....

iii. Date of approval by the Regulatory Body (UGC or equivalent)/Registrar of Companies:

.....  
.....

5. Organizational structure of the ETI, in brief

.....  
.....

.....

.....

Note: A chart with functions and duties assigned for each entity/division/branch must be annexed.

6. Board of Management/Board of Governors composition & Contact details:

a) Name of the governing entity:

.....

b) Details of the governing entity:

Position & Name of the person holding the post	Office			Residence		
	Telephone No.	Fax No.	E mail	Telephone No.	Fax No.	E mail

7. Programme Delivery network, if branches of institution are established

Type & Name	Location & Address	Contact Details

9. Annual Report: Yes/No

Note: The document must be provided as Annexes.

10. Awareness of the UGC Policy Framework and Guidelines on EDPs & ECs:

a) UGC Circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010: Yes/No

b) UGC Handbook on External Degrees and Extension Courses: Yes/No

11. Strategic Plan/Corporate Plan of the ETI

a): Available - Yes/No

b) Date of Preparation/Last revision or Update: .....

Note: Strategic Plan / Corporate Plan must be provided as an Annex.

12. Institutional Handbook: Yes/No

Note: The document must be provided as Annexes

13. Study Programme Prospectuses: Yes/No

Note: The document must be provided as Annexes

14. Availability of Study Programme Curricula and Course Syllabi issued by Degree-Awarding Universities: Yes/No

15. Availability of a Student Record system: Yes/No

16. Details of the Internal Quality Assurance System (e.g. IQAC): Yes/No

a) Composition of IQAC

.....

.....

.....

.....

b) TOR or Functions of the IQAC

.....

.....

.....

.....

**B. Physical resources and Educational Environment**

17. Physical resources of the ETI/Equivalent

a) State of ownership: Government ..... / Owned ..... / Rented/Leased: .....

Note: Details must be provided to the review team during site visit

b) Land area (in acres):

.....

.....

c) Building area (in square meters):

.....

18. Details of Physical Resources

Type of Facility	Description – Sq. area/Number/Description of the items, etc.
Lecture/Tutorial Rooms	
Computer Unit	
Library/Reading Room	
Common amenities – rest rooms, cafeteria, printing/photocopying facilities, etc	
Other (Specify)	

19. Maintenance budget for maintaining resource centers and services: Yes/No

If, yes: Brief description: .....

.....  
.....  
.....

20. Feedback on adequacy of learning resources and learner-support services: Yes/No

If, yes, give a brief description: .....

.....  
.....  
.....

### **C. Human Resources and Competencies**

21. Scheme of recruitment for recruiting human resources: Yes/No

22. Manual of Procedures: Yes/No

23. Human Resource Profile of the ETI

Location	Staff	Cadre positions	Permanent		Temporary		On Contract		Other (specify)
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
At the institution	Academic/Teaching								
	Administrative								
	Support staff								
	Technical/Professional								
	Visiting staff								
	Consultants								
	Any other (specify)								
	Total								
Regional centres, if any	Academic Teaching								
	Administrative								
	Support staff								
	Technical / Professional								
	Visiting staff								
	Consultants								
	Any other (specify)								
	Total								

**Note: Document containing the qualification and experience of all staff must be made available to Review Team during site visit.**

24. Provision of post-recruitment training on ODL methods/techniques: Yes/No

25. Performance assessment of teachers/tutors: Yes/NO

a) Peer Reviews: Yes/No

b) Student Feedback: Yes/No

**Note: Report from Peer Reviews and Student vs Feedback Forms must be made available to Reviewers when they conduct Site Visits**

## **D. Learning Resources Design and Development**

26. Access to Curricula of Study Programme and Course prescribed by Degree-awarding Universities (DAU): Yes/No

27. Detailed Course Contents for prescribed courses have been designed and developed according to the respective course curricula prescribed by the DAU: Yes/No

28. Detailed course contents for courses prescribed EDPs are made available to students: Yes/No

a) Print Form: Yes/No                      b) CD Form: Yes/No

c) Online Form: Yes/No

**Note: Print /CDs/Online Forms of the Documents related to (26), (27), & (28) must be made available / shown to the Review Team for their scrutiny during site visit.**

29. 'Course Team' approach has been adopted for developing detailed course contents for prescribed courses by the DAU according to the syllabi prescribed: Yes/No

**Note: Composition of "Course Team" Responsible for developing detailed course material must be presented along with the expertise of each and every member of the course team**

30. Courses designed and developed and made available to students conform with the following attributes:

a) Comprehensive: Yes/No; b) Self-explanatory: Yes/No

c) Student-centered, Self-learning and self-evaluative: Yes/No:

**Note: Print /CDs/Online Forms of the Documents related to (30) must be made available / shown to the Review Team for their scrutiny during site visit.**

## E. Programme Delivery and Development

31. The Degree Programmes to which the instructional training currently offered by the ETI

Degree Programme	Degree-awarding University	Number of Students Registered
1.		
2.		
3.		

