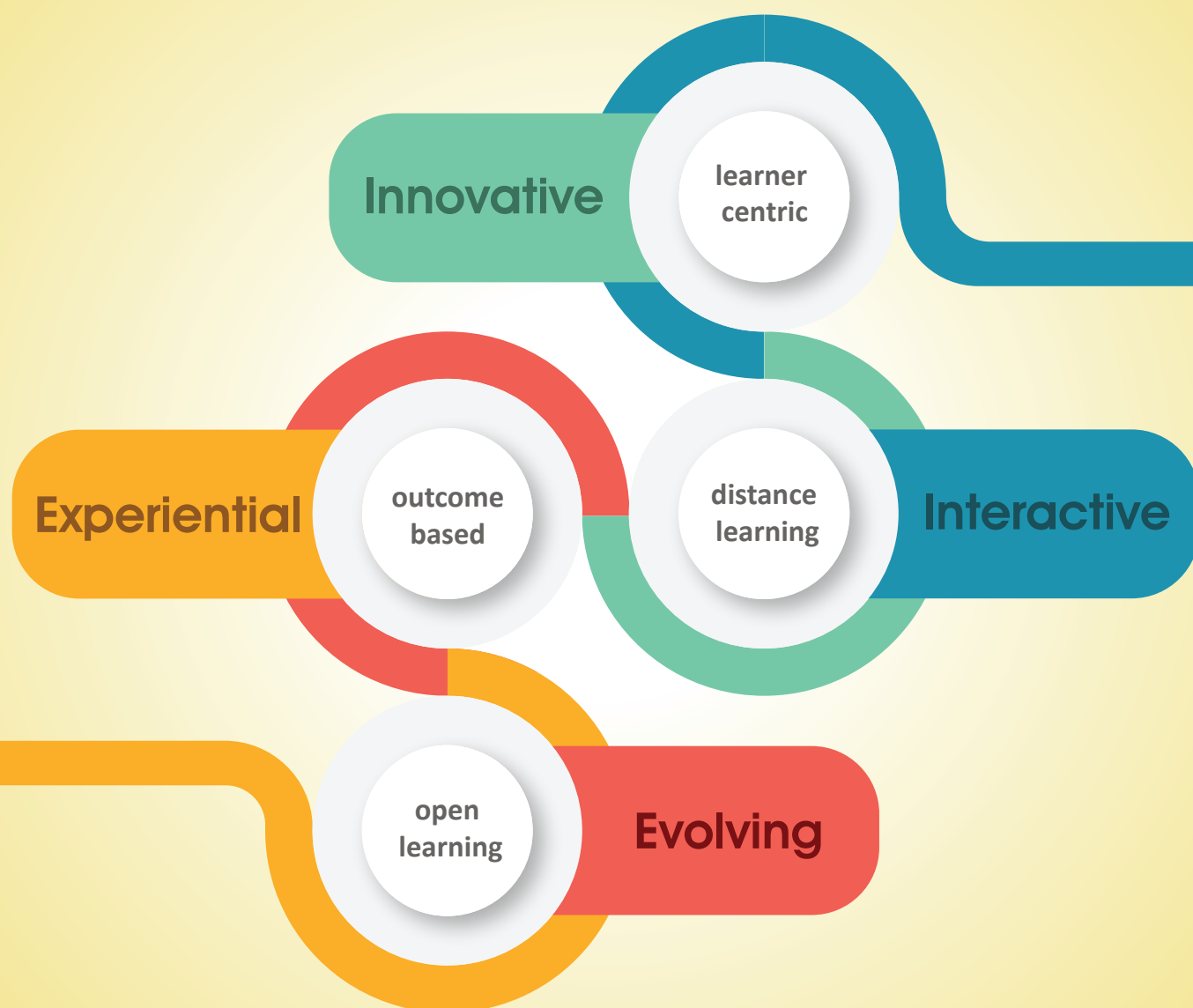


# Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education Institutions



University Grants Commission Sri Lanka  
June 2019

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Sri Lankan Distance Higher Education  
Institutions**



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**University Grants Commission Sri Lanka  
June 2019**

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# Foreword

With the increasing acceptance of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) as widening access to higher education, research suggests that it has become increasingly crucial that quality assurance process is developed and maintained if the ODL provision has to be relevant and effectively functional that the products have the same recognition as the conventional.

A frequently cited challenge by ODL practitioners is that many quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities to assess and review ODL institutions and programmes.

International best practices recognize that arising from the physical separation of the learner from the teacher, the separation of programme design, delivery, learner support and assessment and the use of media and technologies to bridge the gap between the learner and the teacher, the functions and the processes in ODL are radically different from those found in traditional face-to-face classroom teaching. Accommodating these differences in Quality Assurance (QA) systems had been essential in establishing the credibility of ODL.

Thus in 2007 a milestone achieved by the Distance Education Modernization Project,(DEMP) of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the Asian Development Bank was a ‘home-grown’ quality assurance system of accreditation standards and performance indicators developed for ensuring quality in distance higher education in Sri Lanka This was internationalized by Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to make it into a generic document applicable across Commonwealth countries and published by, COL and, UNESCO as “*Quality Assurance Toolkit , Distance Higher Education :Institutions and Programmes*” (2007).

In 2015 decision was made by the UGC that while the conventional universities would be evaluated using “*Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*” (UGC- HETC 2015), The Open university of Sri Lanka should be evaluated using the “*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes*” (COL 2009).

To keep abreast with the assessment standards in the “*Manual for Institutional review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*” (2015) the assessment ‘Standards’ in the “*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes*” have been updated in this manual and this manual will be used henceforth to review OUSL in Sri Lanka.

This manual will serve as a guide for Universities and other Higher Education Institutions to adopt and internalize good practices and standards in respect of quality assurance. It is not an easy task to compile a manual of this nature accommodating views of many stakeholders. We appreciate the contribution of all the resource persons in compiling this manual which will be an effective aid to the process of quality assurance in the Higher Education sector of the country.

Prof. Mohan de Silva  
Chairman  
University Grants Commission



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## List of Abbreviations / Acronyms

APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
AR & FR	Administrative Regulations & Financial Regulations
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
CDs	Compact Disks
CEOs	Chief executive Officers
CODL	Centre for Open and Distance Learning
CPD	Continuous professional development
CVCD	Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors
DE	Distance Education
EDP QA	External Degree Programme Quality Assurance
ELTU	English Language Teaching Unit
EQA	External Quality Assurance
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HETC	Higher Education for the Twentieth Century
HR	Human Resource
ICT	Information & Communication Technology
ILOs	Intended Learning Outcomes
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Units
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cells
IR	Institutional Review
IRQUE	Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education
IRR	Institutional Review Report
IT	Information Technology
LMS	Learning Management Systems
MBBS	Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery
MIS	Management Information System
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MOUs	Memoranda of Understanding
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NEC	National Education Commission
NQAAB	National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Board
NVQF	National Vocational Training Qualification Framework
OBE	Outcome-Based Education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning

PG	Post Graduate
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QAC	Quality Assurance Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statements
SCL	Student-Centred Learning
SDC	Staff Development Centre
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SJTU	Shanghai's Ja Tong Institution
SLMC	Sri Lanka Medical Council
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
THES	Times Higher Education Supplement
TOR	Terms of Reference
UGC	University Grants Commission
UMO	University Medical Officer

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# Introduction

## Purpose of the Manual

The Manual for Institutional Review has been developed to provide guidance to Sri Lankan universities and HEIs dedicated to the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode who wish to submit themselves for Institutional Review under the Quality Assurance Framework of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). It is expected to serve as a guide for universities and other HEIs to adopt and internalize good practices and standards in respect of quality assurance.

This Manual is an upgrading of the Standards in the *Quality, even if they use a multiple mode of delivery. Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmers* developed by the Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP) of Sri Lanka under the aegis of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO and published by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL 2009). It will effectively replace the manual which has served this purpose up to now.

Though primarily meant as a guide for Institutional Review, it will give a brief overview of all aspects pertaining to quality assurance in Higher Education in Sri Lanka, dedicated to ODL mode, such as Open Universities for the benefit of academics and administrators in open universities and other HEIs dedicated to ODL mode. The manual is used to assure the standards and quality of Sri Lankan universities and HEIs dedicated to ODL mode.

Although this Manual is meant for universities and other HEIs within the state sector it will be sufficiently generic in nature to permit its use for non-state HEIs dedicated to ODL Mode.

The conventional universities where the principal mode of delivery is face-to-face, will be evaluated using *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan universities and Higher Education Institutions* (2015), even if they use a multiple mode of delivery. External degree programmers offered by conventional universities using ODL mode will be evaluated using “*Quality Assurance Manual for External Degree Programmers and Extension Courses*” (UGC-HETC 2014)

## **Who will find this Manual useful?**

The Manual for review of institutions-has been developed to provide guidance to dedicated-ODL institutions of higher learning such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) and such other higher education institutions offering degree programmes through ODL mode-

The Manual addresses as its primary audience the academics and administrators and decision makers in the Open University of Sri Lanka and other HEIs dedicated to the ODL mode. It will be essential reading for members of the IQAU, IQAC, Heads of Departments, Deans, Registrar, Vice-Chancellor, of open universities and CEOs of other HEIs. Its content may also prove useful to faculty members of other universities who are called upon from time to time to undertake responsibilities at open universities.

Many academics and administrators in the conventional university system are not familiar with the ODL system and the tools of quality assurance review of open universities. Thus it is necessary to train senior academics and administrators in the university system who are involved with ODL review. Hence this Manual is a comprehensive document prepared to facilitate the training of reviewers. It will be useful for all institutional and programmer reviewers and potential reviewers of open universities and HEIs. Quality Assurance Council (QAC) staff and external review agencies... It will be useful as a resource base for intensive training programmes and workshops organized periodically both at institutional and national level for enhancing the efficiency of distance higher education institutions. It will be a useful reference for other stakeholders such as students, parents, funding agencies in state and private sector, international agencies and policy makers.

The manual will serve as a practical guide for universities and HEIs dedicated to ODL mode to prepare a Self-Evaluation Report (SER).

Thus the utility of the quality“ standards“ in this Manual is multifold. It can be used for quality management, strategic planning and for continuous improvement of ODL institutions.

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

The Manual consists of three parts.

Part I deals with perspectives of Open and Distance Learning System and Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education delivered via Open and Distance Learning mode. It consists of one chapter.

Chapter One deals with the theoretical /conceptual perspectives including definitions of quality, quality assurance, purpose and importance of quality assurance and the respective roles of internal and external quality assurance, the unit of assessment and the difference between institutional and programme review. It also describes the purpose and scope of Institutional Review, the pre-requisites for Institutional review, the review process and review outcome.

Part II deals with important theoretical and practical considerations in objectively assessing quality by peer review and consists of two chapters.

Chapter Two defines quality ‘Criteria’ that show different aspects of open universities’ /HEI’s operations including inputs that facilitate certain processes to achieve the desired outcomes. Ten ‘Criteria’ have been identified. For each of the defined criterion the recommended /proven procedures and practices that contribute to enhance the quality of the educational provisions are listed / explained as ‘Best Practices’. Open Universities can adapt and internalize the best practices in their operations and reviewers can use them in their evaluations.

Chapter Three - In order to enable reviewers to evaluate the performance objectively, these best practices are captured into specific and measurable statements termed ‘Standards’ Each of the standards articulates a dimension of institutional quality. The standards are aspirational expectations that must be met at least minimally. Standards given here are Threshold Academic Standards ie. the minimum acceptable level of achievement that an institution has to demonstrate to be eligible for the academic awards of qualifications. These standards were developed through a lengthy participatory process involving the relevant stakeholders in articulating the dimensions of quality required of open universities deserving of the public trust.

This chapter lists the specific Standards. The reviewers are expected to objectively assess the performance of the University by capturing the degree of internalization of best practices and the level of compliance/attainment of respective standards and assign a score for each standard on a four- point *Lickert* scale. It also describes the procedure for assessment of standards, computation of final score and assignment of a grade for performance.

Part III deals with the practical aspects of Self-evaluation, the Institutional Review and the Institutional Review report. It will consist of three chapters.

Chapter four describes the self-evaluation process in detail, the format of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) to be prepared for the University to be reviewed, and provides detailed guidelines as to how the SER is to be prepared in relation to the expected standards listed in Chapter Three. This would be very important for institutions that are preparing themselves for review.



Chapter five describes the review process in detail from selection of peer reviewers, composition of the review team, reviewer profile, attributes and the conduct expected of reviewers, pre-review arrangements, review visits and review process.

Chapter six provides guidelines for writing the Institutional Review Report including its purpose, structure, how the review judgment is arrived at both quantitatively and qualitatively and the procedure for submission of the report.

Appendix gives a template for the SER and a Format for preparation of Self-evaluation Report (SER); Glossary and References are included at the end.

## **Part I**

# **Quality Assurance System in Higher Education Dedicated to Open and Distance Learning Mode**



# Chapter One

## Perspectives of Quality Assurance in Higher Education Dedicated to Open and Distance Learning Mode

This chapter introduces the concepts and definitions of open and distance learning and quality in the context of higher education via open and distance learning (ODL) in dedicated ODL institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). It describes different approaches to quality assurance and importance of continuous improvement in quality towards excellence and quality culture. It also deals with, the context of Institutional Reviews.

### 1.1 Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

*Open learning* (OL) is an educational philosophy that in which particular value is attached to certain underlying principles. The major ones are:

- openness;
- learner centeredness;
- flexibility in learning with respect to pace, time, place of study etc.;
- removal of unnecessary barriers to access;
- recognition of prior learning;
- technology to mediate learning;
- Industrial process
- Curriculum and courses in the public domain

*Distance education* (DE) is an educational process and a 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.

*Open and Distance Learning* (ODL) is an amalgam of the two approaches of education namely, *Distance Education* (DE) and *Open Learning* (OL) that focuses on expanding access to learning.

Open and Distance learning may be available through institutions exclusively created for that purpose such as Open Universities. Conventional universities may offer certain programmes to off-campus students through distance learning alongside on-campus teaching (dual mode institutions).

Even though there has been an unprecedented expansion of ODL there are certain key issues in this field which are yet to be addressed. Some of the burning issues include quality, cost-effectiveness, assessment, lack of motivation and attrition.

In ODL the teaching function is shifted from the information transmitting performance of a teacher, to the transformative act of the teacher/tutor/instructor, engaging learners in attentive, responsive questioning of, and listening to, learners. Open and distance learning has brought a new division of labor into education and within it, a set of options for stakeholders about the location of enrolling and registering students; of developing, producing, reproducing and distribution of teaching materials; of tutoring, and supporting learners; of assessing, evaluating and awarding credits (industrial process). Organization and management of ODL is thus more complicated than that of a conventional system.

Arising from the physical separation of learners from the teacher, use of media for bridging the gap between the learner and teacher and division of labor in the activities, functions, and processes of ODL are radically different from those found in traditional classroom based face to face system.

Assessing quality is a specific skill.in the context of open universities, quality of both the academic provision and of the ODL system have to be assessed against the formatted set of criteria and standards in the Manual. Usually peers in a team are specialists in a discipline and do not have much exposure in quality assessment of institutions in an ODL context. Therefore it is important that they read chapter One.

Several guiding principles underpin a set of overarching general indicators of success. These include, but not limited to:

- Retention, progression and completion
- Widening participation, equality and accessibility
- Social responsibility
- Employability
- Interdisciplinary
- Internationalization
- Engaged and satisfied learner experience
- Collaboration and cooperation
- Evidenced based scholarship for learning and teaching

- Learners as partners
- Focus on the learner
- Quality assurance, enhancement and evaluation
- Academic excellence
- Technology as enabler and driver
- Innovation to impact
- Academic excellence

The quality concepts and principles for higher education through distance learning mode are thus built on all principles that apply generally to that of higher education, irrespective of the mode of delivery, and to those principles which characterize ODL provision.

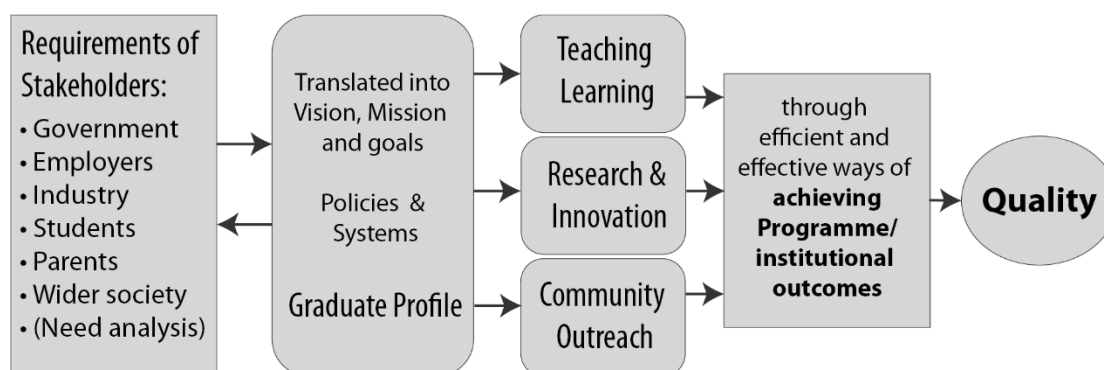
## 1.2 What is Quality and how is it Measured

### 1.2.1 Quality

The concept of quality in higher education is multidimensional and encompasses all its functions and activities.

Described originally as “Fitness for Purpose” of a product the Chairman of the Commonwealth of Learning (2006) defined it as “fitness for purpose with minimum cost to society” which recognizes the diversity of stakeholders viz: students, prospective students, academic staff, funders, professional agencies, government, prospective employers and wider society.

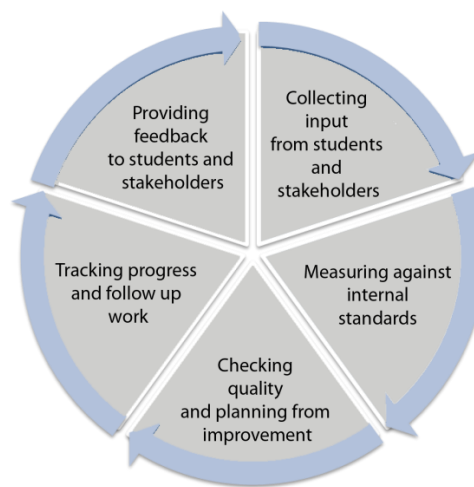
As fitness for purpose “quality” is conceived in relation to the institutional vision, mission, and goals. It allows the institution/programme to demonstrate the achievement of its objectives according to the purpose of its mission and goals.. The challenge is to achieve the goals, objectives/outcomes in an efficient and effective way and that is quality.



**Figure 1.1 - Concept of Quality in relation to Stakeholders (adapted from DADD, 2010)**

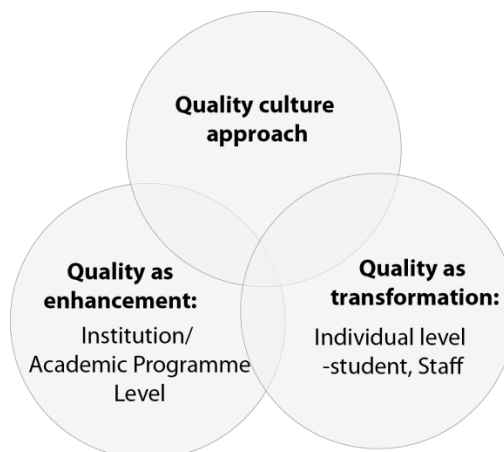
Figure 1.1 shows:

- Diverse stakeholders. (cage 1)
- Needs of stakeholders translated into Vision, Mission, Goals, Policies, Regulations etc. to be reflected through Graduate Profile of the institution (cage 2)
- These to be delivered by the institution through the three missions of the institution, namely teaching and learning; research and innovation; community services (cage 3)
- In an effective and efficient manner with monitoring, feedback and reviews based on Standards (Cage 4) leading to QUALITY (Figure 1.2).



**Figure 1.2 Quality Loop**

Quality is considered as a continuous process and has two important elements: quality as a transformative process of changing individuals and quality as an enhancement process of changing institution, both focusing on the continuing search for improvement and a commitment towards quality culture. (Figure 1.3)



**Figure 1.3 Concept of internal quality culture**

### **1.2.2 Dimensions for Assessment of Quality**

Assessing quality needs a yardstick or benchmark. In quality assessments, both internal and external, procedure will be discretionary and arbitrary if there is no framework against which to measure the scope of the reviews. Transparency, objectivity, and comparability between institutions are ensured by using an assessment structure with elements referred to as ‘Criteria’, ‘Standards’, and ‘Best Practices’. They define what is being measured, how it is measured, and the unit of measurement (quantitative/qualitative). These dimensions have been agreed upon based upon international practices and through extensive national stakeholder consultative process. Chapters Two and Three describe these dimensions in detail.

## **1.3 Quality Assurance and how is it approached**

### **1.3.1 Concept of Quality assurance**

*Quality assurance* is an all-embracing term referring to an ongoing continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, maintaining, guaranteeing, and improving) the quality of higher education system, institution or a study programme (based on UNESCO definition).

Policies and processes are the main pillars of a coherent institutional quality assurance system that forms a cycle for continuous improvement and contributes to the accountability of the institution. Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. The policy should be implemented through appropriate structures and processes while involving external participants. The institutional quality assurance processes must involve all sections of the institutions and be effectively integrated into normal planning and administrative processes. An institution must be committed to maintaining and improving quality through effective leadership and active involvement of teaching and other staff. Institutions should periodically analyse the relevance of their quality assurance system and make the necessary adjustments.

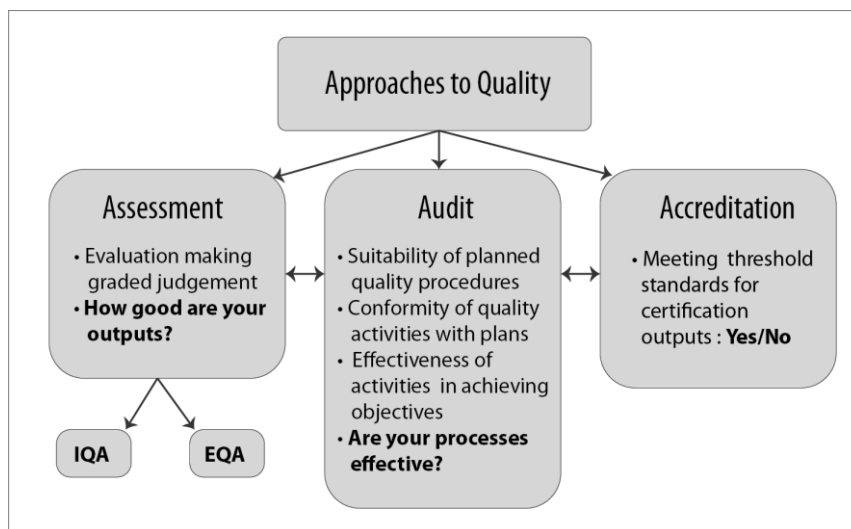
Universities being public institutions have to exercise their responsibility for maintaining quality and standards through periodic internal monitoring. Though this responsibility lies primarily with the institution itself where the power to control or change to practice exists, periodic external review by an independent agency will give further credibility in the eyes of the public and satisfy social accountability. This is the basic rationale for periodic external review.

### **1.3.2 Approaches to quality assurance**

As illustrated in Figure 1.4 main approaches to quality assurance are

- i) quality assessment,
- ii) quality audit and
- iii) accreditation.





**Figure 1.4 - Approaches to Quality**

*Audit* focusses on suitability of planned quality procedures, conformity of quality activities with plans, effectiveness of activities in achieving objectives. It asks the question “Are your processes effective?”

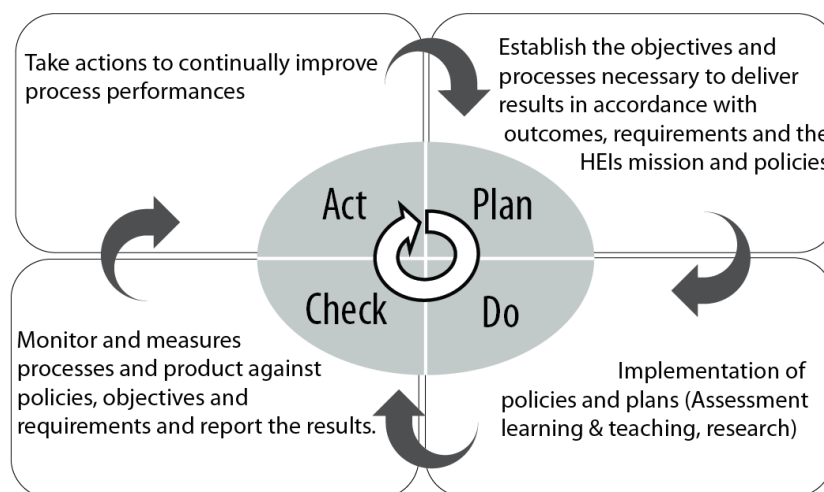
*Assessment* is an evaluation which makes graded judgement about quality and asks “How good are your outputs?” It might be based on self-review internally by the institution itself, and referred to as Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) or based on assessment by an external team of peers and referred to as *External Quality Assurance (EQA)*.

*Accreditation* is a process in which an institution’s services and operations are examined by an external accrediting agency to determine if applicable standards are met. If they are met the institution receives accreditation. Accreditation creates confidence and trust about the quality of the University/HEI and its programmes and awards amongst students, parents, prospective employers, and the general public. Sri Lanka has not yet moved towards accreditation.

### 1.3.3 Internal Quality Assurance

*Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)* is the main element of the quality assurance system. It is a structured internal cyclic system in a higher education institutions devoted to setting up, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of teaching, student learning experience, research and community outreach. Internal QA ensures that institutions have policies, mechanisms and procedures aiming at monitoring, evaluation and improving its activities and services within it. It will assess the current level of performance, identify strategic priorities for improvement, development and implementation plans, monitor and make adjustments, thus continuously promoting and enhancing the quality of the core activities as a whole.

The cycle is referred to as “Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) (Figure1.5).



**Figure 1.5 PDCA Cycle**

PDCA cycle in the case of an institution will include:

- **Plan** to include policies and procedures for management; determination of stakeholder- needs, graduate competencies in compliance with SLQF; expected learning outcomes at different levels; outcome-based curriculum
- **Do-** Implementation of the policies and plans
- **Check-** assessing the current level of performance through monitoring and feedback from all stakeholders, analyzing the results; identifying weaknesses and identify strategic priorities for improvement
- **Act-** development and implementation of improvement plans

Thus it continuously promotes and enhances the quality of the core activities towards a *quality culture*. Emphasis is now on institutions developing *quality culture* to ensure continuous enhancement of quality in their activities and services through internal quality monitoring.

It is recognized that it is difficult to create a culture of quality through a top-down process. It can only take root when the staff concerned take ownership of the process. The more level of oversight set up for implementing quality assurance the lower the extent of faculty ownership. The responsibility for quality needs to be situated as close as possible to the operational end of a given process. Faculty should engage every member in undertaking regular monitoring and reporting. However the top institutional leadership has an important role to play by championing the cause of quality assurance providing the necessary resources and training for the staff.

In the universities with the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) and faculty-wise Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) in the university with clearly defined terms of reference, it is expected that quality of university would be internally monitored towards continuous improvement. IQAU has to report its activities to the Senate and Council. It would be desirable to have this report as a regular agenda item in

the Senate. IQACs coordinate all quality assurance activities within the faculty in liaison with the IQAU. A report from the IQAC has to be a regular agenda item in the Faculty Board.

### 1.3.4 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Addressing accountability of different stakeholders requires assessment by an external peer team appointed by the QAC through a cyclical external quality assurance Process. The process of EQA involves four stages as in Figure 1.6

Stage 1- Pre-determined Criteria and Standards related to each one of the Criterion on which to base the assessment process.



**Figure 1.6 - External quality assurance model**

Stage II - Self-evaluation and preparation of Self Evaluation Report (SER) by the institution / programme

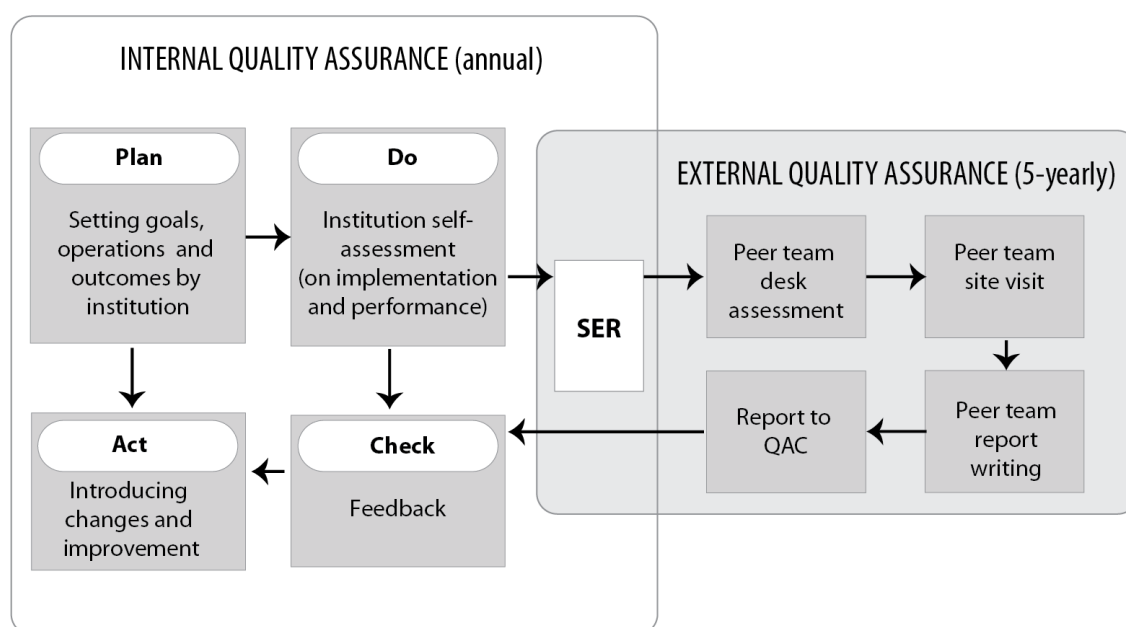
Stage III - Validation of the SER by a team of peers through desk review and site visits the institution and submit recommendations to the UGC-QAC through a Peer Review Team Report

Stage IV - The scrutiny and approval of the Peer Review Team Report by the UGC-QAC and publication of results.

External review process is detailed in section 1.6.

### 1.3.5 Functional link between internal quality assurance and external quality assurance

Total quality improvement system of an institution is built on two pillars, namely internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA). Quality assurance is a continuous process that does not end with external feedback or report or its follow up process within the institution. The functional link between the two components is illustrated in Figure 1.6 As depicted and implied through closed circuit diagram IQA should be 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. The self-assessments undertaken regularly, with documented activities, outcomes, improvements planned, provides the foundation to prepare the Self Evaluation Report (SER) for external quality assurance (EQA). The SER so prepared forms the basis for external quality reviews to undertake external assessment for quality. Thus SER truly reflects the internal operations and activities of the institution, internally monitored through IQA procedures.



**Figure 1.7 Quality assurance as a continuous cycle**

In addition in this closed circuit (Figure 1.7) the Institutional Review Report coming out of the EQA process is expected to serve as feedback to IQA. Internal quality assurance in turn shall spearhead the follow up actions on the findings, shortcomings highlighted and recommendations made therein in the review report.

As mentioned, internal quality assurance is supported by periodic external review. The two processes have to be harmonized for maximum benefit. Findings of one inform the other. Both are essential for maintaining and enhancing quality. The interaction between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance is depicted in Figure 1.7

This will ensure that the institution is heading in the right direction towards continuous improvement in all aspects, thus enabling to reach the status of 'Centre of Excellence' as a HEI and also to maintain the status once it is achieved.

### **1.3.6 Development of Quality Assurance in the Open University of Sri Lanka**

#### **Need for QA tools and systems for higher education through open and distance learning (ODL)**

With the increasing acceptance of ODL as widening access to higher education, research suggests that it has become increasingly crucial that quality assurance process is developed and maintained if the ODL provision has to be relevant and effectively functional that the products have the same recognition as the conventional.

A frequently cited challenge by ODL practitioners is that many quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities to assess and review ODL institutions and programmes.

However international best practices recognize that arising from the physical separation of the learner from the teacher, the separation of programme design, delivery, learner support and assessment and the use of media and technologies to bridge the gap between the learner and the teacher, the functions and the processes in ODL are radically different from those found in traditional face-to-face classroom teaching. Accommodating these differences in QA systems has been essential in establishing the credibility of ODL (World Bank 2002; Damme, 2002; ADB 2012) Thus a number of open universities have developed QA tools and systems in the institutional context. The quality assurance of OUSL has to be viewed within this broad perspective.

#### **Development of QA system for The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL)**

In 2001 a committee on Quality Assurance (QA) was formed within the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) and University Grants Commission (UGC). This committee initiated all QA related activities including developing the QA Handbook for Universities (2002). In December 2004, a Standing Committee for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) was appointed by the UGC. Simultaneously a unit for quality assurance and accreditation was formed within the UGC. This was supported by the Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project of the MOHE and the World Bank (2003-2010).

It was under the supervision of the QAA unit of the UGC, that the first cycle of Institutional and Subject Reviews of all conventional universities and The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) were conducted using the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities (2002).

The Quality Assurance Committee established at OUSL in 2004 developed a QA framework for ODL institutions and programmes in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL) by customizing the generic guidelines in the QA framework for DE institutions developed by the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU-COL 2002), and published it as *“Framework for Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning in Sri Lanka”* (2006). Thereon OUSL used this to guide the internal quality assurance in all its activities.

In 2007 a milestone achieved by the Distance Education Modernization Project, (DEMP) of the MOHE and the Asian Development Bank (2003-2009), was a ‘home grown

‘quality assurance system of accreditation standards and performance standards and evaluation criteria developed for ensuring quality in distance higher education through a very extensive substantial development phase over two years and with wide range of inputs from OUSL, national and international experts. This was internationalized by COL to make it into a generic document applicable across commonwealth countries and published by. COL and, UNESCO as “*Quality Assurance Toolkit; Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes* (Coomaraswamy Uma et al 2009) This endeavor brought international recognition to the Sri Lankan quality standards.

The performance indicators specified for each quality standard in the Toolkit are used to conduct self-assessment of all activities for continuous quality improvement.

In 2015 decision was made by the UGC that while the conventional universities would be evaluated using “*Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and higher Education Institutions*” The Open university of Sri Lanka should be evaluated using the “*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmers*”.

To keep abreast with the standards used to evaluate the conventional universities in “*Manual for Institutional review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions*” (2015) the assessment ‘Standards’ in the QA Toolkit have been updated in this manual. This Manual will effectively replace the use of “*Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes*” for reviewing OUSL in Sri Lanka.

#### **1.4 Distinction between, Institutional Review and Programme Review**

Institutional review analyses and tests the effectiveness of an institution’s processes for managing and assuring the quality of academic activities undertaken by the university /HEIs. It evaluates the extent to which the internal quality assurance schemes can be relied upon to maintain the quality of provision of educational programmes over time.

Subject/Programme review evaluates the quality of a student’s learning experience at programme level, effectiveness of Faculty’s processes for managing and assuring quality of study programmes, student learning experience and standards of awards within a programme of study. It is about management and assuring quality at programme level.

The external review process that is referred to as Institutional Review (IR) constitutes the focus of this manual.

#### **1.5 Institutional Review - Purpose**

Institutional Review focuses on the powers and responsibilities which universities hold for quality and standards. It is concerned with how a university/HEI assures itself and the wider public that the quality and standards it sets for itself are being achieved. Institutional review is separate from, though still closely linked to, programme review. Institutional review is concerned with university-wide processes, which support sound quality management and university planning to maintain an appropriate environment for teaching, learning, research and other activities.

The overall purpose of institutional review is to achieve accountability for quality and standards and by using a peer review process to promote sharing of good practices and to facilitate continuous improvement. The overall purpose is sub-divided into five specific aspects.

i. *Confidence*-to instill confidence in an institution's capacity to safeguard standards, both internally and externally, through a transparent process which involves and is owned by staff throughout the institution and is accessible to students and other external groups with an interest in an institution's teaching, learning, and research activities.

ii. *Accountability*-to achieve accountability through external review and public report of an institution's evidence of its own attentiveness to quality and standards and of actions taken to improve and be responsive to feedback from students and others engaging with the institution as a provider of academic activities.

iii. *Information*-to provide systematic, clear and accessible information on the standards and quality claimed by a University/HEI so as to enable choices and decisions of potential students, employers, funding bodies, and other 'users' of an institution's intellectual resources and its awards.

iv. *Improvement*-to promote improvement by identifying and sharing good practice through peer review, active use of national and international standards and benchmarks as well as implementation of recommendations made in previous institutional and programme/subject reviews.

v. *Innovation*-to showcase innovative approaches in teaching, research, community extension, management, linkages or income generation to meet national or regional needs that could be recognized by the review panel and highlighted in the report as an example of a good practice which can be adopted by others.

## **1.6 Institutional Review - Scope**

The scope of the Institutional Review has been carefully determined. The criteria selected for scrutiny through institutional review, reflect the concerns and expectations of senior staff in Sri Lankan universities of areas regarded as key to the development and maintenance of an effective and competitive higher educational system, within and beyond Sri Lanka. The ten criteria which will be looked at are the following:

Criterion 1 : Vision, Mission and Planning

Criterion 2 : Governance and Management

Criterion 3 : The Learners

Criterion 4 : Human Resource Development

Criterion 5 : Programme Design and Development

Criterion 6 : Course Design and Development

Criterion 7 : Learning Infrastructure ,Resources and Learner support

Criterion 8 : Learner Assessment and Evaluation

Criterion 9 : Postgraduate Studies,Research,Innovation and Commercialization

Criterion 10: Community Engagement,Consultancy and Outreach

In designing the quality framework and dimensions for institutional review, due consideration was given to the different permutations prevailing in the Open University system for the development and maintenance of an effective and competitive higher educational system.

### **1.7 Institutional Review – Requirements**

Institutional review is based on a prior process of institutional self-evaluation, There has to be a willingness by university staff to gather and consider evidence of university policies and processes in action and to discuss them self critically. Universities / HEIs which have well established and functioning Internal Quality Assurance Units (IQAU) would be better prepared for external review.