32. Formal relationship between the ETI and DAU: Yes/No

If. Yes, give the following Details:

Degree Programme	Degree-awarding University	Type of relationship <i>Informal /Formal through MoU/Letter of Agreement</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

33. Institution has adopted a fixed Academic Calendar: Yes/No

Note: Academic Calendars of degree programmes must be made available for scrutiny of the reviewers during site visit

34. ETI considers conducting assessments is as an part of provision of instructional training provided to students: Yes/No

**Note: If Yes, Pl. provide details of assessments conducted, practices adopted and records maintained in conducting examinations to the reviewers for their scrutiny**

35. Monitoring mechanism to monitor the students' progress is adopted and practiced: Yes/Yes

## F. Learner Support and Learner Progression

36. Types of Information Provided, Delivery methods & Learner support services available to registered students

Learner-support Services - Types of staff support services available to the students:

a) At the Institution's Headquarters

Type of Information material and Staff Support services	√
Institutional Handbook	
Study Programme Prospectuses	
Detailed Course Syllabi and Course	
Class rooms Instructions	
Laboratory exercises	
Computer training sessions and access	
Study material – Print form	
Study material – On-line Form	
Study material – CD Form	
Access to Library/Reading room	
Study material on time	
Response to queries	
Feedback on assignments	
Counseling	
Common facilities – printing, photocopying, purchase of CDs, books, etc.	
Physical facilities -	
Any other (specify)	

b) At Regional Centers.(Please tick wherever applicable)

Type of Staff Support services	√
Institutional Handbook	
Study Programme Prospectuses	
Detailed Syllabi and Course Material	
Class rooms Instructions	
Laboratory exercises	
Computer training sessions and access	
Study material – Print form	
Study material – On-line Form	

Study material – CD Form	
Access to Library/Reading room	
Study material on time	
Response to queries	
Feedback on assignments	
Counseling	
Common facilities – printing, photocopying, purchase of CDs, books, etc.	
Physical facilities -	
Any other (specify)	

Note: All evidences must be provided to the Reviewers during the site visit.

37. Types of feedback mechanism adopted to get the learners’ feedback on facilities, quality of information provided, quality of learning material and quality of instructional training

Type of Service Provided	Feedback Mechanism		
	Survey	End of Course Feedback Form	Other (Specify)
Information material			
Course Material			
Instructional Training			
Counselling			
Common amenities			
Other (Specify)			

Note: All evidences must be provided to the Reviewers during the site visit.

38. Performances Records are maintained and published by the ETI: Yes/No

(Please tick wherever applicable)

Attribute	✓
Enrolment rate	
Student Retention Rate	
Graduation Rate	
Employment Rate (s)	

Note: All evidences must be provided to the Reviewers during the site visit.

.....**End**.....

## **Annex 1.2 - Part II: Criteria-wise Report**

Part II of the SER is the descriptive part of the SER. This section shall be developed to reflect the current status of the ETI with respect to 06 criteria listed in Chapter 03, based on which the QA Reviewers will attempt to assess the quality and performance of the ETI. The element and criteria and key performance indicators defined for each of the six criteria, described in Chapter 03 are listed below.

In additions to the information and data are presented in Part I of the SER, any relevant information and data shall be used to substantiate the descriptive report synthesized to reflect the current status of the institution in terms of key attributes and indicators listed for each criterion.

### **Criterion 1 – Governance and Management**

#### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Legal framework for the establishment and operation of the ETI
- ii. Governance and management procedures
- iii. Organizational structure
- iv. Compliance with National Policy and Regulatory Framework and Guidelines for EDPs
- v. Institutional commitment to function as an ETI and reliable partner to DAUs
- vi. Formal collaborative relationships between ETI and DAUs
- vii. Provision Information on the ETI, its programmes and courses to stakeholders
- viii. Academic programme design, development, coordination and audit mechanisms
- ix. Student record system
- x. Human resource recruitment and development procedure
- xi. Performance appraisal system
- xii. Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) framework and procedures

### **Criterion 2: Physical Resources and Educational Environment**

#### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Infrastructure facilities
- ii. Teaching and learning resource facilities
- iii. Learner support services
- iv. Academic and academic support staff
- v. Maintenance of learning resource centers and services

- vi. Regular assessment of quality and adequacy of facilities and learning resources and learner support services

### **Criterion 3: Human resources and competencies of tutoring staff**

#### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Human resources recruitment procedure
- ii. Profile and quality of academic staff
- iii. Human resource development programme
- iv. Competency and awareness of academic and academic support staff on ODL methods
- v. Competency and commitment of academic and academic support staff for student and academic counseling
- vi. Performance evaluation system for of teachers & tutoring staff

### **Criterion 4: Learning resources design and development**

#### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Alignment of course material designed and developed by the ETI with that of curricular and syllabi prescribed the DAU
- ii. Provision details of study programmes and courses
- iii. Academic leadership and coordination of study programme and courses
- iv. Development of course material - 'Course Team' approach
- v. Prior training for staff on the development of course material adopting ODL methods
- vi. Quality of course material
- vii. Adoption of student-centered approach in course material design and development
- viii. Organization and design of course material offered
- ix. Integration of assessment to teaching and learning strategy Completeness of the course package given to students.