In preparation for the institutional review, institutions are expected to have developed the following capabilities:

- Capacity to set university goals and objectives in the form of a Corporate Plan and action plans.
- Capacity to implement strategies and procedures in accordance with the codes of practice. Universities should be familiar with these codes of practice and manuals developed through a participatory process. They should have adopted or adapted them based on their own context.
- Compliance with Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) published by the QAC/CVCD when developing new programmes of study or modifying existing ones, keeping in mind that they are not meant to be prescriptive and that deviations are permissible with justification.
- A desire for university self-knowledge (gained through inquiry, evidence and feedback) and commitment to gathering and using data to support inquiry and evaluation e.g. tracer study information for all degree programmes.
- Willingness to engage in a constructive critical self-evaluation without threat or hindrance, and willingness to submit oneself and the institution to external peer review with a sense of 'ownership' of the process of inquiry and review at all levels.

These essential pre-requisites for external quality assurance should be by now well entrenched in the state university system. The mindset of the academics and administrators should be imbued with a quality culture.

### **1.8 Institutional Review - Process**

The QAC will select the review team from the pool of accredited reviewers and identify one of them as the Review Chair. About two months before the review, the dates for the review visit are agreed upon by mutual agreement of the team and the institution. The QAC will liaise all activities. The SER will be sent to the review team members at least six weeks prior to the review. The broad scope of the review process, including the range of documentation to be made available and the timetable for the visit will be intimated to the Institution by the QAC.



*The review process has three distinct parts:*

- Preparation
  - by the university / institution
  - by the review team
- The review visit
- The review report and process prior to publication

#### 1.8.1

- a. Preparation by the University / Institution: Some months before the visit, the institution will have begun to compile its self-evaluation document (SER) to be completed by a date agreed in advance for submission to the review team.
- b. Preparation by the Review Team: The review team will meet about 4 weeks' in advance of the visit, having read the university's SER. to identify lines of inquiry and identify any further information they need to see in advance, either to fully understand the document or to plan their detailed inquiries. They will also identify individuals and groups they wish to meet during their visit. The team may decide to allocate particular areas of inquiry to individual reviewers.

#### 1.8.2

The Review Visit - During the visit, the review team will: test and verify (so far as possible) the claims in the university's self-evaluation; review with the university any specific concerns arising from reviews of subjects or professional body reviews done before the visit; gather any further evidence necessary to enable it to form a view on the effectiveness of the institution's arrangements for the management of quality and standards including the functioning of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) and its reporting mechanisms; assess to what extent the recommendations and criticisms made by the previous institutional review have been addressed.

The review team will also consult documentation provided by the institution. It will endeavor to keep to a minimum the amount of documentation it requests during the visit. The aim is to consider evidence used by the institution and to focus on discussions with staff and students to get a clear picture of the institution's processes in operation. The review team should always seek to read and use all information requested.

Institutional Review is evidence-based. The judgments made by the review team emerge from consideration of the evidence and collective consideration. They should not rest on unsupported views or prejudice. Most evidence for review will come from information and documentation used by the institution itself. In addition, and as available, review teams will draw on other relevant material such as (professional body accreditation reports, UGC sub-committee reports where appropriate etc). All reviews will draw upon the following principal sources of evidence:

- The university's self-evaluation prepared for the review
- Evidence referenced in the self-evaluation
- Use of local codes of practice developed or adopted by the university
- Use of national benchmarks and guidelines as available

- Information gathered by the review team during the review visit

The visit should last five days based on the size and complexity of the institution and may take less time, depending on the number of campuses/sites; diversity of provision; and clarity and depth of the university's review document.

The visit should conclude with a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor / Director and senior staff. The team will give a general indication of its conclusions based on the review and including strengths and weaknesses identified. The institution can correct any obvious errors of fact or misinterpretations at this point, but they would have to wait until the written report is submitted to give their response to the report.

### 1.8.3

The Review Report and process prior to publication.

The outcome of institutional review is a published report. Its purpose is to inform the institution and external parties of the findings of the review and to provide a reference point to support and guide staff in their continuing quality assurance activities.

In particular, the report will give an overall judgment on the reviewer's assessment of the performance of the institution with regard to quality assurance supported by a commentary on the following:

- the rigor and robustness of the university's mechanisms for discharging its responsibility for the standard of its awards; the quality of the education it provides; the effectiveness of its planning, quality and resource management; and the efficiency of its administration;
- the sufficiency, reliability of the evidence used and its accessibility to external scrutiny;
- a statement on the level accomplishment of the institution under the Grading of A, B, C or D based on the institution wise score as given in chapter 4
- a commentary on commendations when an institution receives an A Grading to encourage achievement of excellence and a commentary on recommendations for improvement for institutions that receive a B,C or D Grading.

The draft report will be submitted to the QAC by the review team. The QAC will send a copy of the report to the University to see whether the university has any concerns regarding the report and if they do a request for discussion would be followed by a meeting between the review team, QAC and the university. Details of the procedure to be followed are described in Chapter 6.

## 1.9 Final Outcome of Institutional Review

After the Institution accepts the Institutional Review report, it will be entered to the public domain through the QAC website where all stakeholders including students, graduates, prospective employers, grant providing agencies and educationists and policymakers will have access to it.

The UGC and MOHE will receive a copy through the QAC. The recommendations re provision of resources and other administrative factors influencing quality need to be addressed by these agencies in consultation with the institution. The institutional report may provide valuable data to the institution at its annual audit review, fund allocation and cadre review meetings.

The most important follow up actions have to be at the University itself. IQAU should ensure that all faculties, departments and support units have access to it. Ideally after all concerned academics, administrators and support staff have read at least the sections relevant to them, their reactions have to be obtained in a formal manner and discussed in special meetings of the Curriculum & Evaluation committees, Faculty boards, Senate and Council. A comprehensive follow up action plan has to be drawn up and integrated into the current action plan. The IQAU and other relevant committees should continue to monitor the progress in redressing defects and enhancing quality. The Institutional review report should be made available for public scrutiny through the University's website.

The QAC should continue to provide system wide analyses and information re Institutional reviews to the University system specially with a view to inculcating good practices. This could be through the QAC newsletter and website.

## **Part II**

### **Quality Assessment Criteria, Best Practices, and Standards**



## Chapter Two

### Criteria and Best Practices

#### 2.1 Introduction

In both internal and external quality assessments, transparency, objectivity and comparability are ensured by having a framework or assessment structure against which measurement could be made. In keeping with international quality assurance practices and procedures, for institutional review of the Open Institution, an assessment structure with 10 ‘Criteria’ and corresponding ‘Standards’ for each of the 10 criteria has been identified. These criteria reflect various aspects of the Institution’s operations including inputs that facilitate processes to achieve the desired outcomes.

This Chapter describes the 10 ‘Criteria’ and respective ‘Best Practices’ that be practiced at open universities.

#### 2.2 Criteria

The “Criteria” reflect the key aspects of an institutions’ development and operations, including inputs that facilitate processes to achieve the desired outcomes. Accordingly, 10 criteria encompassing key aspects of an Open Institution have been identified as most appropriate for institutional review after careful study of several documents including the Toolkit for *Quality Assurance of Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes* (Coomaraswamy Uma et al, 2009), *Manual for Quality Assurance of External degree Programmes and Extension Courses* (UGC/WB-HETC 2014) *Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Educational Institutions* (UGC/ WB-HETC,2015), *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions* (UGC/WB-HETC 2015) and QA Manuals adopted by QA Agencies of other countries. In institutional review process, the performance of the institution in relation to all 10 criteria is considered for arriving at a judgment on the institution as a whole.

The ten Criteria selected for Institutional Review of open universities and HEIs dedicated to ODL are listed below:

- Criterion 1: Vision, Mission and Planning
- Criterion 2: Governance and Management
- Criterion 3: The Learners
- Criterion 4: Human Resource Development
- Criterion 5: Programme Design and Development

- Criterion 6: Course Design and Development
- Criterion 7: Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner Support
- Criterion 8: Learner Assessment and Evaluation
- Criterion 9: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization
- Criterion 10: Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach

## 2.3 Best Practices

Best practices are ideally best known methods, techniques or proven academic, administrative, infrastructural processes adopted by higher educational institutions to enhance quality and may be looked upon as sign posts that lead towards excellence in their practices. They are contextual and may be influenced by many factors. They show the path to success through continuous improvement leading to the benchmark of excellence. They contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the Institution/ programme. Ideally best practices should become part of the working culture of the Institution.

Brief descriptions of best practices related to inputs, processes and outcomes with respect to the 10 Criteria are given below.

## 2.4 Criteria and Corresponding Best Practices

### *Criterion 1- Vision mission and Planning*

- Democratization of higher education being an absolute necessity in Sri Lanka, Institution has formulated a clear vision and mission supported by clearly defined goals, within the context of national development priorities and latest regional and international trends in higher education, which articulates publicly the commitment of the Institution to enhance opportunities of higher education for as large a segment of the population as possible including all adults who wish to acquire knowledge and skills in various fields and for lifelong learning through open and distance learning. Vision and mission are made known to all stakeholders through website and print media.  
The institution is committed to inclusivity, openness to people, places, methods, time and pace of study and ideas and to provide educational opportunity and social justice to the increasingly diverse student population.
- The Institution's mission statement is compatible with the vision and consistent with Universities Act No of 1978 and the relevant Ordinance with respect to the establishment of the Institution. Mission clearly and appropriately defines its principal purposes to take full advantage of ODL and technology-mediated learning strategies to provide increased and equitable access to education and training for all their citizens, its types of qualifications it offers, its commitment to Supported Open and Distance Learning as a mark of the institution's distinct contribution to ODL, and giving direction to its activities and providing a basis for the enhancement of the institution's effectiveness to enhance student achievements.
- The Institution's goals and objectives stated in the Strategic Plan should align with the National Higher Education Policy Framework (2008), with respect to enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning through ODL, and be the lead institution in

providing high quality relevant education through ODL and enhance institutional capacity to achieve excellence in teaching learning ,research and scholarship and complying with standards and guidelines issued by the Ministry of higher Education, UGC and Quality Assurance Council (QAC) and other professional bodies where applicable and as far as possible also comply with reference points such as the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework(SLQF), Subject benchmark Statements (SBS) ,and Codes of Practice.

- The Strategic Management Plan should reflect institution's vigilance on new trends in the higher education sphere nationally and globally and activity should demonstrate institution's readiness to embrace innovative initiative for progressive development. Strategic planning involves 1) formulating goals, objectives, and action steps based on realistic financial planning (aligning the budget and planning cycles) and 2) monitoring implementation tracking progress and revising the plan.

Appropriate goals and objectives should be in place for all key operations and determined through conducting systematic, comprehensive institutional research. Goals, objectives and action steps (plans) for all key operations of the institution based on the institutional values and mission, generated from across the stakeholders of the institution, including all categories of staff, the senate, the council, alumni and students. through a participatory process of involving a wide group of institution stakeholders using a mix of formal and informal mechanisms. Goals and action plans thus formulated are disseminated through print and electronic media to all stakeholders. The policies and plans developed are regularly reviewed in the light of institutional research data. Such a community driven process can help build broad support and encourage commitment among diverse constituents.

Plan also describes the implementation plans, measurable criteria tracking process, and methods for clear accountability, Implementation plans described for each objective's action steps, anticipated outcome, timelines, benchmark indicators and the person or office accountable.

Once the plan is approved it is made available on the institutional website. Implementation is monitored, progress tracked and routinely reported to all stakeholders through conference or annual score card that contains performance indicators.

- The-nature of ODL, predicated on the separation in time and space of the teacher and the learner demands that its quality assurance systems have a different focus. In general the same regulatory framework used by the conventional universities is used for maintaining academic standards of courses and programmes of study. However as the industrial production line features of ODL became obvious , appropriate procedures and practices to ensure quality in its various aspects of the system are being used through Council approved specific QA policy guidelines prepared for internal quality assurance , in alignment with the national policy on QA for higher education, with criteria used to measure unique features of ODL such as the process of course preparation and the quality of study materials; the quality of feedback and interactivity in the form of counselling; tutorials, and assignments, Quality is the glue that holds together the other systems in an ODL operation.



Institutional QA policy and regulations are in conformity with the national policy on QA for higher education implemented by the UGC-QAC. It is effectively communicated to all internal stakeholders and placed on the institution's website. The institutional QA policy is also in compliance with Sri Lankan Qualification Framework (SLQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and other reference material including those of the relevant professional body.

- The Institution has a defined ethical policy built upon the values by setting out ethical principles such as selflessness, integrity, responsibility and accountability, freedom of speech, dignity and respect, collegiality and sustainability, and avoiding conflict of interest that we expect our staff, students and external members act in accordance with. Ethical principles are to be applied throughout the academic community, whatever the nature of activity or interaction. All members of the constituencies are made aware of the policy and the practice of it is strictly enforced and violation appropriately acted upon.
- There should be a clear and transparent policy for the fee levying system and for the administration of financial support to students, including scholarships, bursaries, and waivers. The policies and procedures should be communicated to prospective students before entry. Implementation of the policy is monitored and reviewed periodically. Necessary actions should be taken to ensure timely disbursements of financial assistance to students.
- Keeping with global trends in distance higher education to enhance recognition of all forms of learning (formal, non-formal, virtual or work-based) and in alignment with the mission and objectives of ODL, institution enables learners to transfer credits accumulated elsewhere to the institution so that they could continue a course or programme with the institution without loss academic time. In order to address this a comprehensive, accountable, transparent policy, regulation and procedures concerning credit transfers and credit exemptions which recognize prior learning experience of students should be in place. The decisions about credit transfers are made by the academic authority of the institution. The Institution provides timely accurate and clear instructions regarding the policy to all prospective and registered students. The Institution has also in place well defined and effectively disseminated policies, regulations and procedures to enable qualified students to transfer from one programme of study to another programme.
- The institution has a clearly identified policy that provides a basis for collaborative relationships and partnerships at many levels of international outreach and collaboration: some are academic, others professional, and others take different forms according to need, requests, and affiliations. These may involve public/private; /governmental/non-governmental; national/regional/international agencies. These may include student and academic faculty exchanges, international university partnership agreements, international research projects, development of joint degree programmes with partner universities, as well as possible development of branch campuses of foreign institutions. Many of them are franchised institutions operating on behalf of a recognized or unrecognized foreign degree awarding institutions. Under this theme phenomenon of cross border delivery can also be mentioned.

- Institution has a clearly identified defined policy that provides the basis for collaborative relationships and partnerships. There should be specified TOR or establishing collaborations and partnerships and for monitoring and evaluating their effectiveness with reference to defined performance indicators.
- Institution has a policy for the establishment, implementation and maintenance of a Management Information System (MIS) for management of the data and operations of the institution, including its infrastructure, finances, student records, academic programmes, and network of centres which is complete and current with an effective mechanism to manage and monitor its operation to remain current and complete.
- In ODL the impact of ICT goes wider than just the structure and presentation of courses viz -teacher roles, course design, support systems, and the curriculum This impacts on the roles and workload of both course teams, academia and tutors. Institution should have a framework within which strategic decisions about the use of ICT by students, academics and other staff can be made. The institution should have a policy for the planning, acquisition, deployment, maintenance and effective use of latest ICT in support of ODL management and educational provision enabling access to information, the sharing of findings and knowledge and the development of new knowledge. It is integrated into the system for management, teaching and learning, delivery and learner support and research. Institution should also have policies for the release of their OER materials as MOOCs for making education more vibrant and sustainable. Procedures for monitoring the implementation of ICT policies should be in place and enforced.
- In general a supportive environment including welfare and recreational services have to be provided for staff and students and institution to be responsive to concerns when they are raised. However in distance education irrespective of technological advances facilitating delivery of educational and training programmes, responsibility for instructional quality and control, the improvement of learning and the aggregate effectiveness of distance education still rests with the faculty. There is also a host of other people who together as a team make it happen. The institution need to have an appropriate human resource policy in place, , showing the type and number of human resources required at different cadres or levels, their recruitment, placement, induction and continuing professional development, their workload appraisal, benefits and incentives, tenure and promotion, retirement, terms and conditions, and code of professional ethics based on a human resource needs survey and human resource planning. The planning should take into account the network of centres the institution has.
- In addressing violence and indiscipline among students within institutions it has been recognized that this can be remedied to a certain extent through introducing modules on social cohesion discussed at orientation programmes, improved contact and engagement between academic staff and students, and increased inclusive extracurricular activities. There should be a policy and appropriate mechanisms to encourage staff to engage in more extensive contact with students both socially and academically so that they can share their problems. Strategies include enhance genuine social and political debate within the institution, with participation of academic staff, assigning academic staff members to small groups of students as their

mentors, encouraging staff to work together with students on activities that benefit the community and in enhancing the public image of the institution.

The institution should aim to handle complaints in a way that: ensures a full and fair investigation; addresses all the points at issue and provides an effective response and appropriate redress; provides a prompt resolution within established time scales; and positive actions to continuously improve services. Confidentiality should be preserved during the investigation of a complaint in the interests of everyone concerned. A Code of Practice designed for this purpose should be communicated to the relevant parties.

The mission of the university emphasizes its fullest dedication towards quality of the education offered through ODL. Quality management of the ODL institution should be a systematic and organized approach to ensure quality outcomes (rather than processes and inputs) which should include all the activities institution will use to direct, control, and coordinate quality. These activities include formulating quality policy, and setting quality objectives., quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement. The quality objectives, policy and prescribed guidelines and procedures documented in the institution's QA policy is made available to all staff. Based on the Quality Manual service operations manuals are developed at departmental levels as well as at network of centres. The manuals have work instructions and SOPs for effective quality management toward achieving outcomes. This is part of the internal QA system of the university which should focus on performance outputs/outcomes than the inputs and processes and should be steered by the leadership.

- ODL Institution's internal quality assurance responsibility necessarily involve multiple stakeholders – senior management, discipline leaders, academic staff, staff with responsibility for support services in the main campus and network of Centers by virtue of ODL mode of delivery and the division of labor in its functions. Institution therefore takes responsibilities for ensuring quality and standards in programme provision, service delivery, operation, student learning, and institution performance to ensure that defined standards will be reliably achieved and that awards have credibility. The Institution, in order to reflect the above should demonstrate the following:
  - development, effective implementation, and review of QA policies for all aspects the institutional operations and of the academic activities including delivery through ODL in the main campus and all centers.
  - Maintenance of academic standards with appropriate mechanism for external input.
  - Promoting internalization of best practices in its various units through IQA system, as a move towards quality culture.
  - Effective quality assurance arrangements for all operations at the main campus and the network of centres, encompassing systematic internal monitoring and improvement in quality assurance.
  - Policies and procedures for quality assurance being effectively communicated to all stakeholders including those at the centres.
  - regular valid and reliable feedback from internal and external stakeholders from main campus and centres to improve its operations.

- The Institution takes ultimate responsibility for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, irrespective of where these are delivered or who provides them. In this context IQA is the main element of quality assurance system. It is a structured internal cyclic system devoted to setting up, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of teaching, student learning experience research, and community outreach.

A central IQAU and faculty-wise IQACs have clearly defined terms of reference and performance targets aligned with the ‘standards’ in the Review Manuals (UGC-HETC 2015). It is expected that quality of institution would be internally monitored towards continuous improvement by central unit, the IQAU which report its activities and outcomes to the senate and Council as a regular agenda item. Recommendations of the Senate and council are discussed at the respective Faculties and improvements effected in coordination with IQACs. Faculty level IQACs coordinate all activities at the faculty level, report its outcomes at the Faculty Board in liaison with IQAU.