### **Criterion 5: Programme Delivery and Assessment**

#### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Degree of alignment with types, structure, design and curricular with those prescribed by DAUs
- ii. Academic calendar and its alignment with the academic calendar of DAUs

- iii. Degree of adherence with the calendar prescribed at the beginning of the semester/year
- iv. Degree of alignment of delivery of instructional training and exercises with the curricula and syllabi prescribed by DAUs
- v. Recognition to assessment as the key motivator to learning and as an integral part of the teaching and learning process
- vi. Procedure is in place for selection and orientation of marking examiners
- vii. Mechanisms are in place for monitoring assessment practices and their impact on student learning experiences and outcomes.
- viii. Provision of feedback obtained from assessment
- ix. Keeping records of learner's attainments
- x. Monitoring progress of students and provision of academic counseling for students

## **Criterion 6: Learner Support Services and progression**

### Key attributes and indicators

- i. Quality of learner support services
- ii. Quality and appropriateness of instructional training delivery strategies
- iii. Provision of Learner guides – Handbook, study programmes prospectuses, course guides, etc.
- iv. Methods of seeking learners' feedback on quality of educational services
- v. Methods of seeking learners' feedback on performance of ETI
- vi. Methods of measuring institutional performance targets (in terms of enrolment, student progression and retention, graduation and employment rates) and regular reporting on institutional performance to stakeholder

## Annex 2

### Survey Format for Evaluating ETI by Students

Date of Administration of Questionnaire: .....

#### A. General Information

- a. Student's name (optional) .....
- b. Name of the study programme .....
- c. Name of the Degree Awarding University .....
- d. Year of first enrollment .....
- e. Expected date of graduation .....

#### B. Evaluation of the Institution

1 – Strongly disagree      2 – Disagree    3 – Agree      4 –Strongly agree

Statement	Score			
	1	2	3	4
1. I was satisfied with administrative services provided by the institution, and the staff was friendly				
2. I was provided with all required information through its Handbook and Website with respect to study programmes and courses offered, calendar dates, fees, and all other required information.				
3. I found its Website was very informative and any prospective student could always find the required information about study programmes and courses offered, calendar dates, fees, and all other required information.				
4. I found that the academic and tutoring staff is well qualified and skilful in conducting teaching and training and providing academic guidance				
5. I was very satisfied with the physical facilities such as lecture rooms, cafeteria, rest rooms, etc. provided to us throughout the study period.				
6. I noted that most lecture rooms were equipped with sufficient facilities for teaching – black boards/white boards, multimedia projectors, screens, etc.				
7. Library has offered me all essential reading material and the				

staff was very friendly				
8. Computer facilities provided to me was satisfactory and I found the staff was very friendly				
9. I was impressed that the academic instructions provided has adopted a right blend of lecture-discussions, practicals, assignments, tutorials, etc.				
10. I noted that the academic calendar set out by the ETI was in close synchrony with academic calendar of the degree awarding university.				
11. I always received all announcement and notices targeted to registered students well in advance through print and electronic media.				
12. I noted that the academic staff and tutorials staff was very punctual and always commenced session on time.				
13. I noted that the students were always informed of assessments and feedback/results were given back to students promptly.				
14. I noted that the progress and performance of students were monitored and information was made available to students regularly.				
15. I noted that the student support services (student and academic counseling) were available to us, as and when required.				
16. I observed that the institution regularly posts the information on pass rate and graduation rates of students who followed instructional training at the ETI.				
17. I noted that the institution regularly provides information on employment rates of graduates who followed instructional training at the ETI.				
18. I have no hesitation to recommend the ETI to any prospective student (s).				

### C. Evaluation of Study Programme

1 – Strongly disagree      2 – Disagree      3 – Agree      4 – Strongly agree

Statement	Score			
	1	2	3	4
1. I was provided with the required information on the curricula of the study programme and syllabi of prescribed courses and they were in close alignment with the curriculum of study programme and syllabi of courses prescribed by the Degree Awarding Universities				
2. I noted that the Study Programme Package provided to me by the institution at registration contained all required information on the study programmes and courses				
3. I found that the course design for prescribed courses meets the criteria of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed,				

self- motivating, self-evaluative and self-learning.				
4. I found that the course material provided clearly specified course aim/objectives, ILOs, course outline, teaching and learning methods, assessment methods and essential and recommended readings.				
5. I noted that calendar followed by the ETI was close alignment with academic calendar, semesters and examination set out by the degree awarding university.				
6. I found that the Institution always adhered to the time tables sets out at the commencement of the academic year and semester.				
7. I found that the Institution had prepared and conducted learning instructions and exercises strictly according to the curricula and course syllabi prescribed by the degree awarding university.				
8. I found that all course offered had both continuous and summative (end semester) assessments.				
9. I consider that the assessment conducted by the Institution has given due recognition to the assessments as the key motivator to learning and assessment was considered as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.				
10. I noted that the outcomes and outputs of assessments were processed speedily and communicated to students without delay.				
11. I noted that the Institution conducts feedback assessments to assess whether the students are satisfied with the instructional training and support services provided to them.				

#### D. Evaluation of a Course

a. Name of the course /Course Code .....

b. Year: 1/2/3/4 (circle appropriate number) Semester: 1/2 (circle appropriate number)

1 – Strongly disagree 2 – Disagree 3 – Agree 4 –Strongly agree

Statement	Score			
	1	2	3	4
1. Provided information related to this course, time schedule and learning resources (print) well ahead of time.				
2. Contact persons assigned for different activities were clearly communicated				
3. Lecturer explained the learning outcomes of the lecture-discussion / practical clearly at the beginning				
4. Lecturer organised and sequenced the course topics in a logical manner.				
5. Lecturer explained the subject matter clearly				

6. Lecturer used student-centered activities and provided opportunity for us to participate actively in the learning process				
7. Lecturer encouraged us to ask questions during lectures.				
8. Lecturer answered the questions and clarified doubts.				
9. Lecturer used teaching aids (Black/white boards, videos, slides, etc.) in a very effective and meaningful manner.				
10. Lecturer used relevant examples and /or case studies to facilitate the learning process.				
11. Lecturer managed to keep my attention throughout the lecture/s.				
12. Learning resources used by the lecturer (print/online) was easy to understand.				
13. Lecturer managed to project his/her voice clearly and presented the lecture very well.				
14. Lecturer was friendly and approachable.				
15. Lecturer was punctual.				
16. Lecturer gave his/her contact no./email address for us to contact him/her if I have any queries afterwards.				
17. Lecturer provided clear instructions on assessment and evaluation criteria prescribed for the course.				

**E. Other**

a) What was your most satisfying experience with the partner institution as a learner?

.....  
.....

b) What was your most disappointing experience with the partner institution as a learner?

.....  
.....

c) Any other comments/suggestions.

.....  
.....

Thank you very much for providing valuable information.

.....**End**.....

## Annex 3: Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Academic audit	is a quality assurance review process that focuses on the procedures a university or an institution uses to assure its academic standards and quality. It evaluates how the university or institution satisfies itself, that its chosen standards are being achieved and makes a judgment about threshold standards.
Academic award	the outcome or successful completion of a course or programme of study that leads to a qualification such as a degree, diploma or certificate or other formal recognition.
Academic calendar	the schedule of the institution for the academic year giving details like dates of reopening and closing, holidays, exams, results, convocation, etc.
Academic quality	describes how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their awards. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided.
Academic standards	the level of achievement a student has to reach to gain an academic award.
Access	the arrangements that an educational or training system makes with respect to entry requirements (exam qualifications, etc.) so as to offer entry opportunities for a much wider range of applicants than was traditionally the case.
Accountability	the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in the light of agreed expectations.
Accreditation	certification of an academic institution by a recognized national or regional body or agency with reference to quality provision that is valid for a fixed period.
Accrediting agency	An organization or association with authority to certify the quality of the educational provision of an institution and of individual programmes.

Action plan	description of specific activities that respond to short and longer term strategic objectives. The plan includes outcomes and outputs along with detailed roadmap and planned milestones. It also details resource commitments and time horizons required for the accomplishment of the plan.
Active learning	interactive instructional techniques that engage students in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and reflection. Students engaged in active learning might use resources beyond the faculty, such as libraries, Web sites, interviews and/or focus groups, to obtain information. They may demonstrate their abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate through projects, presentations, experiments, simulations, internships, practicum, independent study projects, peer teaching, role playing, or written documents.
Student-centered Activities	are questions or tasks designed to help learners to think for themselves, come up with explanations/solutions, sort out the features of an argument, draw inferences, engage in controversy and relate their own ideas and experience to a topic. Sometimes called self-assessment questions (SAQs), in-text questions (ITQs) or adjunct aids.
Advance organizer	is built into the beginning of a piece of self-instructional material to give learners a general idea of what is to follow and to help organize their learning.
Appeal mechanism	documented procedures for dealing with challenges to a rule or decision, or for reviewing a judgment or decision made on behalf of the institution. This also includes the constitution, roles, responsibilities and ethical practices of the committees or authority established for the purpose.
Assessment	is the measurement of aspects of a learner's performance in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes (usually referred to as 'evaluation' in the USA). It can be formal or informal and formative or summative. It may be paper or computer-based or on-the-job assessment.
Student Assignments	Student-centred learning exercises given during a course at pre-determined intervals and according to defined criteria in fulfillment of assessment requirements. Work submitted by the learners may be computer-marked or tutor marked.

Audio-visual learning material	a term used to describe instructional materials or teaching aid which use both sound and vision; more generally, a term used to describe all communication media.
Audit	on-site verification activity, such as inspection or review, of a process or quality system, to ensure compliance to requirements.
Award	a certificate or title conferred by an academic institution signifying that the recipient has successfully completed a prescribed course of study.
Benchmarking	Is a technique in which an institution measures its performance against that of the best of others, making reference to how those institutions achieved the 'benchmark' levels, and uses that information to improve its own performance by comparing its own to the standard/good practice of that performance.
Beneficiaries	anyone who benefits from a particular action. In the case of an ODL course this may include learners, employers, the community etc.
Bridging course ( Bridge course)	a course designed for learners who have difficulty in coping with the transition to a higher level of study. The bridging course is often of a short duration and is intended to bridge the gap between an existing level of competence and the level required for effective study at the higher level.
Certification	the process of granting recognition to a learner who has satisfied the predetermined criteria set by an authorized awarding body.
Code of conduct	expectations of behaviour mutually agreed upon by the institution and its constituent members.
Collaboration	the process by which people/organisations work together to accomplish a common mission.
Collaborative learning	is a method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. Within the context of electronic communication, collaborative learning can take place without members being physically in the same location.