- However addressing accountability of different stakeholders is carried out through EQA which has two components viz: a) internal monitoring(IQA) and self-evaluation with a submission of SER and, b) a site visit for validation of the SER by a peer team appointed by the UGC. The outcome of the EQA is a published report to inform the institution and external parties an overall judgement of the reviewer’s assessment of the performance of the institution with regard to its quality and recommendations for improvement. IQAU ensures that all faculties, departments, units etc. have access to the findings and recommendations and comments and together IQACs address the recommendations/comments through formulation of an improvement action plan with timelines.

### ***Criterion 2- Governance and Management***

- Institution has an appropriate and clearly defined organizational structure (organogram) reflected in the Corporate Plan / Institution Calendar and its governance and management system is in compliance with what is prescribed in the Universities Act no 16 of 1978 as amended, the relevant Ordinance, and their amendments, Universities Establishment Code, Circulars and Establishment letters by the UGC and relevant ministries and rules and regulations issued by the relevant Ministries/Authorities. The organizational structure of the main campus and its network of its centers is clearly defined and documented, is appropriate for its ODL operations, provides for collegial decision making and oversight of institutional activities and ensures the overall quality of institutional ODL provision. Its decision making processes and policies are clear, consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The organizational structure of the institution is widely communicated to its internal and external stake holders including wider community through the website and/or in printed form.
- The governance and administrative structure must provide effective leadership in the interests of the institution as a whole, through policy development and processes for accountability. Senior administrators must lead the activities of the institution effectively as per the mission statement and within a clearly defined internal governance structure. The governing structure ensures that the mission statement is appropriate for the institution dedicated to ODL delivery mode, clearly and

appropriately defines its principal purposes and priorities, and is influential in guiding planning and action within the institution. The mission is used consistently as a basis for the establishment of goals and objectives, planning and major policy decisions and for development of the institutional and organizational units within it. The planning process is managed effectively to achieve the mission and goals through cooperative action across the institution. Planning must combine coordinated strategic preparation with flexibility to adapt to results achieved and changing circumstances.

- The Institution's organizational structure is clearly defined, its decision making processes, and policies, are clear, consistent with its mission and support institutional effectiveness. The Institution's system of governance involves the participation of all appropriate constituencies and includes regular communication among them. This is widely communicated to internal as well as external stakeholders through Corporate Plan/Strategic Plan, University Calendar and website. The effectiveness of the institution's organizational structure and the system of governance is improved through periodic and systematic review.
- Governance and management activities generally relate to the funding, regulations, provision or delivery of educational services, mechanisms used in the governance of ODL (include policy, legislation, market forces, allocation of funding etc.) and QA systems. The governing authority, senior administration, faculty, and staff at all levels should understand and fulfill their respective roles as set forth in the Institution's official documents and support institutional effectiveness and integrity.

Mechanisms are in place to promote coordination and communication between these entities and promote participatory management with a flexible mix of formal and informal mechanisms which encourage teamwork in a transparent manner. Informal /ad-hoc committees complement the work of the statutory bodies. The planning process is managed effectively through cooperative action across the institution. The success of the institution will be dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms on institutional policies and strategic management plans. Which should be output and outcome based rather than input or process based. Monitoring and evaluation procedures relating to this should be built into all faculties/departments/divisions/centres/units.

- In alignment with the Corporate Plan / Strategic Plan, planning and management occurs within a framework of sound institutional policies and regulations that ensure financial, administrative, and academic accountability. The Institution through a participatory systematic process involving all relevant stakeholders, plans beyond a short term horizon, an integrated strategic plan that involves realistic analysis of internal and external opportunities and constraints with responsibilities assigned to them. It is communicated to all relevant stakeholders. The results of this systematic and integrated strategic planning are implemented in all faculties, departments, units and network of Centres of the Institution across the country, through financial, academic, administrative and other supporting plans.
- The resources and infrastructure should suit the particular characteristics of the institution, in terms of teaching methods (ODL) and to meet the needs of the institution's activities, including in terms of organization, planning and methods of allocation. Financial planning processes must be responsive to institutional goals and

priorities, maintain viable revenue expenditure relationships and take full account of long term and short term funding implications. Financial resources must be adequate for the programmes and services offered and efficiently managed in keeping with programme requirements and institutional priorities. Effective systems must be used for budgeting and for financial delegations and accountability, providing flexibility for managers at different levels in the institution with institutional oversight and effective risk management. Managing allocation of resources such as space, money, material, and human resources should be explicitly and transparently linked to activities identified by the annual plans of the respective years. The Institution preserves and enhances available financial resources sufficient to support its mission.

- Institution complies with national administrative and financial regulations as well as its own pre-approved Manual of Procedures or Standard Operational Procedures and prepares financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in Sri Lanka. The annual audit is prepared by an auditor external to the institution. Governing board policies and institutional practices ensure the independence and objectivity of the auditor and the appropriate consideration of the audit by the governing board. The governing board reviews and approves the institution's financial plans. The institution complies with national administrative and financial regulations and prepares its own Manual of Procedures.
- Financial planning processes based on principles of transparency and participation and steered by the governance and management is responsive to institutional goals and priorities and take a full account of long term and short term funding implications. Financial affairs must be effectively managed with a proper balance between local flexibility for cost center managers and institutional accountability and responsibility. Risk assessment and auditing processes must provide for effective risk analysis through independent verification of financial processes and reports in keeping with applicable accounting standards. To accommodate the above and to be accountable Institution has an efficient monitoring mechanism through internal audit procedures, complemented by an external auditing process.

The Institution ensures the integrity of its finances through prudent financial management and organization, a well-organized budget process, appropriate internal control mechanisms, risk assessment, and timely financial reporting to internal and external constituency groups, providing a basis for sound financial decision making.

Opportunities identified for new services of revenue are reviewed by the administration and the governing Council to ensure the integrity of the Institution. The Institution directs its fund raising efforts toward the fulfillment of institutional purposes and conducts them in accordance with clearly defined policies on financial management that stipulate the conditions and terms under which gifts (donations, grants) are solicited and accepted. Gifts are promptly directed towards donor's intentions.

Institution ensures that the financial resources must be adequate to suit the characteristics of an ODL higher education institution and it must meet the needs of the institution's activities, learners and staff for a safe, conducive and inclusive learning/work environment in which scholarly and creative achievements are nurtured, both in the main campus and in the network of Centre, use of facilities must

be monitored and user-surveys used to assist in planning and improvement. The institution must develop and implement master plans for development and management of facilities and equipment to meet the needs of the institution-Financial resources must be efficiently managed in keeping with programme requirements and institutional priorities. The institution complies with the National Financial Procurement Guidelines and has established maintenance and upgrading of equipment procedures to take care of regular maintenance and handle emergencies at all locations.

- The Institution subscribes to and advocates high ethical standards in the management of its affairs and in its dealings with students, prospective students, faculty, staff, its governing board, external agencies and organizations, and the general public. The institution adheres to non-discriminatory policies and practices in recruitment, admissions, employment, evaluation, disciplinary action, and advancement. The institution has established and publicizes clear policies on ethical standards ensuring institutional integrity included among them are appropriate policies and procedures which are communicated in print and or electronic form to all internal and external stakeholders. The university has a clearly defined Code of Conduct for all categories of staff emphasizing the maintenance of the highest moral and ethical standards. This is effectively communicated to all staff at the time of appointment to the university.
- Human resource planning in an ODL institution forms an integral part of institutional governance and management, undergraduate and postgraduate programme and course development, delivery and assessment, research and innovations and outreach activities. Human resource policies on staff recruitment, career progression, professional development etc. should support the strategic objective of quality teaching. Institution has a clear and documented academic staff recruitment policy according to the UGC Circulars. The institution employs, appropriately qualified, academic, administrative, and technical staff in sufficient numbers to handle tasks both at the main campus and the network of centres. Selection, confirmation, and promotion are effected through criteria giving due consideration to appropriate qualifications, skills, and experience for these positions, and subject/discipline to be taught and through transparent mechanisms. Selection, recruitment and promotion process is transparent and adheres to criteria stipulated in the UGC Circulars. The staff-student ratio for academic programmes must be appropriate to the teaching learning methods and comply with the programme standards, taking into consideration the uniqueness and flexibility of the ODL.

The institution clearly defines and circulates the roles and responsibilities of the academic staff in teaching, research, and scholarly activities, consultancy, community services and administrative functions and assign accountability. Through skills development and or upgrading, motivation, recognition of their commitments towards the institution and/or ODL philosophy and other innovative efforts the institution have mechanisms to retain the staff.

The Institution, adhering to UGC guidelines and procedures, has clearly defined work norms for academic staff taking into account all aspects of workload including teaching- learning, assessment, research, community and national service obligations, administrative work.

Effective staff performance management and appraisal system in place, which promotes accountability, identifying training needs and motivation and effectiveness of the staff in performing these activities. The policies on performance appraisal are communicated to all staff at the time of their appointments. These documents are regularly reviewed and improved when necessary.

- The institution has a comprehensive and widely accessible set of policies and regulations establishing the terms of reference and standard operating procedures for major committees, administrative units and all categories of staff within the institution for effective management. The institution implements systems to maintain a positive organizational environment, one that is defined and characterized by a sense of involvement in decision making, capacity to take the initiative and pursue career goals, and a belief among teaching and other staff that their own contributions are valued.
- The institution must implement appropriate strategies to support continuing improvement in quality of teaching for teaching staff and offer opportunities for and promote professional development, encourage scholarly activities to strengthen the link between education and research and encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies. The teacher's role is essential for creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competences and skills. Training, retraining and awareness on the recent developments on the subject, teaching and assessment methodology, unique characteristic features and practices of the Institution as an ODL institution, teaching methodology, different roles of a ODL teacher etc. are important in developing the quality of staff. An effective human resource development system through a robust Staff Development Centre should be in place to train, re-train, and motivate faculty and other staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to application of new approaches to teaching and learning and application of ICT in teaching and learning for ODL learners. Appropriate structure, staff development policies and mechanisms should be in place. Periodical training implemented by a well structured Staff Development Centre within the institution and performance of staff evaluated on the use of their training in activities/ functions they perform and appropriately rewarded.
- The Institution must develop and efficiently implement master plans for development and management of facilities and equipment to meet the needs of the institution, including computer equipment and software and related support services. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated into the system for teaching and learning, administration, research and community engagement. The institution's ICT facilities support distance learners (e.g. learning management system (LMS), digital/virtual library, video conferencing, online help desk etc.) and maintain up to acceptable current standards and capacities. There is an established policy regarding the selection and effective use of electronic devices, internal and external networks, and other effective networks and other effective means of using ICT in academic programmes and management of Centres. The educational resources, services and facilities, should be periodically reviewed to assess the quality and appropriateness for current education and training through ODL.

Computing equipment and software and related support services should be adequate for the Institution needs of staff and students who should be trained to



use them and have access to efficient and reliable networked computing facilities including access to Institution – wide information service .

The Institution demonstrates the effectiveness of its policies and procedures in ensuring the reliability of its technology system, the integrity and security of data and privacy of individuals. The Institution establishes and applies clear policies and procedures and monitors and responds to illegal or inappropriate users of its technology systems and resources.

- A user friendly management information system (MIS) with all student records from admission to graduation including course details and examination details should be in place for effective and efficient management of operations and should be available for staff. This system allows information to be logically stored and easily retrieved for instant availability of information and swift execution of tasks in a cost effective and efficient manner.

The implementation and management of a standardized structure for the governance of all education services including those of the institution's centres is designed and put in place to ensure consistent, effective and transparent operation of ensuring the academic quality and integrity of educational provision through a Code of Practice for academic governance. The Code sets out how Senate as the ultimate academic authority of the Institution delegates various elements of its responsibility in the areas of course material production, learning, teaching, and assessment. Senate receives periodic regular reports on the operation of the powers and processes delegated to subsidiary committees.

Any arrangement wherein an institution contracts out to another organization, the provision of services to students or future students, institution must maintain effective policy oversight, accountability and risk management processes. In such cases the institution contracting out the service must establish supervisory and reporting requirements that ensure that all relevant standards are met and that those concerned will be held responsible for the results.

- The internationalization of higher education has manifested itself in multiple ways. These developments include mobility of people, programmes, and institutions, the rising prominence of collaborative research, evolving curricula as well as approaches to teaching and learning, an increasingly heightened sense of the interconnectedness of the higher education enterprise across the globe, and the growing pervasiveness of the phenomenon of internationalization across institutions and broader systems of higher education.—mobility of academic researchers ; number of programmes and institutions operating internationally sister institutions, branch campuses of parent institutions, fields of study offered overseas

The consequence of economic globalization and the subsequent pressure on higher education internationally has been the necessity for effective, and more transparent, systems of accountability, shared benchmarks, and standards for ethics and quality. Targeted efforts to fashion institutional agreements with strategic partners. Sometimes neither the host or home country has the capacity to monitor the quality, ethics, or conditions of the education being provided.

- Institution plans its academic activities and prepares an academic calendar at the beginning of each academic year involving all faculties, departments, units etc. Academic calendar is made available to all concerned at the beginning of the academic year. Institution assigns responsibility for monitoring effective implementation of the calendar and for proposing mid-term corrections. Academic calendar is strictly enforced.
- ODL unlike the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning environments, is characterized by distinctive course development and delivery features. First team must design the courses with members bringing their expertise in the instructional design process. Second the courses developed through a course team approach, using the modular model and must be presented in a way that facilitates self-learning. They are quality checked by several groups/statutory bodies which include the course team. Third, several means, which include an array of appropriate multimedia, must be used to deliver the courses to wherever the students are located. As a result of the above and for other pertinent reasons, several programme planning procedures are followed. The institution has mechanisms with appropriate committee structures which ensures timely production of quality materials and delivery.
- The institution must have an effective system for ensuring that all programmes meet high standards of learning and teaching through initial approvals, monitoring of performance and provision of institution-wide support services. In all programmes student learning outcomes must be clearly specified, consistent with SLQF and requirements for professional practice. Effective systems must be in place for assisting student learning through academic advice, study facilities monitoring student progress, and provision of academic, administrative and personal assistance when needed by individuals.
- General features of good practice in managing QA at an institutional level include the following: allocation of responsibility for QA at senior level; Cultivation of ownership and responsibility for managing quality at all levels; coordination of quality policy. initiatives and practices; design of systems and practices which align with, but are not dominated by external requirements and standards; guidelines widely disseminated and understood so that all concerned share the same picture; staff development and training in relation to quality practices and policy; establishment of monitoring processes which feedback into activities for improvement in policy and practice

Institution should have in place a comprehensive quality management system with an established Code of Practice or QA policy and a QA Framework for assuring and enhancing quality that is made public and forms part of its strategic management. Internal participants should develop this policy and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes. The institution should periodically analyze the relevance of its QA system and make the necessary adjustments. QA processes must involve all sections of the institution and be effectively integrated into normal planning and administrative processes with an internal monitoring mechanism to ensure the quality of the academic, administrative activities and services which is outcome based. The institution must be committed to maintaining and improving quality through effective leadership and active involvement of teaching and other

staff. The internal quality assurance mechanism should be linked to external quality assurance system.

The Framework should include an internal quality assurance unit (IQAU) at the Centre and the internal quality assurance cell (IQAC) at the faculty level. Recommendations made in the reports of institutional and subject reviews by the respective review panels are addressed by the academic authorities of the Institution coordinated by IQAU and IQAC. Quality assurance should be a continuous process that does not end with the external feedback/report/or its follow up process within the Institution. Institution ensures that the progress made since the last EQA activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

- The role of teaching and other staff is essential in creating a high quality student experience and enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competence and skills. The institutions have a primary responsibility for the quality of their staff and for providing them with a supportive environment that allows them to carry out their work effectively. Professional development strategies must be followed to ensure motivation and continuing improvement in the expertise of teaching and other staff. The institution must have clearly defined staffing and employment policies. The policies should include amongst others, welfare measures designed to encourage and support staff and to function optimally.
- The Institution ensures both internal and external stakeholder participation in decision making and uses an efficient administrative structure and an effective communication strategy to translate decisions into action. There is a mechanism to receive enquiries from stakeholders and provide correct and timely information. There is a mechanism to deal promptly with complaints received and provide timely redressal. The composition, TOR and decisions of the grievance redressal entity are made known to all thereby ensuring transparency of the process.
- The Institution strives to promote gender equity and equality (GEE) and deter any form of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) amongst all categories of staff and students by adopting an appropriate policy and strategy drawn in line with the UGC prescribed policy and strategy (on GEE and SGBV) and it is spearheaded through a taskforce /coordinating body with necessary empowerments and resources for effective implementation.
- The Institution adopts the policy of zero-tolerance to ragging and any form of intimidation/harassment among students and develops students' disciplinary by-laws framed according to UGC Circular 919 and implements the preventive and deterrent measures through a comprehensive network operated through academia, student counselors, proctors, marshals, and security staff.
- Health and safety of students and all levels of staff is of highest priority. Institution has put in place appropriate infrastructure, policies, rules and regulations with respect to addressing this. The provision of health and safe environment is considered to be the shared responsibility of all students and staff. Accordingly emphasis should be placed on the communication and enforcement of health and safety rules and regulations at all times.

- Institution activities reflect national, social justice promotion through inclusion in the curriculum and in extracurricular activities of gender issues, social harmony, ethical values, and good citizenship and promote the holistic development of the students.

The Institution promotes social harmony and ethnic cohesion through programmes and activities coordinated through institutional mechanisms such as student counseling and welfare systems and a multicultural centre.

- Institution encourages innovation and creativity among different constituents. It has policies and implements them and resource allocation procedures to encourage innovation and creativity in teaching learning practices, technology application for teaching/delivery, research, community engagement. It recognizes meritorious work done by the staff through incentives, rewards, special awards and monetary grants.
- The institution has formal and informal mechanisms and procedures in place to obtain feedback from learners at regular intervals on the efficiency and effectiveness of its processes. The results of the feedback obtained from learners feeds into the decision making and planning of its programmes.  
In the context of diverse, student population enrolled at many net-worked centres across the country, and students not mandated to be on campus everyday effective communication and information provision is imperative. The institution has an efficient administrative arm which is responsible for providing information about itself and the learning opportunities they offer in a timely manner, and focused on the need of the intended audience. Institution is accountable and responsible for the information they provide about the learning opportunities they offer. Information should be available and retrievable so that intended audience and information users can reasonably expect to find it.
- Permanent records of students must be maintained in a secure and confidential location, with automated processes for generation of statistical data needed by the institution for performance indicators, general reporting requirements and generation of reports on student progress and achievements. The confidentiality of individual student information should be protected.

### ***Criterion 3- The Learners***

- Consistent with its mission to enhance access to higher education, the institution should describe the characteristics of the students it seeks to serve, and focus on the needs of all cohorts including the geographically remote or isolated students. Institution's commitment to lead the way on widening access to higher education in Sri Lanka and its commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and equality supporting students from diverse backgrounds, and the need to continue to do so is clearly documented in the mission statement. Institution is required to promote equity, fairness and justice, on the one hand, and maintain efficiency, quality and public accountability on the other. The mission statement is readily made accessible to all stakeholders within and without the institution through online, print and website.