Communication	a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour.
Community engagement	developing and sustaining a working relationship between an institution and one or more community groups to help them both to understand and act on the needs and issues that the community experiences.
Competence	a broad term used to describe the range of abilities that people can demonstrate
Competencies	ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject matter.
Compliance	a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements or legislation.
Constituencies	of an institution various departments in the institution including administration and other sectors.
Content	the subject knowledge and information or other related matter that the faculty/teachers are expected to deliver to the students/learners.
Continuous improvement	a management process whereby academic teaching/learning processes are constantly evaluated and improved in the light of their efficiency , effectiveness and flexibility; the ongoing improvement of the content, material, services or processes through incremental and breakthrough improvements.
Continuous quality improvement	a philosophy and attitude for analyzing capabilities and processes and improving them on a continual basis to achieve the stated objectives and stakeholder satisfaction.
Counseling	the provision of academic, personal and emotional support and guidance to learners.
Course	is a planned series of learning experiences in a particular subjects offered in a given time frame (eg. semester) for students by an institution.
Course completion rate	percentage of students in the total enrolment for the course/programme who have satisfactorily completed all of the prescribed requirements of a given course/programme.

Course development	a specified and quality assured process that combines the elements of course formulation and approval, academic content writing, assessment design, instructional design, integration of media content, media production and course materials production.
Course materials	materials in print or electronic format which are provided to the learner to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
Credit	a unit used in the calculation of the academic value of the courses taken by a learner. A learner accumulates credits by passing courses. A pre-determined number of credits is required for an award. The value of a credit is normally determined by the number of notional learning hours required to complete it.
Credit transfer	the ability to transport credits (for learning) from one setting to another. This not only facilitates smooth transfer of learners from one programme to another and one institution to another but also enables transnational mobility.
Criteria	mean a set of pre-determined standards of procedures, performance, degree of compliance and achievements of an institution of higher education that form the basis of graded assessment and accreditation.
Culture of the institution	norms, values, beliefs and behaviours inherent in an institution and reflected in the functioning of the institution and its staff. The top management of the institution defines and creates the necessary environment for the institutional culture.
Curriculum	the total planned structure of knowledge and skills and educational experiences and assessments that make up a programme of study that enable the learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
Curriculum planning	any systematic process intended to develop the structure of a study programme and prescribed courses .
Database	a collection of data fundamental to an operation, organized in some pre-defined structure; print or electronic media

Delivery	(of programme/course) refers to the deployment of instructional approaches –modes of teaching and organizational activities and experiences directed towards effective learning.
Developmental testing	field trial or pilot - trying out draft materials with a small group of learners in the hope of developing or improving those materials for the benefit of other learners.
Disabled learners	learners who have a physical or mental impairment which effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Discipline (Academic)	a branch of knowledge or learning which is taught or researched at the college or university level.
Distance education	an educational process and system in which all or a significant proportion of the teaching is carried out by someone or something removed in space and time from the learner. Distance education requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as specific organizational and administrative arrangements.
Distance learning	a system and a process that connects learners to distributed learning resources. All distance learning, however, is characterized by a) separation/distance of place and/or time between instructor and learner, amongst learners, and/or between learners and learning resources; and b) interaction between the learner and instructor, among learners and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media.
Distance teaching	a term that emphasizes the teacher's role in the distance education system.
Distributed learning	a term that emphasizes learning rather than the technology used or the separation between learner and the teacher; distributed learning makes learning possible beyond the classroom and when combined with classroom modes becomes flexible learning.
Diversity (demographics)	differences among people and individuals based on caste, creed, geographies, colour, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, learning abilities etc.

Dropout	is the term for learners ceasing to be active in their course of study before its completion and is a concern in any form of education or training.
Dual mode institution	an institution that offers learning opportunities in two modes: one using traditional classroom-based methods, the other using distance methods.
Educational Technology	It is the study, and application, of techniques, systems, tools and media used in education and training.
Effectiveness	The status having produced a desired effect.
Efficiency	The ratio of the output to the total input in a process
Elective courses	a range of courses not specified in programme completion requirements from which learners may select in accordance with their own preference and learning and career goals.
Electronic media	media that utilize electronic or electromechanical devices to enable the teacher to deliver and end user to access the content. Includes video recordings, audio recordings, multimedia presentations, slide presentations, CD-ROM and online content. Excludes print media which may be produced electronically but do not require electronics to be accessed by the end user.
Equity	an educational and learning environment in which individuals can consider options and make choices throughout their lives based on their abilities and talents, not on the basis of stereotypes, biased expectations or discrimination with respect to race, caste, economic status etc. The achievement of educational equity enables females and males of all races and ethnic backgrounds to develop skills needed to be productive, empowered citizens. It opens economic and social opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status.
Ethics	the practice of applying a mutually agreed code of conduct based on moral principles to the day-to-day actions of individuals or groups within any organization.
Evaluation	a series of activities designed to obtain of the stakeholder feedback of the level of achievement/competence. It is designed to measure the effectiveness of a course, instructional programme, institution etc.

Experiential learning	learning acquired through workplace or other previous experience.
Extension (services, programmes)	an educational opportunity provided by colleges and universities to people who are not enrolled as regular students.
Exit meeting	The concluding session of the onsite visit which is attended by various representatives of the institution where the chair of the peer team will share the highlights of the completed assessment exercise.
External quality Assurance (EQA)	it is performed by an organization external to the institution which is aimed or intended to assesses the operation of the institution or its programmes in order to determine whether it meets the pre-determined standards.
External review	a scrutiny process that examines standards and quality in a university .it is undertaken by people who do not work for the university?.
Face to face interaction	interaction between two individuals or groups in the same physical space.
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) formative and evaluative comments made to individual learners by their tutors in response to written assignments.</li> <li>b) evaluative comments made by stakeholders to the institution on the quality and effectiveness of a defined process.?</li> </ul>
Feedback mechanism	systems for obtaining information from participants in a process that contributes to the assessment of its quality and effectiveness.
Formative assessment	the evaluation of learning that is carried out as the learning activities of a course progress.
Formative evaluation	the assessment of learning that occurs as a project or course while it is in progress, with the aim of identifying short-comings in the course and addressing them immediately.

Generic skills	<p>skills that are fundamental to a class of activities and are transferable from one job or activity to another. Lists of generic skills usually include the following categories:</p> <p>Basic/fundamental skills—such as literacy, numeracy, analytical skills, technical skills etc.</p> <p>People-related skills—such as communication, interpersonal, teamwork, customer-service skills</p> <p>Conceptual/thinking skills—such as collecting and organising information, problem-solving, planning and organising,</p> <p>learning-to-learn skills, thinking innovatively and creatively, systems thinking</p> <p>Personal skills and attributes—such as being responsible, resourceful, flexible, able to manage own time, having self-esteem</p> <p>Skills related to the business world—such as innovation skills, entrepreneurial skills</p> <p>Skills related to the community—such as civic or citizenship knowledge and skills, multiculturalism, entertainment and social responsibility etc.</p>
Goal	<p>a result, milestone or checkpoint in the future which will indicate significant progress towards achieving the institutional mission. A goal should be specific, measurable, critical for success and benchmarked.</p>
Good practices	<p>practices which when effectively linked together , can be expected to lead to sustainable high qualityoutcomes in quality provisions , student satisfaction, flexibility timeliness , innovations and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>A superior method or innovative practice that contributes to the improved performance of an organization, usually recognized as best by other peer institutions.</p>
Governance	<p>Managing or governing an organization based on pre-determined policy; providing leadership and managing and coordinating and the use of physical and human resources, procedures and processes, in transparent and efficient manner to successfully achieve towards the vision of the organization.</p>

Governance structure	the system and structure for defining policy, providing leadership, managing and coordinating the procedures and resources that ensure the quality of all the activities of the organizations ( NCATE Standards – <a href="http://www.cqaie.org">http://www.cqaie.org</a> ).
Grievance redress mechanisms	mechanisms for receiving , processing and addressing dissatisfaction expressed, complaints and other formal requests made by learners, staff and other stakeholders on the institutional provisions promised and perceived.
Horizontal mobility	the opportunity for learners to move within and across disciplines for additional learning within the same level of education. Also see vertical mobility.
ICTs (see also new technologies)	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) consist of the hardware, software, networks and media for the collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text, images) as well as related services.
Independent learning	instructional system in which learners are prepared for carrying on their studies beyond the classroom instruction even without instructors or tutors for direction and assistance. This is for preparing students for lifelong learning.
Independent study	mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.
Indicators	established measures to determine how well an institution is meeting its stakeholder expectations and other operational and financial performance expectations.
Induction (see also Orientation)	is the process by which learners are helped to understand the requirements, learning skills, mode of operation etc. of an open or distance learning scheme.
Informal assessment	assessment of learning that is carried out using discussion with tutors or peers, self-tests, etc in which the learner's performance may be noted but not formally graded.
Information flow	dissemination/transmission of information through a specified path within the organizational structure.
Innovation	Using new knowledge and understanding to experiment with new possibilities in order to implement new concepts that create new value.

Inputs	products, services and prepared materials used to produce the desired outcomes.
Institutionalization	formalization of a practice; it is the opposite of any ad hoc arrangement which offers extensive flexibility.
Institutional research	collection, analysis, reporting and warehousing of quantitative and qualitative data about an institution's students, faculty, staff, curriculum, course offerings and learning outcomes to inform institutional decision-making and planning.
Instructional design	process of designing instructional materials in a way that helps learners to learn effectively.
Instructional package	all essential study materials for a course
Interactivity	the ability for the learner to respond in some way to the learning material and obtain feedback on the response ; there are two kinds of interactivity viz: <b>learning material interactivity</b> , involving the learner's interaction with the medium , the level, and the immediacy of feedback the medium itself provides , and the extent to which the medium will accommodate learner's own input and direction and <b>social interactivity</b> , extent to which learners interact with teachers and with each other via a given medium.
Interactive learning	learning that results from the two-way communication between tutor and learner, between learners and between the learner and the learning materials. The interactivity of the learning can be assessed in terms of the learner's interaction with the medium of delivery, the level and immediacy of the feedback the medium itself provides, the extent to which the medium will accommodate the learner's own input and direction and the extent to which learners interact with the tutor and with each other via a given medium.
Interdisciplinary study	an integrative approach in which information from more than one discipline is used in interpreting the content of a subject, phenomenon, theory or principle.
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	temporary grants of monopoly intended to give economic incentives for innovative and creative activity. IPR exist in the form of patents, copyrights and trademarks.
Internal Quality	Internal system of monitoring to ensure that policies and

Assurance ( IQA )	mechanisms are in place and to make sure that it is meeting its own objectives and pre-determined standards.
Internal review	methods used by universities to assure their own academic standards and quality.
Internal stakeholder	the staff or student or department within an institution who is associated with and responsible for one or more of the institutional activities.
Intervention	the action of an individual , team or the management getting involved in the processes to take appropriate decisions or provide meaning to a policy, rule or regulation to solve a problem , dispute or to bring in consensus
Learner-centred education	learner-centered education places the learner at the centre of education. It begins with understanding the educational context from which a learner comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the learner's progress towards the achievement of negotiated learning outcomes. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place.
Learner profile	A description of an average potential learner or group of learners based upon knowledge of appropriate learner characteristics
Learner support	a supportive network of preparatory courses, study skill development opportunities, personal and course counseling, learning support through flexible approach to resources including individualized support from the teacher/facilitator, all constructed in ways which avoid deficit views of learners and which learners can draw upon to meet their needs. These will assist them perform to their potential, motivate them and to respond to their needs.
Learner support services	physical and academic facilities made available to learners to enable every individual to achieve the stated learning outcomes and optimize his/her learning. They may include online support, tutor support, library and information services, laboratories, administrative support for admission, assignments, examinations etc.