- Institution's admission and retention policies and procedures are clear, consistent with its mission and purposes. Institution has policies, and procedures for ethical recruitment and admission of students that are fair, clear and explicit. Institution's decisions regarding admissions are made by academic bodies, equipped to make the required judgments and competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities. Policies and procedures are consistent with its mission and purposes, are clear and explicit, documented in print and digital forms, widely publicized and are implemented consistently.
- Institution conduct their admission processes efficiently, effectively, and courteously according to fully documented operational procedures that are readily accessible to all those involved in the admissions process. Information on the enrolled students with respect to demographics, language, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic and educational backgrounds and special needs, up to graduation are documented into a up-to-date integrated database (MIS) which ensures that the documented records, learner profiles, personal information, assessment and evaluation are securely stored and made accessible only to authorized staff members. Effective quality assurance arrangements are in place to ensure that the integrity of the student records is not compromised, Learner records are regularly updated and made available without delay to authorized persons. Appropriate security arrangements are in place to ensure confidentiality of data. MIS enables the academic staff to access relevant student information and use it for guidance and counselling as well as for performance improvement. Automated processes for generation of statistical data needed by the institution for performance indicators, external reporting requirements, and generation of reports on student progress and achievements the relevant data is in place with provision to secure backups of all files. The confidentiality of individual student information should be protected.
- The Institution publishes a handbook which provides information to prospective students and registered students on entry requirements, prior learning experience, brief description of study programmes offered, pre-requisites for programmes and courses, teaching learning and assessment, system, learning resources, student-support services, welfare measures, financial support for needy students, and make it available through print media and website. These are clearly specified prior to entry so that selection of programmes and courses is relevant and meaningful to the student community and enable prospective students to make informed choices. The faculties should publish a study programme prospectus which provides relevant information on the courses offered, options available at different levels, examination procedures and grading mechanisms graduating requirements etc. The Institution strictly adheres to advertised admission requirements.
- In establishing policies relating to recruitment, programmes and support services study programmes for distance learners it is necessary to go beyond quantitative data

to look more closely at students, their learning needs, their characteristics, circumstances and environment, through basic research. Gathering sufficient data and information about students to inform policy decisions is vital in distance education.

- The university should regard the availability of effective channels for student feedback as a key element in its monitoring of quality and standards. Faculties/departments should have documentation that refers to the areas such as joint consultative committees; feedback questionnaires; students' representation in committees; Evidence of effective student feedback systems is also essential to the university's ability to meet the expectations for teaching quality. Institution should equip itself with information on student satisfaction with their higher education experience, including academic guidance, library services and IT, accommodation, equipment and facilities, quality of teaching and learning, assessment arrangements and counseling. Institution would also benefit from a comprehensive study akin to tracer study providing insights into success and failure factors of its students. Such studies will be useful in various ways. Success stories will become a model and inspire other students while will enable the institution to find better supporting and maintaining learners. Information so obtained is documented and used as a basis for revising design of programmes/courses; development of course materials; planning support services,
- The institution's admission policy has adequate provision for admitting disabled learners and fosters inclusiveness. The different facilities at the institution and the programmes offered should have provision to cater to students with special learning difficulties.
- Arrangements exist for student representation in divisions/departments/faculties to support students in their development as lifelong learners and in effectively managing their learning. As most students in ODL are working adults, they must be encouraged to participate in decision making that shapes their career and pursuit of knowledge.
- Teacher and learner interaction is facilitated through formal contact sessions and tutor feedback on assignments. The institution has a clear understanding of the technology profile of the students to optimize communication between learners and the institution. The institution uses available technology to communicate with the learners on a continuous basis.  
The institution facilitates and provides for social interaction through approved student societies.

Appropriate student - friendly administrative, academic and technical support system targets retention and provides preventative support such as mentoring, personal advice and counselling to facilitate progression. Therefore the institution should provide opportunities from the pre-entry contact with the Institution to the point of exit and

beyond, to create an environment that pro-actively encourages students to engage with staff positively and indicate their needs without any inhibition. Considering the needs of individual students and diversity of the student body, the Institution should provide student support which includes academic and personal counselling financial support progression studies, acquisition of skill for employability and career guidance, inculcation of values and overall development of personality which will enable student development and achievement.

- Institution explains to applicants who have accepted a place arrangement for the enrollment, registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote efficient and effective integration of entrants fully as students. Faculties /Departments should have induction arrangements in place well in advance of the beginning of the academic year with a clear sense of the main aims and objectives of the induction process. Provision made by a faculty /department to identify and to meet any special needs of students for induction purposes should be included in information made available to incoming and existing students. Faculties /departments will need to be able to demonstrate that they are able to respond appropriately to the particular needs of individual students and to plan ahead to make their provision as accessible as possible. Newly enrolled students should be provided with an orientation that includes information on student support services as well as a focus on academic opportunities, expectations and support services. In providing services, in accordance with its mission and purposes, the institution adheres to both the spirit and intent of equal opportunity and its own goals for diversity.

#### ***Criterion 4- Human Resource Development***

- The ODL system is different in its approach in delivery of education and pedagogy. ODL institutions differ in their functioning from conventional universities. The organization of activities of teaching staff changes to team work specialization and various tasks are lined up in a chain. This necessitates interdependence between teaching, supporting and service divisions. The equivalent of classroom teaching takes the shape of course planning, course writing and editing, assignment and assessments planning, scripting for audio and video programmes, coordination of design and development processes, tutoring and counselling students, course maintenance, training of other staff, apart from research, both discipline-based and ODL. The service divisions facilitate the work of the faculty and managerial divisions facilitate the work of the faculty and of the support divisions. Further the structure of the staff will also depend on the kind of learner-support network, i.e. Whether a dedicated regional study center network for regular face-to-face contact, or, contractual local support by trained tutors, or online synchronous or asynchronous support by the faculty, or through networking and consortia.

In this context to support the enhancement of quality the Institution has an appropriate strategic human resource policy in place, for management, administration, teaching, and support, technical and part-time staff. The policy is geared to the needs of the institution's learners and is based on a human need survey and resource planning and is aligned to the institution's strategy for optimum efficiency within its strategic plan. The policy shows, amongst others, the type and number of human resources required at different levels or cadres, their recruitment, placement, induction and continuing professional development, workloads, appraisal mechanism benefits and incentives, tenure and promotion, transfer, termination and retirement terms and conditions, and code of professional ethics. All staff are made aware of the policy through intranet, website and/or print form

- By virtue of factors such as the mode of delivery through a variety of media, number and nature of courses to be offered with the option of adopting different models of material development, audio visual programme production, kind of learner support network across the country, there is the necessity of recruiting a good number of part-time staff both in the central campus and the study centers. The recruitment policy of the institution spells out the criteria and procedures for selection and recruitment of part-time staff. Their roles and responsibilities are specified in a TOR and given at the time of appointment. The policy also provides for mandatory orientation for the new recruits prior to their commencement of activities and further training when required.
- The organizational structure and the governance of the institution fits the model of an HEI dedicated to ODL mode. Categories of staff that are needed and, new demands on staff, and the variety of jobs they need to perform has been stated under 4.2. The changed roles and sometimes unusual combinations of role, required for ODL, may not fit well with the traditions of conventional education. The quality and commitment of staff are critical to maintaining and enhancing the high quality of learning and teaching. The institution should recognize that all staff, both academic and support, should be continuously reflecting upon and seeking to improve practice in all areas of the institution's work to advance learning and teaching and research and the quality of student learning experience. The role of support services is of particular importance in facilitating the mobility of students within institution. When programmes are offered in different study centers, required standards must be met, the same equivalent resources must be provided, and evaluations must include data for each Centre. It is thus crucial that all categories of staff must be appropriately qualified and experienced for the operation of the institution.
- A high quality and well-motivated teaching staff and a supportive professional culture are essential in building excellence” Thus a solid institutional policy is in place to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced personnel with academic and pedagogical competence and with capacity to promote active learning, and produce learner-centered materials, in order to serve the needs of all stakeholders concerned



.Academic staff development specifically addresses the upgrading of knowledge in a discipline; the adaptation of this knowledge to the new demands of the labor market being faced by students, thus often necessitating curricular innovation; and use of new technologies and systems and innovations therein for teaching learning and assessment and learner support. Academic staff development programmes see these as components of a holistic strategy for institutional development of an ODL institution. Equal opportunities approaches are ensured in order both to contribute to equity in any particular context, but equally to ensure that the best appointment is made to the job.

- Staffing issues in an ODL institution gain new prominence because of the networked centers across the country, which have implications for staff roles within the institution. This includes alignment of staff development to an institutional strategic plan and human resource development system, and allocation of sufficient staff release time, funding and facilities both at the center and the periphery. The structure of staff will depend on the kind of learner- support network, whether a dedicated regional study-center network for regular face-to-face contact o, or contractual local support by trained tutors and mentors, or online synchronous or asynchronous support by the faculty, or through networking and consortia. Not just teachers, but all staff involved are skilled and experienced, and systematically update their knowledge and strategies of special concerns to institutions is the ratio between teaching, technical and administrative staff, and those who provide learner support services including counselling at study centers. The ratio depends on many factors including the number of students, and programmes/courses offered, the financial position of the institution, and what it is to be done in-house and what is to be outsourced. Workloads and a shift in working hours for staff also have to be taken into account. An approved formula for determining the levels of staff: student ratio has to be applied appropriately taking into account the above factors.
- For each appointment, a job description is in place which makes clear what is to be done, and a person specification which makes clear the essential and desirable qualifications, experience and skills. The job description includes a passage on the values associated with the job. Each person is expected to work to a job description which is current, and which can remind them of their core tasks and responsibilities. Institution makes available clearly specified job descriptions for all positions recruited for. When the employment of any member of staff ends, the job description shall be reviewed, and shall be assessed. The job description is made available to the recruit at the time of appointment. New employees shall be instructed on their rights and obligations along with job descriptions. The job descriptions should accurately describe the position/designation, duties, responsibilities and authority where relevant. Managers are required to hold regular information meetings in order to clarify matters pertaining to job descriptions and inform members of staff about issues directly concerning their work.

- ODL learners are demanding better quality educational services and provisions. This means ODL institution must pay close attention to quality in terms of physical products, processes, production and delivery systems, and philosophy. Products include course materials, number of graduates, examination pass rates, admission in further studies. Processes cover areas such as learning and teaching processes, advising students, coordination external course writers, networking with regional offices, managing student information Production and delivery systems include course production, print and multimedia production, test item production, warehousing and stock control, getting materials to students and broadcast transmissions. Philosophy covers such things as ODL vision, mission, and policy statements, institutional culture, governance, corporate culture and public image. ODL involves a complex division of labor requiring functionally interacting parts. These do not work optimally unless those working in these systems understand and are fully committed fully the system. Without well-functioning administrative systems the wheels of distance education provision grind to a halt. Apart from the technical skills required to work the systems they also have to monitor the systems in operation closely, be responsive and have problem solving skills.

In the context of the above Institution shall ensure that it's Faculties/Departments/ Divisions/units/ Centers etc. have adequate staff qualified according to the type and specific characteristics of the jobs to be held and to support the effective educational, technological, physical, and administrative operations of the institution.

In the context of the unique features of ODL, human resource development assumes greater significance as an investment in people, and that an institutional human resource development policy, within its strategic plans, needs to be put in place for teaching, technical, and administrative staff, as well as for part-time people associated with the institution's operation.

- Staff development plays a crucial role in ODL programmes because most staff engaged in ODL received their formal education and worked mainly within the conventional face-to-face educational institutions which have different traits from distance education delivery and learners. As a result ODL staff are not equipped with the necessary skills and competence require for teaching and administering in an ODL context. It can lead to high drop out among distance learners. This suggests that the various categories of staff will need to change their working practices significantly. This will only be possible with a well-developed programme of staff development to support staff in working in new ways. In order to stimulate empathy in staff with regard to the requirements of distance learners, proper orientation and sensitization of the staff is essential. Such an environment sets up and follows conditions of employment that recognize their function, offers opportunities for and promotes for professional development. The above suggests that various categories new staff will need to change their working practices significantly as many of them to new an ODL system. This will only be possible with a well-developed induction programme to

support staff in working in new ways. Institution recognizes the importance of mandating a timely and effective induction for all new staff to ensure effective integration into the university, the department and the role. Induction aims to assist new staff members to an orientation to ODL; orientation to the institution; pedagogy; materials development; use of media for learner support; good writing practice, ODL and discipline research. Every promotion should be preceded by attendance at refresher programmes and followed by induction to the new job. The institution should ensure that academic staff are challenged and supported to engage in the development and furtherance of pedagogical content knowledge and their own disciplinary development of learning/pedagogy.-Induction of a new academic recruit into the university system has become an indispensable component in the endeavor of building the career path of an academic.

- A novice teacher may not be having knowledge and skills to do some or many of the tasks outlined under the above best practice. New faculty members often get lost in the system in terms of clearly understanding their roles and responsibilities, and performance expectations within the academia. Promotion and career growth prospects often become diminished leading to feelings of discontentment, low morale and frustration. Institution has put in place a programme of mentoring by senior faculty staff. This is essential to nurture them and accelerate their growth as accomplished, confident, competent and scholarly teachers. Supporting new teacher's needs is more than just sharing information. The allocation of a mentor for the first year or so of appointment for a new member of staff can substantially assist both in supporting that new colleague in his or her work in a non-threatening way through a peer, and also support the institutional agenda of establishing values which underpin interaction with students. Mentoring in other words, supplements the line management relationship. It can be particularly effective as the values are seen to come from a peer and thus to be accepted by one's immediate colleagues. It should, provide instructional direction, and design professional development. It also need to come in the form of empathy, perspective and advice. All new staff are assigned to one or more experienced members of staff who will provide mentoring support and guidance about meeting the institution's expectations in teaching and learning, research and outreach.
- It is important that institution ensures that staff in an ODL environment , ,have clarity with regard to their roles and responsibilities as well as the required technical knowledge and skills to execute their roles confidently and responsibly through a Staff Development Policy and an effective staff development as a continuous activity that should be high on the agenda With regard to teaching in their own disciplines they need to be competent in three areas, namely knowledge about one's discipline, generic principles and ideas about teaching and learning and specific paradigms and objectives particular to teaching and learning in one's own disciplinary area. Continuing training and development is important in management of ODL and

delivering academic programmes using ODL mode. After the induction period, some of the priorities for training and development can be conceived to be: for remedial purposes for the immediate job (e.g. providing IT skills, new skills in ODL, writing course materials); as preparation to meet change and future organizational needs and for individual development.

- Those working in service divisions such as admission, materials distribution, evaluation, planning, regional services for student support services, computing, electronic media, training and research, and administration and finance, all facilitate the tasks of course design and development, and the delivery of courses. There is no beginning or end to the academic year, the whole system may operate throughout the year. The distinction between teaching-academic; technical-professional; managerial-administrative is possible when there is a defined role for each category and for all staff within that category. Job roles are defined at the time of placement. Of special concern to institutions is the ratio between these categories of staff. Workloads have to be considered in conjunction with the working style, work norms and processes adopted by the institution for various types of work. Allocation of workload in most categories of staff is transparent and fair as far as is possible to ensure them to have adequate time to provide effective instruction, advice, conduct assessments, contribute to course evaluation, programme evaluation and improvement and engage in continuing professional development growth.
- Performance is to be understood as degree of accomplishment of the task that makes up a staff member's job, as given in his/her job description. Performance appraisal then is the process of defining expectations/standards for staff performance, measuring, evaluating, and recording performance relative to those expectations/standards and communicating the results to the staff member. Performance appraisal must be systematically done by the institution and it must be related to the individual's performance on the job. This implies that the mode of measurement (standards) must have been set in advance. Major purpose of performance appraisal is to influence, in a positive way, staff performance and development, with a view to identifying weaknesses and strengths as well as opportunities for improvement and skills development. It is an important human resource management tool which provides information to many critical human resource decisions, training and development needs, layoffs, and discipline. In order to fulfil this the institution should, apply to all levels of academic, administrative and research staff; it should be compatible with the university policies on equality and diversity; operate regularly on an annual cycle; encourage staff to reflect on their performance and as necessary to take steps to improve it; provide an effective follow up action in relation to staff development needs. The appraisal should consider the main tasks of the appraiser's job; any significant changes to the job during the past year and any limitations; how the appraisee coped with any change; any standards of performance set against the main tasks, whether they were met; the strengths and

weaknesses of the appraisee's performance on the evidence of the events of the past year; any aspect where more guidance or training or other experience would seem to be needed.

Institution should have means to identify underperformance by staff through appraisal procedures and handle, Once the cause of the low performance has been identified and discussed, supervisor/manager should partner to determine a plan for improvement. Together, they can develop incremental steps that lead to maximum growth.

- A Reward Scheme Policy and a Reward Scheme Procedure shall be established to recognize and reward excellence over and above good performance through various methods of rewarding including teaching, research and community engagement, for staff for their individual or team contribution. The rewards set out in the policy should be for contribution to the institution's objectives. Judgments should be evidence based. Scheme details should be circulated to staff annually with timetables.
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- The institution has a well-established, equipped and staffed, Staff Development Centre which is tasked with training and development needs of all levels of staff of the institution p, particularly because the people joining the system as service provider are either completely new to the system or hail from the conventional education system. The administrative structure and processes are equally important in this system for efficient functioning of the institution being a complex system, it requires multiple skills and competencies. Training Plan of the Centre is based on an effective training needs assessment which determines the need for training. The purpose of training needs assessment involves, determining the performance gap, developing the evaluation outcomes for training, determining if training is the most appropriate intervention and assessing the financial needs for the training. Furthermore other reasons for conducting needs assessment are to inform trainees of available training and determine trainees' needs or interest in taking training, to gather and prioritize trainees' ideas for additional training areas, and to determine the capacity staff to train others. Staff development needs to be viewed as organizational change All staff development should be evaluated and there should be transfer of training to real work situations.
- Professional development for staff is a key component of organizational development and a critical aspect of sustainability for ODL. ODL involves a complex division of labor requiring functionally interacting parts. These parts do not work optimally unless those working in these systems understand and are fully committed to the underpinning values implicit in a methodology that is essentially about student access to learning. Providing professional development that responds to the educational goals of the institution, fits with its core values, reflects the pedagogical competencies required for the quality teaching in ODL mode, and engage teachers. Professional

development within the institution-wide teaching and learning framework has to be tailored to meet the needs of specific groups, for instance: adjunct faculty, as occasional teachers, may need to further assimilate the broader educational goals of the institution; full time faculty might need support to manage changing workloads; technical, administrative staff and part-time staff associated with the programmes and operations of the institution.

Academics are expected to engage in continuous professional development and critical reflection throughout their career. These should include activities that support the enhancement of teaching and learning as well as research and academic career development. Institution should embed continuous professional development in their institutional strategies and consider pedagogical development as a systematic process with which academics engage throughout their careers.

During professional development initiatives promote the diffusion of excellent practices via a wide range of tools, define a set of indicators of excellence in teaching that the institution may use to encourage for improvement, evaluate performance, and take into account in decisions concerning promotion. Institution uses Performance of all staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for improvement where required. Processes for personal and professional development must be fair to all staff, designed to encourage and support improvements in performance, and recognize outstanding achievements.

A well designed professional development programme through Staff Development Centre addresses the needs of all categories of staff and regularly train, retrain, and motivate them for the roles and tasks they perform.

- Evaluating courses and teaching is widely seen, not only as a necessary step towards accountability, but also as an integral part of good professional practice and the systematic development of teaching expertise. From this contemporary standpoint, excellence in teaching and learning is not simply the product of experience. It depends on the regular monitoring of teaching performance to pinpoint achievements, build on strengths, and identify areas where there is scope for improvement.