Learning centres	(also known as Access centres, Outreach centres or Regional centres); offices or buildings maintained by open and distance learning programmes in order to provide localized delivery of learning materials and support to learners.
Learning environment	the place and setting where learning occurs. A virtual learning environment is one in which a student is provided with tools and resources to learn both autonomously and with a virtual cohort of learners.
Learning outcomes	statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.
Learning portfolio	A representative collection of a student's work that promotes self-assessment, awareness and continuous improvement.
Learning resources	the resources of the learning process which may be used by a learner (in isolation or with other learners ) to facilitate learning that include the availability of access to courses, teachers or facilitators, learning materials, library facilities , laboratory facilities, media equipment, computer centres, and community experts.
Leadership	an essential part of a quality improvement effort. Organization leaders must establish a vision communicate that vision to those in the organization and provide the tools and knowledge necessary to accomplish the vision.
Lifelong learning	a philosophical concept in which learning is viewed as a long term process beginning at birth and lasting throughout life; a conceptual framework within which the learning needs of people of all ages and educational and occupational levels may be met , regardless of their circumstances.; a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the lifespan of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives
Lifelong learning skills	knowledge and skills which improve learners' competence at the time of learning and facilitate continuous learning throughout life.
Livelihood	the application of knowledge and skills that will help an individual to boost his/her self-esteem and eventually achieve a better quality of life.

Management Information System (MIS)	a computerized integrated information collection, collation, analysis and reporting system to support institutional decision making process.
Market research	activities undertaken by an institution to determine the demand for its programmes and services and the features in similar programmes and services that its potential customers prefer.
Marking scheme	a set of criteria used in assessing student learning.
Mission	the overall function or purpose of an institution.
Mobile/cellular) phone	a portable telephone that connects to the telephone network over radio wave transmission.
Module	a separate and coherent block of learning; a part of the modular programme of studies where the curriculum is divided into a range of similar sized segments.
Modular curricula	courses offered in units which are complete in themselves.
Monitoring	a management function that operates during programme implementation to carry out an on-going assessment or appraisal of a system while it is in operation with a view to correcting problems as they arise.
Multimedia	learning technologies that involve the whole range of audio, visual, text and graphics media available, integrated into a package that has been effectively designed from an instructional perspective.
Needs analysis	a process of identifying the learning and training needs of a particular group or population.
Network	any system consisting of a number of physically separated but inter-connected sub-systems. It may be applied to computers, radio or TV stations, agencies, institutions as well as to people with shared interests.
New educational technologies	ICT tools and resources (hardware and software) and their application in the field of education.
Objectives	(see also learning outcomes) In the context of teaching and learning, a specific statement about what the learner will be able to do when a learning activity is complete, the conditions under which learners will demonstrate their competency and the way in which this competency will be

	measured.
Open access	a way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, prerequisite credentials or an entrance examination.
Open learning	an educational philosophy that also emphasizes giving learners choices about media, place of study, support mechanisms and entry and exit points.
Open and Distance Learning	<b>Open and distance learning</b> is an amalgam of two approaches to form of education strategy that focus on expanding access to learning. It is characterized by two factors: <b>distance education</b> as a delivery strategy through a variety of media and <b>open learning</b> as a philosophy in which particular value is attached to certain underlying principles chief among which are ‘learner centeredness’ , ‘flexibility in learning’ , ‘removal of unnecessary barriers to access , ‘and ‘recognition of prior learning’. It is a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face to face meetings between tutor and learners; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.
Open educational resources	educational materials and resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and redistribute.
Open source software	a licensing model for software that gives free access to the source code of the software to allow interested parties to modify or contribute to the software as they see fit.
Organizational chart/ Organogram	a diagram that shows the structure of an organisation and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs.
Organizational structure	the form of an organization that is evident in the way that divisions, departments, functions and people link together and interact. It reveals vertical responsibilities and horizontal linkages and may be represented by an organization chart(see organogram)

Orientation	a process through which a new student or employee is integrated into an institution, learning about its culture, policies and procedures, and the specific practicalities of his or her programme of study or job.
Outputs	products, materials, services or information arising out of a particular process.
Outreach	the provision of programmes, services, activities and /or expertise to those outside the traditional university community. Outreach is a one-way process in which the university is the provider either on a gratis basis or with an associated charge.
Outreach centres	see Learning Centres
Outreach programmes/activities	a systematic attempt to provide services beyond the conventional limits of institutional provision to particular segments of a community e.g. educational programmes for illiterate adults.
Participatory management	a system of institutional management in which every member of the institution is involved at one stage or the other in the decision making process.
Partners	refers to those key institutions /organizations who are working in concert with an institution to achieve a common goal or to improve performance.
Partnership	a strategy and a formal relationship between the institution and another institution or agency that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and for the learners.
Partnership/alliance	is a formal arrangement between two partners for a specific purpose.; It is both a strategy and a formal relationship between the university and another major provider that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and the student population at large.
Peer assessment	a method of assessment that is based on the consensus opinion of a peer group of learners on the respective contributions made to the work of the group by each individual participant.