The institution regards the availability of effective channels for staff feedback, as a key element, in its monitoring of quality and standards. Principal sources of feedback used by the institution includes, from students (which gives 'learners' eye view), feedback from teaching colleagues and professional peers and self-generated feedback. Methods of feedback include questionnaires, focus groups web-based discussion boards, direct observation, video audio recordings. Particular attention is drawn to the importance of ensuring effective systems of representation for all levels of staff. Institution should put in place mechanisms to collect, review and where appropriate respond to feedback from all concerned. They will make arrangements for feedback to be considered openly and constructively and for the results to be

communicated appropriately. Evidence of effective staff feedback systems is also essential to the university's ability to meet the expectations for teaching.

- Maintaining a healthy and safe work environment and improving staff motivation and productivity are critical issues for an institution. Logically the provision of welfare schemes is to create an efficient, healthy, and satisfied force for the institution. Welfare strategy is considered vital because the quality of teachers is crucial to any education system. Staff welfare entails everything from services, facilities and benefits that are provided or done by the management to the advantage of comfort of its staff. It is undertaken in order to motivate their staff and raise their productivity levels. Institution should aim to provide facilities such as sports and recreation, medical Centre, Counselling, banking facilities, canteen, post office, bookshops, and security service places of worship within the institution.
- Professional development of the academic staff has an important contribution to make in the realization of the increased emphasis on, outcome-based education and student-centered learning and the advent of new pedagogical approaches. Outcome-based education is an educational process which is based on trying to achieve certain specified outcomes in terms of individual student learning. Thus having decided what are the key things students should understand and be able to do or the qualities they should develop, both structures and curricula are designed to achieve those capabilities or qualities/outcomes. Educational structures and curriculum are regarded as means and not ends. What is taught, how it is taught, and how it is assessed ought to be aligned with the intended learning outcomes, such that they are fully consistent with each other (constructive alignment). Outcome based education (OBE) is about constructive alignment, that means the learning objectives, curriculum, teaching and learning activities and assessments are all directed towards the intended learning outcomes of the course/programme. Teacher's role is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to result in achieving the desired learning outcomes. Student centered learning (SCL) is the instructional approach (vehicle) through which outcome-based education is delivered. The role of teacher in the application of SCL is very important. The quality of teaching is to be judged by the quality of learning that takes place.

The goal of having all students succeed in achieving a set of meaningful learning outcomes implies that teachers must be innovative and creative in order to develop ways of helping students to achieve the learning goal. OBE will require teachers to have a very thorough understanding of what they are teaching and the insight to relate their prime subject matter to other learning areas.; use a variety of methods of instruction that could help in achieving the learning outcomes and assessment strategies supporting the learners in their progress and validate the achievement of intended learning outcomes at the end of the course. The change in teaching approaches implies sustaining reform of the initial and of the continuous training of

teachers and trainers to prepare them for their new responsibilities. Teaching staff must be appropriately trained and skilled for their particular teaching responsibilities, use teaching strategies for different kinds of learning outcomes and participate in activities to improve their teaching effectiveness. Teaching quality and the effectiveness of programmes must be evaluated through student assessments and graduate surveys with evidence from these sources used as a basis for plans for improvement. Professional Performance of staff must be periodically evaluated, with outstanding performance recognized and support provided for improvement where required.

### ***Criterion 5: Programme Design and Development***

- The Faculty adopts a participatory approach through a programme /curriculum team, inclusive of academic staff, non-academic/ technical staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders (e.g., industry, key employers and professional bodies) in the design and approval of programme and courses adopting an outcome-based education (OBE) approach where teaching learning strategies and assessment strategies are aligned with programme/course learning outcomes.
- Programme is consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the University. It is designed to meet the needs of all stakeholders, national, regional and global requirements, and to reflect latest developments and practices in the field of study.
- Programme complies with the SLQF with respect to the title of the award, volume of learning, level descriptors and qualification descriptors, and is also guided by other external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements and requirements of relevant professional bodies.
- The programme must define its aims, objectives, and learning outcomes developed in alignment with graduate profile and make them known to internal and external stakeholders. Its objectives must reflect the key elements of the outcomes of higher education that are in line with the national and global developments. The programme aims and objectives and learning outcomes must be developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, particularly potential employers principal stakeholders which should include the academic staff.
- They must be consistent with and supportive of the university's vision and mission to engage in ODL. Programme design and development procedures take into consideration entry and exit pathways including fallback option.
- The programme must define the competences that the learner should demonstrate on completion of the programme as stipulated in the SLQF (2015) and cover mastery of body of knowledge; practical skills; social skills and responsibilities; values, attitudes and professionalism; problem solving and scientific skills; communication, leadership and team skills; information management and lifelong learning skills; and managerial



and entrepreneurial skills. The programme should also specify the link between competencies expected on completion of studies and those required during the career undertakings and further studies.

- The programme must demonstrate how the component courses contribute to the fulfillment of the programme's learning outcomes. The programme must show how the learner is able to demonstrate the learning outcomes through assessments.
- The programme aims, objectives, and learning outcomes should be periodically reviewed in consultation with a wider range of stakeholders that may include the alumni, industry, community, civil society organizations and international peers
- Curriculum is enriched by incorporating vocational, professional/ semi-professional, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary courses either as core and/or optional/ elective components.
- Where relevant, curriculum recognizes diversity among students and addresses issues of gender, cultural and social diversity, equity, social justice and ethical values.
- Programme is organized as courses/modules which incorporate required sequential core and optional elements and maintains an appropriate balance of theoretical, practical, and experiential knowledge aiming to impart competencies at the appropriate level of study as in SLQF.(2015) Courses/ modules of the programme are structured in a manner to progressively increase the challenges on students intellectually in terms of skills, knowledge, conceptualization and autonomy of learning, to promote progression of students from one level to the other.
- Where work-based placement/ internship is a part of a programme of study, the Faculty ensures that ILOs are clearly identified; contribute to the overall and coherent aims of the programme; appropriately assessed jointly by the Faculty/Institute and the workplace using a structured marking scheme where relevant. Faculty/Institute informs the students of specific responsibilities relating to their work-based placement/ internship prior to the assignment.
- The Faculty has identified key outcome-based performance indicators for the programme, such as student progress and success rates, learners' satisfaction with the programme, cost-effectiveness of the programme, and employability of graduates, admission rates to advanced degree programmes and scholarship / fellowship awards and enables the learners to attain them.
- The programme offered is duly approved by Faculty/Senate/Council/UGC The programme approval criteria include the design principles underpinning the programme (e.g., outcome based and student centered learning approach), title of the award, volume of learning, level descriptors and qualification descriptors, as per

SLQF (2015) stipulations; course contents, teaching/ learning and assessment strategies, physical and human resources and learner support, monitoring, evaluation and review arrangements and other relevant details. Policy and procedures on this should be contained in By-laws, Rules and Regulations.

- The Faculty ensures that the principles to be considered when programmes are designed (such as balance of the programme, awards, and titles, resources available to support the programme) as well as the roles, responsibilities, and authority of different individuals/ bodies involved in programme design and approval, are clearly defined and communicated to them, so that they are clear about the design principles, sequence of the procedures and the final authority for approval.
- The requirement for approval of a new programme proposal by the academic authority of the University should also take into account of external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements published by the UGC, SLQF published World Bank HETC (2015) and requirements of professional bodies. It should look into academic grounds for the new programme, anticipated demand, academic content, assessment methods, teaching learning strategies, availability of learning resources.
- Self-learning materials should be so designed to be learner-friendly, self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating, self-evaluating and help in self-learning.
- Self-learning materials are pilot tested and quality assured before release. Quality of learning materials is assured at various stages of production and delivery.
- Programme specifications are published with course specifications which include the ILOs in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes and mindset; teaching learning methods that enable the outcomes to be achieved; assessment methods that enable the outcomes to be demonstrated; teaching learning resources; and compatibility of the programme with the SLQF and to any other relevant professional accreditation requirements.
- The programme information package/prospectus is made available and accessible in print and/or electronic forms. It is comprehensive and includes the entry requirements (including lateral entry if applicable), programme specification along with course specifications, credit hours, course contents, and recommended and supplementary readings. The information is accurate and up to-date.
- Academic programmes are regularly monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the IQAC as a part of the IQA process, to ensure that the programme remains current and valid in the light of emerging knowledge in the discipline, effective in delivery and assessment; information is used for continuous quality improvement.

- The programme may be considered only after a needs assessment has indicated that there is a need for the programme to be conducted using ODL mode and there is evidence to ascertain sustainability. The need analysis of the programme should involve feedback from external sources including market, learners, alumni, peers, whose commentaries should be utilized for the purpose of curriculum improvement.
- The content of the programme must be periodically reviewed to keep abreast with scientific, technological, and knowledge development of the discipline, and with the needs of society. Student feedback must also be incorporated in the curriculum review process. Regular routine (annual) monitoring of courses to ensure that they remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application, to evaluate the extent to which the learning outcomes are being attained by the learners to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment strategy in relation to the learning outcomes. In contrast periodic reviews, at intervals not exceeding five years, enables programme teams to stand back and reflect on broader aspects of the programme learning outcomes, scope and depth of learning, market/employer requirements, review of the continuing validity and relevance of programmes offered. Reports compiled by such monitoring and reviews should be considered by the IQAC of the faculty and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to remedy any identified shortcomings.
- The programme content, approach, and teaching learning methods must be appropriate and support the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.
- There must be a variety of student-centered teaching learning methods in order to achieve the eight domains of the learning outcomes in SLQF and to ensure that learners take responsibility for their own learning
- The programme must involve the provision of appropriate learning materials for ODL learners who have to assume greater responsibility for their learning. The learning materials for the programme must be provided in the following ways: adopting existing materials; adapting existing materials; or creating original materials or any other appropriate approaches
- Curriculum should encourage multidisciplinary approaches to enhance the personal development of the learner through electives, study pathways and other means which should be monitored and appraised.

#### ***Criterion 6: Course design and Development***

- ‘Programme’ means an arrangement of courses that are structured for a specific duration and learning volume to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme and usually leading to an award of a qualification. workload of a study programme is defined as 1500 notional learning hours per academic year, with

volume of learning described as credits and one credit is considered equivalent to 50 notional learning hours. with minimum number of credits to a course being one.

- In designing a particular course unit /course, its workload should be computed based on the total amount of learning activities a student is expected to complete in order to achieve the for seen learning outcomes. and the workload expressed in time should match the number of credits available for the course unit/course keeping in mind that minimum number of credits per course unit/course is one and number of credits per course unit /course should be indicated by whole numbers and that one credit is equivalent to 50 notional learning hours for a taught course, laboratory studies course or field studies/clinical work.
- Notional learning hours include direct contact hours with teachers/trainers, time spent in self learning, preparation of assignments, carrying out assignments and assessments.
- Courses are designed based on learner-centered principles with teaching learning strategies, teaching methods, learner activities promoting engagement, use of appropriate ICTs, and contact sessions determined as part of the course design process and are clearly stated in the course learning materials, and communicated and discussed with learners.
- Course team approach is followed in design, development and delivery. Team includes faculty, who play an important role in content development, instructional designers, graphic designers, content editors, language editors, media experts, whose roles and responsibilities are specified before commencement of tasks.
- Standard formats/templates for instructional design and development are in place and are used by the course team for effective instructional design and efficient course development.
- Content in a programme is organized into focused courses/ modules with the ILOs aligned with the programme ILOs (learning outcomes being statements that describe what learners should know, understand, and can demonstrate upon the completion of a course or study programme).
- Courses are designed to reflect latest developments and practices in the field of study.
- Course/module design is in alignment with the SLQF and reflects the expectations of the SBS, requirements of statutory/ regulatory bodies.

- Faculty develops standardized formats/templates/ guidelines for course/module design and development of courses for effective instructional design and efficient course development.
- Course ILOs are mapped against Programme ILOs to ensure that programme is coherent and comprehensive. Courses are designed to support learners in achieving the programme ILOs. Course content, teaching and learning and assessment strategies are constructively aligned with the course ILOs.
- Courses are designed based on student-centred principles with teaching-learning and assessment strategies and appropriate use of ICT; these are clearly stated in the course specifications, communicated to and discussed with students.
- Course ILOs, content, teaching learning and assessment strategies, learning resources, credit weight, notional learning hours as specified in SLQF etc. are contained in course specification which is made accessible to all students.
- Faculty/institute takes into account the needs of differently abled learners when designing courses.
- Choice of media and technology are integrated into the course design.
- The work load for learners with respect to courses complies with the SLQF guidelines and facilitate completion of each course within the intended period of time.
- Courses/ modules of the programme are structured in a manner to progressively increase the challenges on learners intellectually in terms of knowledge, skill, conceptualization and autonomy of learning.
- The Faculty provides prior training and necessary inputs to the staff involved in instructional design and development.
- The Faculty ensures that relevant staff are informed of the criteria against which the course proposals/specifications are assessed in the course approval process.
- The Faculty ensures provision of adequate physical and human resources for course design, approval, monitoring and review processes.
- Course approval decision is taken after full consideration of design principles, academic standards, and appropriateness of the available learning opportunities, monitoring and review arrangements and the course specification.

- Regular course evaluation is undertaken through internal monitoring by the IQAC, and the findings are used to improve the course content, delivery and assessment processes.
- Course/ module evaluation at the end of each course/module includes assessment of its content appropriateness, effectiveness of teaching, measurement of student learning outcomes and feedback; it is used for further improvement of the courses/modules.
- The instructional package provided to learners is comprehensive and contains learner-friendly description of the syllabus, course plans, learning outcomes at the programme level and at the course level, lesson level, assessment and evaluation details, credit hours, teaching learning strategies, academic calendar etc and should be made available both off-line and online.
- Teaching learning strategy should be linked to the learning outcomes of the course and should be congruent with student centered learning methods as exemplified in the SLQF (2015, pp15). Learner engagement with peers and with teachers is a powerful driver for quality teaching via ODL and should be encouraged and promoted.
- The Faculty provides course specification and timetable before the commencement of the programme/ course.
- The Faculty ensures that course/module ILOs, teaching learning strategies and assessment strategies are meticulously planned to be closely aligned with each other (constructive alignment) and are also appropriate and accessible to differently abled students if the programme caters to such learners.
- The Faculty promotes the use of blended learning to maximize student engagement with the curriculum.
- Faculty/Institute ensures that the staff draw upon their research, scholarship, or professional activity to enhance teaching.
- Teaching engages learners as partners in learning in ways that develop curiosity-driven investigative approaches, and maximizes each learner's personal and professional development; draws on real world scenarios so that the learners comprehend the application of knowledge; capitalizes on formative assessment and feedback as key components of teaching and learning.
- Teachers use information gained from assessment of learners to improve teaching.

- The teaching approach encourages learners to contribute to scholarly and creative work, discovery of knowledge and to relate theory and practice to real life situations through reflection.
- Teachers adopt both teacher-directed and student-centred methodologies, where learners learn by actively engaging in and interacting with the content and activities (active learning) with the role of the teacher being more as a guide and facilitator.
- Self-directed learning is encouraged through assignments which require learner to refer books, journals, internet and other resources; by incorporating investigative methodology into the learning processes through activities such as literature review, research project, collaborative project work and work-based placements.
- Teachers engage learners in research as a part of teaching learning strategy and support learners to publish their research.
- Teachers are sensitive to gender, culture, race and religion; they design teaching learning activities that are not discriminative and avoid making derogatory comments.
- Teachers are encouraged to promote innovative pedagogy and introduce ICT into teaching learning practices.
- Progress in implementing the teaching learning framework across each level of the programme are monitored and reported regularly to Heads of Departments, Dean and programme coordinator, and remedial actions taken when needed.
- Workloads of academics are equally distributed to ensure them to have adequate time to provide effective instruction, advice, conduct assessments, contribute to programme evaluation and improvement, and engage in continuous professional growth, while participating in scholarship and research.
- The Faculty uses key indicators such as adoption of outcome based approach in teaching and learning, innovative teaching practices, degree of teacher-student interaction obtained through self-appraisal, peer evaluation and student feedback, for evaluating the performance of teachers for excellence in teaching and rewarding. Recognition and reward must be based on equitable work distribution, and meritorious academic roles using clear and transparent policies and procedures.

### ***Criterion 7: Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner support***

- The faculty must provide its learners with a conducive learning environment in which scholarly and creative achievements are nurtured and learners are enabled to achieve the learning outcomes and competencies
- Learner support services should be given a prominent organizational status in the university and a dominant role in supplementing programme learning outcomes.
- The programme must have sufficient and appropriate facilities (physical, equipment, financial) to learners including those with special needs. Support ODL and these are reflected in the long term plans and budget. ICT related facilities (learning management system, digital/virtual library, videoconferencing, virtual labs, online helpdesks etc.) must be provided for and maintained up to acceptable current standards and capacities. Adequate and appropriately qualified academic, administrative, and technical staff are employed to meet the faculty objectives for learners. The facilities should be user friendly to all.
- An effective human resource development system through a robust Staff Development Centre should be in place to train, re-train, and motivate faculty and staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to application of new approaches to teaching learning and application of ICT in teaching and learning for ODL learners.
- The library resource centre must have adequate and up-to-date reference materials and qualified staff that meet the needs of the programme and research amongst academic staff and learners. These include provisions for adequate computers, and ICT-mediated reference materials.
- For practical-based programmes, adequate and appropriate equipments and physical facilities should be available and training must be adequately provided for technical and support staff at all learning centres. (Regional and Study Centres). Effective mechanisms and procedures should be in place for maintenance and optimizing the use of resources.
- For research-based programmes and programmes with a substantial research component the faculty must provide adequate and suitable research facilities and environment. The quality and appropriateness for current education and training. The facilities should be user-friendly including to those with special needs.
- The university must have a policy regarding the selection and effective use of electronic devices, internal and external networks, and other effective means of using ICT in the programme.



- The learning environment should be regularly improved through renovations, building new facilities, and the acquisition of the latest and appropriate equipment to keep up with the development in educational practices and changes. The educational resources, services and facilities should be periodically reviewed to assess learner support (comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personal counseling, online help) using a range of media is considered during programme development, and is built into the design of the course potential delivery strategies (print, audio video tapes, CD-ROMs, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, computer based instruction, computer conferencing, online learning )are identified based upon the nature of learners, learning objectives, and instructional methods in the context of economic and logistical feasibility of different options.
- Instructors are given orientation, training, and support in their role as distance educators and /or online mentoring and tutoring.
- Criteria have been established which provide an objective evaluation of the learner's progress towards attaining the programme's specific educational objectives and consistently applies it to evaluate learner's progress
- Learner support system targets retention and prevent learners dropping out of the system.
- Learners must have access to appropriate, adequate, and continuous support services, such as physical, social, financial, recreational, and online facilities, counseling (academic and non-academic) and health services.
- Learner support services must be evaluated regularly to ensure their adequacy, effectiveness and safety. Learner support system targets retention and prevents drop outs.
- A designated administrative unit should be responsible for planning and implementing student support services staffed by individuals who have appropriate experience consistent with their assignments.
- Academic and career counseling must be provided by adequate and qualified staff and issues pertaining to counseling must remain confidential.
- An effective orientation to the programme must be made available to students to promote self-directed learning /self manage learning. The orientation programme must be evaluated regularly with special attention given to out of district and international students as well as students with special needs.
- There should be a structured training and development plan to enhance the skills and professionalism of the academic and non-academic counselors
- There must be policy and programmes for active learner participation in areas that affect their welfare such as peer counseling, co-curricular activities, and community engagement

- Learner support provides a suitable learning environment that enables the learners to successfully achieve the ILOs. It comprises provision of facilities and learning/information resources (including adequate number of full-time faculty members to support the mission of the institution and to ensure quality and integrity of its academic programmes, technological infrastructure, scientific laboratory facilities, language laboratories, library facilities, studio spaces, clinical practice sites as appropriate to the programmes/ subjects) and offering guidance to students in the ethical use of learning/ information resources.
- The Faculty provides an inclusive educational environment (Learning Resource Centers; academic/student counselling and mentoring; needy learner support; Career Guidance activities; Gender Equity Centers) considering the needs of individual students and diversity of the student body, in enabling learner development and achievement.
- Learners are clearly conveyed of their rights, responsibilities and conduct for successfully completing the programme through Student Charter/ Code of Conduct. There is a mechanism for learners to air grievances and make appeals relating to student support services.
- The Faculty offers, monitors and improves special support and assistance services for learners with special needs
- Faculty has academic counsellors who hold meaningful discussions with students focusing on areas such as student support, choice of courses, assessments, career paths etc. When sharing information, counsellors ensure that confidentiality is maintained to protect the rights of individuals.
- The Faculty monitors student learning experience, achievement and satisfaction annually to ensure that learning experiences are effective and help in achieving the desired learning outcomes.
- The Faculty facilitates and monitors on a continuous basis, learner progression from one level to the next and ensures successful completion of the programme towards gainful employment/ further advanced study; makes necessary improvements and facilitates the students who do not complete the programme successfully, to settle with the fallback options available.
- The Faculty enhances learning opportunities for learners by collaborating with employers who offer work-based learning or placement opportunities.
- Career information, advice and guidance are provided enabling learners to make choices about their future. Learners are empowered to access relevant information on the local, regional, national and international graduate labor markets, enabling them to make informed career choices.
- Career education, networking with alumni, information and guidance, and the development of career management skills along with soft skills are considered as

inter-dependent parts of learner support; there is an institution-wide commitment to prepare students for their future careers.

- The Faculty has strategies to promote employability of learners and their ability to articulate their knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through working in partnership with external stakeholders such as employers, societies, local communities.
- Retention, progression, completion/ graduation rate, employment rate and per student cost are regularly monitored and remedial measures taken where necessary. The Faculty regularly and systematically gathers information about student satisfaction with the support services. Information collected is used for improvement of the services.
- The Faculty has fair, effective and timely procedures for handling learner complaints and academic appeals; thus ensures opportunity for students to raise matters of concern without risk of disadvantage.
- The Faculty implements the policy on gender equity and equality and supports opportunity for student leadership, creative activities and scholarship; promotes active academic/social interaction between the faculty and students.

#### ***Criterion 8: Learner Assessment and Evaluation***

- Assessment strategy of student learning is considered as an integral part of the programme design with clear relationship between assessment tasks and programme ILOs. The Faculty/Institute reviews and amends assessment strategies and regulations periodically as appropriate and ensures those being fit for purpose.
- Student assessment policies, regulations and processes underpin the setting and maintenance of academic standards with reference to SLQF and SBS, and where applicable, requirements of professional bodies.
- Assessment principles, methods and practices must be aligned with the learning outcomes and programme content. The links between assessment and learning outcomes in the programme should be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness
- Assessment must be consistent with the levels defined in the SLQF, the eight domains of learning outcomes and the programme standards
- The frequency, methods and criteria of student assessment –including the grading criteria and appeal policies must be documented and communicated to students on the commencement of the programme. A variety of methods and tools must be used appropriately to assess the learning outcomes and competencies. Changes to student assessment methods must follow the established procedures and regulations and communicated to the student prior to their implementation. The various modes of assessment components (eg: assignment, project, report, test) must each be given a

weight age contributing to the final grade. Assignment must be formative and/or summative, and the system reviewed at appropriate scheduled intervals.

- There must be mechanisms to ensure validity, reliability, consistency, currency and fairness of assessment methods. Specific procedures to cater for the examination of students must be put in place which could involve distant locations and simultaneous processes in many locations.
- There must be mechanisms to ensure the security of assessment documents and records.
- There should be independent external scrutiny to evaluate and improve the management of student assessment
- The policy and procedures in handling plagiarism must be put in place and made aware to all students and staff. The faculty should have the appropriate software to detect cases of plagiarism/similarities among students' work.
- The methods of assessing should be comparable to ODL best practices locally and internationally
- Student assessment results must be communicated to the students within reasonable time, taking full advantage of the ICT capabilities to ensure efficient communications.
- The Faculty has approved procedures for designing, setting, moderating, marking, grading, monitoring and reviewing the assessment methods and standards of awards.
- The Faculty/Institute provides regular trainings on methods of assessments to staff and ensures that staff involved in assessing students are competent to undertake their roles and responsibilities, and have no conflict of interest.
- The assessment procedures and the weight age assigned for different components are clearly stated in the programme/course specifications and clearly communicated to students.
- The Faculty/Institute adopts well defined marking scale, marking scheme, various forms of internal second marking and procedures for recording and verifying marks etc, to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency.
- The Faculty/Institute considers involvement of external/second examiner is an essential part of the process of quality control and maintenance of standards. The external/second examiner assesses answers and assigns marks without seeing the marks given by the first examiner (blind marking). There is an established procedure

(senate/relevant academic body approved) for reconciling the marks when there is a major discrepancy between the two sets of marks.

- Faculty/Institute and departments have a clear policy on consideration of the external examiners' reports, reporting lines and time frame to ensure that changes recommended in the examiners' reports are implemented. Assessment outcomes including external examiners' report are used to improve teaching learning and assessment methods.
- The Faculty/Institute ensures that policies, regulations and processes relating to assessments are clear and accessible to all stakeholders (students, academic staff, administrative staff, internal and external examiners).
- Assessment and examination policies, practices, and procedures provide differently abled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Assessment strategies are aligned with ILOs and enable students to provide evidence of achieving the ILOs.
- Assessment methods are integrated into teaching and learning strategies. Formative assessments are used to provide feedback to students to facilitate achieving the ILOs.
- The Faculty/Institute implements and supports systematic and broad-based assessment which incorporates all aspects of learning including industrial training, field-based training, clinical training etc.
- The Faculty/Institute uses both formative and summative assessment to track individual student's learning, and uses this information to ensure the achievement of ILOs; students are provided with regular, appropriate and timely feedback on formative assessment to promote effective learning.
- Assessment is designed and sequenced to provide a reasonable spread of assessment items throughout the course enabling students to monitor and progressively improve their capabilities.
- The Faculty/ Institute ensures the degree awarded complies with the SLQF.
- A complete transcript indicating the courses followed, grades obtained and the aggregate GPA/grade and class is made available to all students at graduation.

- Where a programme leads to registration of a professional/statutory body which issues a license to practice, clear information is made available to staff and students about specific assessment requirements that must be fulfilled for the award of the professional qualification.
- Students are informed before the commencement of the programme/course about the types of assessment, its alignment with the ILOs, timelines for assessment and releasing results, and issue of transcripts. Students are also made aware of code of conduct for preparation and submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations.
- Assessment regulations are strictly enforced and disciplinary procedures are in place for handling breaches of examination regulations by students; malpractices such as plagiarism etc. and violation of codes of conduct.
- Examination boards and panels are responsible for timely release of results, recording assessment decisions accurately; such records are maintained for a designated period of time.
- The staff carries out all aspects of assessment in a way which ensures the integrity of the assessment process and in turn the integrity of academic standards of each award. Faculty ensures academic integrity of the award by maintaining confidentiality and declaring conflicts of interest where applicable.

#### ***Criterion 9 - Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization***

- The Institution works on the premise research, innovation and commercialization as one of the triple missions of the Institution and as reflected in its mission. Thus it has a clearly defined policy framework for research, innovation and commercialization as a part of quality enhancement with a clear link to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan and the organizational structure. Institution recognizes that it is crucial for the institution to aim at both ODL research and discipline-based research. With academic excellence being one of Institution's strategic objectives, ODL research designed to influence policy and practice and aims at strengthening its academic reputation, improving its research environment, ensuring there is intellectual breadth and rigor across all curriculum and delivery to learners. is vital to revise and improve the quality in development and delivery of courses and programmes. At the same time discipline-based research is important for skills training that translates to successful completion and employment, career progression of academics in their disciplines or for their professional development and for enhancing student's research skills and working to sustain a rich developmental research environment.
- Institution has in place academic framework and regulations, policies and guidelines and specific by-laws relating to research degrees and made available to applicants, students, staff, supervisors and examiners through online and print media and website.

These should include admission requirements and procedures; support and guidance that helps students to choose the right programme; pre-entry advice for differently abled students and for faculties where an applicant has a difficulty; registration; induction; student entitlements and responsibilities; supervision arrangements; support structure at different organizational levels; academic and procedural requirements for particular research qualification and the minimum and maximum periods for completion including reference to SLQF for qualification descriptors; assessment methods, requirements, procedures; research integrity and ethics, including avoiding plagiarism and Intellectual Property Rights and responsibility; complaints and appeal process.

- General admission requirements for entry to research degree programmes are contained in the Post-graduate Prospectus and are in line with the SLQF guidelines. Each programme will provide detailed admissions statement that details entry requirements and admission procedures. Institution admission procedures for research degrees are clear. Consistently applied and demonstrate equality of opportunities. Adopt fair procedures to applicants in a widely accessible format both online and on print. Prospective research students will receive information about the induction procedures for their research degree programme when they are notified that their application has been successful, prior to the expected start date. The institution provides a general induction programme which is offered on multiple occasions at the beginning of the academic year and further sessions coincide with the entry points. A checklist may be given to new students to ensure that the student knows the various induction events and services available to them on campus. Information for new students is also available in a specific area of the university website.
- Curricula and broader co-curricular experiences are designed to enable students not only to learn about research, but to learn how to undertake their own research and inquiry within and across disciplines. This focus on the development of research and inquiry skills enables students to begin framing their own questions, evaluating and assessing data and so supports them to become better learners throughout their degree and be active participants in their learning. Opportunities to become directly involved in research enhance students' ability to develop key employability skills, providing them with a competitive edge over their peers upon graduation. Institution provides access to leading research facilities to students supported and supervised by active researchers.
- Research and teaching are inextricably linked. The development of research-teaching linkages, has been a priority in the quality enhancement framework for HEIs.

A pool of high -level graduate skills is needed to feed into leading edge sectors and help drive innovation and productivity in the country. These talented individuals need to be able to think critically, analyse and solve complex problems, and bring ideas and teams together- and crucially they need to have the capability to adapt to a rapidly changing labor market. The research intensive learning environment at the Institutions should support academics and students from the outset of their degree and throughout their time at university to engage critically with their subject throughout their studies and provide opportunities to undertake and interact with research. All teaching staff must be involved in sufficient appropriate scholarly activities to ensure they remain

up to date with their developments in their field/s, (in both ODL and discipline,) and those developments should be reflected in their teaching. Teaching staff must be encouraged to pursue research interests and to publish the results of their research. The research contributions must be recognized and reflected in evaluations and promotion criteria. Institution should provide an environment conducive to research in which students are able to work as colleagues of academic staff with opportunities for personal and professional development.

The institution facilitates and encourages research by providing support to its academic staff in the form of leave and resources from the institution through a research committee or an equivalent body that monitors and evaluates the research funded by the institution. Encouragement and motivation of good research made possible by suitable incentives, awards, rewards, and public recognition of the institution facilitates a research culture.

Institutions should seek to embed students into its research environment and culture through integrated strategic planning, training policies, development opportunities and requirements of Code of Practice in Research. Institutions wishing to develop a culture of research must allocate significant resources for faculty training and support; require open and collaborative personal relationships among faculty members; administrators must be prepared to tailor resource allocations based on faculty members' current motivations and abilities. A culture of research may take years to develop and, once established requires regular maintenance. Plans for a culture of research should include consideration of doctoral student involvement. Student research potential is optimized through the research culture of the institution. Undergraduate students are encouraged to carry out research as part of the teaching learning strategy and should be encouraged and supported to publish their research.

- Institution uses criteria for assessing research degrees that enable them to define their academic standards and the achievement of their graduates. The criteria used to assess research masters and doctoral degree are clear and readily available to research students, staff and examiners. Institution should fully implement the SLQF for its academic awards and all research degrees are assessed and approved in the context of regulations that reflect the framework level descriptors –levels 10 and 11 for research masters degrees and level 12 for doctoral degrees. All research students and supervisors must be aware of the assessment criteria for research degrees before undertaking research or supervision.

Institution monitors the research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets that reflect the context in which research degrees are being offered. Factors to be considered when collecting evidence to evaluate the success of research degrees may include: submission and completion times and rates; pass, referral and fail rates; withdrawal rates; number of appeals, and complaints, reasons for them and how many are upheld; analysis of comments from examiners; recruitment profile; feedback from research students, employers, supervisors; information on subsequent employment, destination, and career paths of research students who have achieved the qualification.

Institution develops, implement and keep under review Codes of Practice for research degrees, which help enable Institution to meet the expectations. The Codes are readily available to all students and staff involved in research degrees. Codes form an integral part of QA mechanism and are designed to ensure the quality and maintain the



academic standards of research degrees, bringing consistency to research degree provision. Institution should alert applicants to the relevant codes of practice at an early stage in the recruitment process

Institutional regulations regarding both taught courses and research programmes are made available through the Graduate Prospectus and relevant websites: about selection and admission of graduate students; course content; course duration; available facilities; required qualifications and conditions contained in the taught programme; any requirements relating to attendance; registration procedures; induction arrangements; preliminary reading etc.

- The viewpoint that research and teaching are (interdependent) inextricably linked has received much attention in the published literature. The development of research-teaching linkages has been a priority in the quality enhancement framework for Sri Lanka universities and has been highlighted as one of the priority enhancement themes for higher education. Academic staff think carefully about their professional development. It is important that a researcher periodically reviews his/her skills and personal development needs by undertaking a Training needs Analysis which is an examination of the skills one needs in order to complete a particular task against his current abilities and identifies the type of skills training he/she needs. SDC should provide academic staff with generic research skills, professional and transferable skills.
- Key principles of the approach to researcher development and skills training are that the approach is researcher-centred and needs-based; that supporting students in their development is embedded in institution's supervision and monitoring processes; and that training is delivered in the broadest context appropriate in order to promote cross-disciplinary understanding and student networking.

At the institutional level, the institution provides research students with generic research skills, professional and transferable skills and career development opportunities. At the Graduate faculty levels Training can be in 1) discipline specific skills to undertake the research- ( knowledge base, & creativity), 2) cognitive abilities personal effectiveness (personal qualities, self-management, professional and career development), 3) Research governance and organization-(professional conduct, research management, finance, funding and resources), 4) engagement, influence and impact - ( working with others, communication and dissemination, engagement and impact).

Institutions must ensure that their research students have access to the training appropriate to their individual research objectives - to enable them to undertake their research effectively and to complete their programme successfully and within time. To this end, the faculties are responsible for delivering the research skills, methods and techniques that are specific to their discipline and for integrating students in the research environment of the faculty/department. Delivery of research training includes the essential role of the supervisor.

Faculties should make the training and development requirements they have of their students clear at the outset of the research degree programme as part of their faculty-

based induction and in the information issued to students and also make these requirements clear to supervisors. Institution expects students to engage with training and development opportunities throughout their research programmes.

Faculties are expected to review the effectiveness of their training and development provision as part of the Annual Review and Enhancement process.

- Good supervision is an important contributing factor to a student's successful and timely completion of their research degree. Appropriate academic authority is responsible for the appointment of staff as supervisors to the research students enrolled and for ensuring the continuation of regular and appropriate supervision throughout each candidature. Institutions ensure that: supervisors appointed have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor students effectively and have received appropriate training and guidance in both supervision skills and the relevant university regulations and policies; supervisors are responsible for the academic progress and pastoral and personal support of their students, and for dealing with administrative matters. They should provide the guidance and support necessary for successful completion of the research project; should have undertaken supervisory training and be committed to ongoing development of supervision skills. Faculties are expected to organize supervisor training and discussion sessions periodically, where best practices can be shared between all supervisors and topical issues can be explored. Quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors; Institution must make sure that the research project falls within the supervisor's area of expertise, can be completed with the resources available, can be completed within the prescribed period of study, is suitable for the degree that the student intends to take, for funded students can complete within the period of the studentship. Examination and assessment, monitoring and review mechanisms and procedures are in by-laws, rules and regulations and/or guidelines are communicated to students and staff and operated rigorously, fairly, and consistently. The performance of supervisors is monitored, through staff appraisal and routine feedback from students and examiners and appropriate action is taken as necessary.
- Institution has a Code of Practice for Research Degrees which sets out the institution's requirements for the management of its research degree programmes. The Code references and compliments, relevant Senate regulations of the Institution. It is designed to provide clear and useful information for students and staff and makes reference to relevant policies, procedures, and services including the criteria for appointment of supervisors, supervisor's roles and responsibilities student's role and responsibilities, mechanisms for confirming the appointment of supervisors, and review and progress arrangements for students which detail procedures for resolving problems that may arise in the supervisory relationship. Supervisor's responsibility includes guidance on the nature of research, the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, requisite research methods, relevant regulations governing research at the institution, meeting student according to the schedule, ensuring the progress of the student and where inadequacy of progress is found student to be made aware of it and supporting remedial action etc.
- The institution appoints supervisors with the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support and encourage research students and to monitor their progress effectively.

Each research has a supervisory team containing a main supervisor who is the clearly identified point of contact. Institution ensures that the responsibilities of research student supervisors are readily available and clearly communicated to supervisors and students. Institution ensures that the individual supervisors have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Institution should introduce a structured training programme for supervisors that involves the consideration of good practice in supervision, roles and responsibilities, grievance issues and incorporate reflective and group discussion exercises. The programme is mandatory for all new supervisors as part of their appraisal. Responsibilities of main supervisors is to give guidance about the nature of research, the standard expected, planning of the research programme, requisite research methods and relevant regulations governing research at the institution (research ethics, health and safety).

Making clear to candidates that while the course of study for that degree constitutes training in research methods, the degree is awarded only for original research work; meeting at least fortnightly; recording the substantive outcomes of all scheduled supervision meetings and countersigned by supervisor.

- Institution is committed to the effective monitoring of research student's academic progress, from the commencement from the programme until its completion. Monitoring begins with the production of the Research Plan which is negotiated between the student and the supervisor, the purpose of which is to define the project and describe the strategy for achieving its successful completion within the required timeframe. And is then managed through the Research student Progress Monitoring Procedure approved by the Senate. Research Plan should identify key stages anticipated highlighting any special skills requirement of each stage. Indicating the frequency of formal contacts and meetings with the supervisor and be adapted to accommodate changes. Supervisors meet with their students on a weekly and sometimes on a daily basis.

The Institution recognizes that the formal system of annual monitoring is complemented by the ongoing monitoring and support provided through the regular supervision process, and expects that scheduled monitoring events are integrated with the time table of supervision meetings.

Heads of Faculties are responsible for providing regular opportunities for their research students to give individual and collective feedback, and having in place mechanisms to review and respond to that feedback. Heads of Faculties are responsible for ensuring that there is a clearly communicated mechanism by which research students can provide feedback or raise concerns in confidence which should be open at all times. Institution has put in place clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research student progress, including formal and explicit reviews at different stages. research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are made aware of progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities.