Performance appraisal	a systematic assessment of an employee's performance in order to assess his/her achievement of objectives, training needs, potential for promotion, eligibility for merit increment etc.
Performance indicators	criteria which are used by educational institutions themselves in self-evaluation and by external evaluators when judging the quality of educational provision.
Planning	is the formal process of making decisions for the future of individuals and organizations.Plans are statement of things to be done and the sequence and timing in which they should be done in order to achieve a given end.
Policy	a statement of aims, purpose, principles or intentions which serve as continuing guidelines for management in accomplishing objectives.
Pre-requisites	for a lesson/course are the knowledge, skills, relevant experience, and perhaps attitudes the teacher would like the learners to have before starting on some particular learning experience.
Print media	printed, as distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted, communications
Prior learning	what has been achieved by a learner prior to enroll a particular programme of study by means of previous experience, knowledge or skills acquired in the workplace.
Procedures	the documented steps in a process and how they are to be performed.
Process	a set of interrelated work activities characterized by a set of specific inputs and activities to achieve specific outputs.
Programme	structured teaching and learning opportunities which leads to an award; to choose from. Refers to all activities that engage students in learning .This may include courses, research, outreach, community services etc.
Programme options	a range of courses offered at various levels leading to degrees/diplomas/certificates for students
Progression	vertical movement of learners from one level of education to the next higher level successfully or towards gainful

	employment.
Prospectus	a booklet produced by an institution for prospective students giving details about itself, its programmes, courses and admission requirements.
Provider	Any organization providing training or education.
Quality	the fitness for purpose of a product or service according to a set of required standards.
Quality audit/review (external)	a systematic, independent examination by an independent third party to determine whether quality activities in an institution and related results comply with plans and whether these plans are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve the stated objectives.
Qualification framework	a system that recognizes and assesses the skills and qualifications of individuals at any stage in their careers whether these skills and qualifications are acquired in a formal education setting, on the job or through self-study.
Quality enhancement	efficiency in efforts at improving the performance or performance efficiency of a system.
Quality policy	an organization's general statement of its beliefs about quality, how quality will come about and its expected result.
Quality tool	an instrument or technique to support and improve the activities of process quality management and improvement.
Reflective practice	thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline.
Regulatory agencies	government or quasi government agencies with responsibility for the overall planning and monitoring of the educational provision of institutions commonly under their purview.
Research	rigorous intellectual activity that probes into what is known to reach the unknown.
Scenario	a sequence of imagined events designed to indicate what might happen in real life.
Self-appraisal	individual's or institution's own evaluation of his/her or its performance.

Self-assessment	A process in which learners are required to answer questions or carry out prescribed activities and to judge the outcomes against pre-determined criteria.
Senior management	Chief Executive Officer and senior officers of the institution.
Social learning capital	the blending of social capital and lifelong learning taking place in the context of the horizontal transfer of knowledge.
Staff appraisal	is a systematic periodic evaluation of a staff member with respect to his/her performance on the job and his/her potential for development.
Staff development	skills development, refresher programmes or other training provided for staff within or outside the institution to enable them to continuously update their knowledge and skills for effective and efficient performance and career advancement.
Stakeholder	any individual, group, unit, department or organisation that will have a significant impact on or will be significantly impacted by the quality of a specific process or service. They may be internal (e.g. staff, students) or external to the institution (e.g. employers, government; for agriculture they include farmers, educators, extension personnel, researchers, representatives of financial institutions and NGOs).
Standardization	the establishment of standards for different levels of performance.
Standards	measurable criteria that provide the basis for forming judgements concerning the performance of an instructional activity, innovation or programme.
Strategic plan	a specific, action-oriented medium or long-term plan for making progress towards a set of institutional goals.
Student handbook	an information book for registered students of an institution containing information on all matters relevant to students for their academic career in the institution.
Student: tutor ratio	the average number of students assigned to an individual tutor across a programme or institution.
Summative assessment	evaluation of learning that takes place on completion of the learning activity or activities.

Summative evaluation	assessment that occurs at the completion of a course or project, which provides a summary account of its effectiveness and the extent to which it met its goals and objectives.
Survey	the act of examining a process or questioning a selected sample of individuals to obtain data about a process, product or service.
Syllabus	Subject contents recommended for a given study programme or a course.
Systemic change	change that occurs in all aspects and levels of the educational process.
Total Quality Management	is a comprehensive approach for improving competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility through planning , organizing and understanding each activity and involving each individual at each level.
Transparency	institutional processes that are characterized by openness, communication and clearly assigned accountability.
Tutoring	an interactive approach to disseminating knowledge that helps students to improve their learning strategies in order to promote empowerment and independent learning.
Validation	process of confirming the appropriateness of something ; determination of the effectiveness of instructional materials or system by the use of appropriate summative evaluation techniques.
Vision	a short memorable statement that paints a vivid picture of an ambitious, desirable and future state aligned with institutional values. Its purpose is to inspire and act as a guide for decision-making and planning within a 5 year time horizon.



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