- Research is of no use unless it gets to the people who need to use it 'Dissemination is now acknowledged as an important component of the research process. Effective dissemination is about getting the findings of your research to the people who can make use of them to maximize the benefit of the research without delay. Channels,

depend on the audience's social media, sharing podcasts websites, conference papers/posters traditional media, journals, patents, reports, protocols, Dissemination should not be limited to the end of a study. Whether any findings can be shared earlier should be considered. Institution promotes and facilitates dissemination of research, and publication linked incentives would serve to enhance the research culture. All authors are fully responsible for the content of the publication, unless otherwise specified.

- Institution must have a policy on the criteria for authorship consistent with the Code, seeking to minimize disputes about authorship and helping to resolve them if they arise. Researchers should adhere to the authorship criteria of the Code and their institution's Policy statement. Authorship credit is based on (substantial contribution to conception and design of work, or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of data for the work), must be based on a substantial scholarly or intellectual contribution to the research output. The policy should state the requirements for the attribution and management of research authorship which should clarify the criteria for honestly and fairly attributing authorship for research outputs; ensure that researchers appropriately and consistently attribute authorship for all research outputs; minimize disputes about authorship and; ensure that researchers appropriately affiliate research outputs to the Institution.

All authors are fully responsible for the content of a publication, unless otherwise specified. All authors agree on the sequence of authorship. Researchers adhere to the same criteria as those detailed above whether they publish in a subscription journal, an open access journal or in any other alternative publication form.

Attributions of authorship must be based on a substantial intellectual contribution to the research output. Standards and guidelines relating to authorship are in place. Institution staff and students are required to follow the authorship standards and guidelines.

- Ethical conduct in research demands respect for the rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research. Institution has a stated Code of Conduct with clear policy, regulations and procedures to help research students and researchers comply with the principles of ethical research and all legal requirements associated with a piece of research. Ethical issues overseen by the Research Ethics Committee of the Institution.
- A basic responsibility of HEI involved in research is to formulate the principles of research, to define the criteria for proper research behavior, to maximize the quality and robustness of research, and to respond adequately to threats to, or violations of, research integrity. The institution requires that all its researchers maintain exemplary standards of professionalism, academic practice, rigour and honesty in every aspect of research. To support this institution has in place a relevant Code of Conduct for Research Integrity which will help realize this responsibility and serve as a framework for self-regulation. The Code should include good research practices and violations of research integrity (research misconduct, potential conflict of interest). It should describe professional, legal and ethical responsibilities with associated guidelines and be updated regularly. It is of crucial importance that researchers master the knowledge, methodologies and ethical practices associated with their field. Violations of good research practice or allegations of misconduct should be handled through investigations that should be fair, comprehensive and conducted expediently, without compromising accuracy, objectivity, or thoroughness in a consistent and transparent fashion.

All staff and students engaged in research should familiarize themselves with the Code and observe the relevant provisions they contain. Responsibility for research conduct and integrity in their research degree programmes resides with the researcher, with guidance from the supervisor.

- Institution has in place a policy setting out how to complain or make allegations of breaches of Codes and research misconduct must be readily accessible to all researchers and promote independent and formal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals that are fair, clear to all concerned, robust and applied consistently.

The acceptable grounds for complaints and appeals are clearly defined. Students may appeal against the decisions of examining committees'. Regulations relating to the postgraduate appeals procedure, including the criteria on which appeals may be based, should be available online or in print. Every appeal must be in writing and must be lodged with a relevant institution official. All students are entitled to use the procedure without concern that they will be disadvantaged by complaining. Due regard to privacy, confidentiality and the interests of any third parties will be borne in mind.

- Research is a common enterprise, carried out in academic, industry and other settings. It involves collaboration, direct or indirect. Institution has a Policy on collaborations (See Criterion 10) and encourages and promotes and facilitates links and collaborations to various international, national, governmental, and non-governmental agencies and industries undertaking basic and applied research. All partners in research collaborations take responsibility for the integrity of the research. All partners agree at the outset on the goals of the research and on the process for communicating their research as transparently and openly as possible, standards concerning research integrity, on the laws and regulations that will apply; on protection of intellectual property of collaborators, and on procedures for handling conflicts and possible cases of misconduct. All partners in research collaborations are properly informed and consulted about submissions for publications of the research results.
- Institution has in place factors that stimulate and maintain research conducive environment some of which are promoting the responsible conduct of research; establishing good governance and management practices; training staff; promoting mentoring; ensuring a safe research environment ;maintaining high standards of responsible research; reporting research responsibly; respecting research participants; consumer and community participation of research appropriate reward; leadership with research expertise and skill in both initiating Responsible research is encouraged and guided by the research culture of the institution. A strong research culture will demonstrate: honesty and integrity; respect for human research participants, animals and the environment; good stewardship of public resources used to conduct research; appropriate acknowledgement of the roles of others in research; responsible communication of research results. A research environment should provide secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic,

personal, and professional outcomes from their research. Institution also supports proper infrastructure for the management and protection of data and research materials in all their forms that are necessary for reproducibility, traceability, and accountability. To enable students to undertake research effectively, it should endeavor to provide the most appropriate working accommodation, equipment and resources that it can.

- Institution provides supervision and advice for each graduate student through the appointment of an experienced supervisor through the Institution's Policy (or through a Code of Good Practice for Supervision) on Supervision, which deals with principles of supervision, selection and nomination of supervisors, appointment of supervisors, changes in supervision, arrangements during the absence of a supervisor, policy on frequency of contact and feedback and specific supervisory responsibilities and guidelines to students and student's responsibilities which may be contained in a Code of Practice on Research Students. The ratio of research students to supervisors must be low enough for effective intellectual interaction.  
Institution publishes clear criteria for the appointment of supervisors. Institution's academic authority is responsible for the appointment of staff as supervisors to the research students enrolled in the institution and for ensuring the continuation of regular and appropriate supervision throughout each candidature; ensuring that Institution is responsible for guaranteeing that all research students registered in their institution; receive adequate supervision in the pursuit of their research goals and professional development needs; receive effective monitoring of their academic progress; have access to the facilities necessary for achieving their research goals; are able to conduct their studies in a high-quality and supportive research environment and to maximize their contribution to their chosen discipline; are given opportunities to raise issues, voice concerns, and provide feedback.
- In a research degree programme to develop significant and original research in an area of expertise a student may need to have required courses, especially if the student does not have a master's degree yet. These courses are designed merely to compliment the research and provide a broad and deep knowledge base to support the student in his research endeavors. A postgraduate taught programme of SLQF level 9 will comprise a set of courses relevant to the programme and a project assignment of guided independent study equivalent to a minimum of 5 credits.
- The institution has in place clearly defined mechanisms through By-laws, Rules and Regulations for monitoring regularly and supporting research student progress, for making decisions about whether registration should be continued each year, overseeing all stages of the research process, including identifying the research objectives and approach, obtaining ethics and other approvals and reporting the research outcomes in appropriate forums and media. Including formal and explicit reviews of progress at different stages. At least once per year student should produce a written report outlining their progress during the preceding year sufficiently detailed in order to be used as evidence when necessary, Research students, supervisors and other relevant staff are made aware of progress monitoring mechanisms, including the importance of keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of the meetings and related activities. Monitoring committees may be established to provide an independent assessment of the progress of research students and the quality of their research supervision.

- Meetings of the committee also provide an opportunity for students to draw attention to any difficulties that may have arisen in the student-supervisor relationship.

### ***Criterion 10- Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach***

- The institution, as reflected in its mission have clearly defined policies for collaborations, linkages, community service and outreach activities as a part of quality enhancement with a clear link to the goals and objectives of the strategic plan, and procedures for dissemination, implementation, monitoring and improvement. Policies and strategies should include provision of adequate resources (physical, financial and human) and encouragement, recognition, and reward system for academics and students. A clearly defined policy framework and manual of procedures exist for income generating activities. This includes budgeting, fee-structures and rates, financial disbursement procedures, dispute resolution, and termination of contracts. The Institution has an established or adopted policy and procedures for sharing the income earned through consultancy between the partners and the institution. The Institution should diversify its source of income, principally undertaken by offering fee-levying programmes, consultancy and advisory services, commercializing research and innovations, laboratory services, technology and media center services etc. Potential expertise of the academic staff are identified and published through media and the website.

Collaboration with universities provide industry with the means by which to have access to advance technology and know-how at a lower cost The universities can benefit through additional public and private funding for R&D and new income through patenting and licensing thus create a win-win situation for both the universities and industries. Collaborations and consultancies builds up the reputation of the institution and the specific faculty and helps in augmenting institutional corpus, quest for new areas for research and social acceptance.

Institution should engage students, staff, administrators and faculty with industries and community. Interactions with the institution should apply to all disciplines and include. University student internships, informal contacts with academics and attendance at seminars, symposiums, workshops and conferences Student research and innovation potential is optimized through this. The institution should satisfy itself that the partner organization has effective measures to assure that the staff engaged in delivering a collaborative programme are appropriately qualified and competent.

- Identifying and responding to community needs is of great importance to the Institution as well as to society and must become part of the collective responsibility and expectations of appropriate faculties/departments and units within the institution. The institution's commitment to service to the community must be clearly specified, clear in its nature and scope, supported by policies to encourage involvement, and regular reports on the activities that take place.

Outreach programmes may involve students assisting local organizations, incorporate faculty and staff programmes targeting community development and

each engagement in outreach is likely to have an element of inquiry and discovery, leading to new knowledge. The flow of knowledge is in both directions. It provides bridges between theory and practice which benefit the teaching learning process. Direct student involvement in faculty outreach projects has the potential of providing considerably more mentoring and learning. It is of great pedagogical value for faculty to have had direct involvement in outreach projects, working collaboratively with practitioners thus acquiring firsthand knowledge of the field. Within these units discussions must lead to a deployment of available faculty resources to ensure that the unit carries out its multidimensional task of teaching, outreach and research in an optimal fashion. Potential expertise of the academic staff are identified and published through media and the website.

Outcomes of the outreach includes having an impact on the teaching and the research of the individual and his/her colleagues; benefitting participating students; contributing to the mission of the institution. Outreach projects should be evaluated using adequate documentation and evidence.

For the purposes of these standards contributions to the community should include services and activities to assist individuals, organizations or communities outside the institution they would not include such things as financial assistance for enrolled students or the provision of academic programmes leading to qualifications but could include participation in research or development projects and community education programmes provided without cost.

- Where work-based or placement learning is part of the programme of study, the institution ensures that the intended learning outcomes are clearly identified, contribute to the overall aim of the programme and are assessed appropriately. The Institution also informs students of their specific responsibilities and entitlements relating to their work –based and placement learning. The Institution has policies and procedures for securing, monitoring, administering, and reviewing work-based and placement learning.
- The Institution has in place a monitoring and evaluation designed to monitor the impact of policy or progress of programme activities against the overall goals, objectives and targets based on ongoing systematic collection of information to assess progress towards the achievement of objectives, outcomes and impact. It should also assess the outcome relevance of an activity, and the impact of a programme or initiative or effectiveness of a policy as well as its efficiency and sustainability. Assessment and evaluation to be conducted in partnership with broader range of stakeholders including the civil society and local community. Based on the results the purpose, process and outcomes are continuously modified through reflection, and feedback from partners.





## **Chapter Three**

### **Standards for Assessment**

Quality assessment in higher education is a diagnostic review and evaluation of the Institution's compliance with a set of best practices and the degree of attainment of the 'Standards'/Benchmarks prescribed by the UGC-QAC. The best practices for each of the ten criteria are summarized in Chapter two of this Manual. The best practices captured into specific statements termed 'Standards' are presented here but are not necessarily in the same order in which they appear in Chapter two. The Standards are to be used by reviewers, to measure quantitatively or qualitatively, the degree of compliance with best practices and the level of attainment in the relevant 'Standards'.

#### **3.1 Standards**

Standards are usually established by an authority (rule or principle) by general consensus as a basis for comparison. They define exactly how a task should be completed or what the outputs and outcomes would be. Generally there is not much room for variance. Factors that affect input, process, output and outcome have been taken into account in developing these standards.

The self-evaluation report (SER) of the Institution has to be structured in line with the 'Standards' provided in this chapter describing the extent to which it has adhered to the best practices defined in the ten criteria. A quality assessment uses evidence to make judgments objectively. In order to facilitate the use of standards in assessment, examples of evidence are given against each standard. During the review, the peer team after scrutiny of the documentary evidence provided for each standard, will measure its level of attainment and give a corresponding score.

To arrive at standard and criteria-wise assessments, examples of evidence and a score-guide on a 4-point Liker scale are provided. The examples of evidence are not exhaustive and the Institution may present any relevant evidence deemed appropriate for a particular standard. The standards could be used for both IQA & EQA.

#### **3.2 Standards, Sources of Evidence and Score Guide**

##### **Criterion 1 - VISION, MISSION AND PLANNING**

**Scope** -The university has documented evidence for recognizing the need of the country for open and distance learning programmes.

The university determines its own vision, mission, and objectives that are consistent with Open and Distance Learning (ODL) philosophy/approach for life-long learning.

The mission statement and purposes, reflect the university's broad educational goals; its intended student population; its commitment to all stakeholders; commitment to the needs of society; guides university all decision making; planning and resource allocation; and informs institutional goals to all relevant personnel for realizing the stated mission.

The university demonstrates strong commitment to the mission and demonstrates integrity in all policies and strategies.

Quality assurance is an integral part of the overall functioning of the university to ensure the university is committed to comply with national policies, regulations, and guidelines prescribed by the regulatory agencies. External monitoring emphasises accountability as well as continuous improvement, traditional regulatory methods to ensure quality are internal and should be carried out through internal quality assurance units.

*Criterion 1 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
1.1	The university's vision and mission are clear and articulate publicly the commitment of the university to open and distance learning within the context of national development priorities and the latest regional and international trends in higher education.	Vision and mission statements; Corporate/Strategic Plan; handbook of the university; governing board/academic board meeting minutes; planning policy, institutional framework; involvement of staff in the university plans - as evidence to show relevance of vision and mission to national development priorities and international trends in education; relevance of goals and objectives to the institutional context	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0	1	2	3								
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>								
1.2	The university's mission reflects its broad educational purposes, its intended student population, the types of credentials it offers and its commitment to student learning and student achievement.	Handbooks; Corporate/Strategic Plan; brochures; programme information documents; website, promotional materials, statistical handbook - to show the educational purposes and goals, etc., reflect the mission.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
0	1	2	3								
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>								

<b>1.3</b>	The university's (strategic plan) goals and objectives align with the National Higher Education Policy Framework	Handbook; Corporate/Strategic Plan; brochures; programme information documents - to show compliance with Standards, Guidelines, Qualification Frameworks, Subject Benchmarks, etc., issued by the MoHE, UGC, QAC, and other professional bodies (where applicable)	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.4</b>	The university has a strategic management plan with clearly defined goals and objectives, which provides a basis for all key operations of the university.	Corporate/Strategic Management Plan; Monitoring committee minutes to show all strategies/activities planned are aligned with goals and objectives	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.5</b>	Policy statements and action plans are formulated for all key operations to fulfil the stated mission, and incorporated into the institutional Strategic Planning.	Corporate/Strategic Management Plan; year planner; schedule of activities; minutes of statutory boards/committees relevant By Laws; evidence provided through interaction with staff – as evidence for university having policies for key operations such as teaching-learning, student recruitment, research, HRM, Financial management and infrastructure development; Strategic Plan in place which provides a basis for all key activities of the university, and is appropriately aligned to the institutional vision and mission.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.6</b>	The vision, mission and strategic plans are formulated including the viewpoints of all stakeholders.	Composition of university committees and minutes of the meetings; evidence provided through interactions with students, university, administrators, employers, and the community; Data/information on feedback; agenda and minutes of policy development committees - as evidence for wider representation of the stakeholders in all its decision-making bodies and the participatory approach taken through a process of regular and continuous feedback loops with its stakeholders.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>1.7</b>	Vision, mission, goals, objectives, policy statements and action plans are clearly documented and effectively communicated to all stakeholders.	Handbook, brochures; other advocacy materials of the university; circulation to all stakeholders (students, university, administrators employers and community) through minutes, website, materials etc., evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and other stakeholders - as evidence for communication of the vision and mission to all stakeholders	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>1.8</b>	The mission statement, objectives and plans are reviewed and appropriately revised by the university by periodically and systematically collecting data from all its Units and other relevant stakeholder groups.	Feedback forms, documented feedback information, market surveys and data, evidence provided through interaction with stakeholders, data on workshops, minutes of policy planning units/committees, minutes of meetings of various committees dealing with feedback processes – as evidence for assessment, review and improvement in the areas of management, budget, administrative policies and practices, student support services, university and staff development, curricula, learning resources system, facilities, and student achievement outcomes; assigned responsibilities for conducting research and evaluation of its performance and for regular review of policies in the light of institutional research data	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

<b>1.9</b>	The university has a Quality Assurance (QA) policy in alignment with the national policy on QA for higher education which is effectively communicated to all internal constituencies.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; Quality Assurance framework and Quality Assurance policy documents, agendas and minutes of relevant committees, quality circles, internal quality assurance bodies IQAU & IQAC, quality assurance procedures; Management Information System, website, internal circulars, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, documents on external quality assurance agency to show that there is an integrated framework and process to ensure the quality of the academic and administrative activities of the university and for its alignment with the requirements of the relevant external quality assurance agencies.	<div>0 1 2 3</div> <div>○ ○ ○ ○</div>
<b>1.10</b>	The university has a clear policy on the use of Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), Subject Benchmarks Statements (SBS)	Policies on the use of SLQF, SBS and accreditation documents; Handbook; Corporate/Strategic Plan; brochures; programme information,	<div>0 1 2 3</div> <div>○ ○ ○ ○</div>
<b>1.11</b>	The university has clear policies that are enforced on academic honesty and integrity, conflict of interest and ethics.	Documents specifying code of conduct, ethical standards, corporate plan, minutes of relevant committees, structure, prospectus, brochures, information package; evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, minutes of management committees; minutes of disciplinary committees - as evidence for provision of awareness for management, staff and learners and their adherence to it; for action taken for violation of code of conduct	<div>0 1 2 3</div> <div>○ ○ ○ ○</div>
<b>1.12</b>	The university has a stated policy for fee levying system including financial support for enrolled students.	Policy documents; Brochure, prospectus, scholarship/bursary schemes and guidelines; programme information package - as evidence for the administration of fee levying system and financial support to students and for monitoring and evaluation of the policy	<div>0 1 2 3</div> <div>○ ○ ○ ○</div>

<b>1.13</b>	The university has a transparent credit transfer policy.	Policy documents on credit transfers/exemptions, corporate /strategic plan, prospectus, programme documents, Memoranda of Understanding, course material package, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, minutes of credit transfer/exemption committee meetings.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.14</b>	The university has a stated policy on partnerships, collaborations and internationalization that includes international student recruitment, staff/student exchange, alliance with off-shore universities, student support services, and cross border delivery.	Policy documents, Memoranda of Understandings, Corporate/Strategic Plan, annual report that documents international student recruitment, staff/student exchange, alliance with off-shore universities or institutions, student support services, cross-border delivery for research, documents for selection procedures for collaboration for academic and extension purposes, documented evidence for defined responsibilities and accountability, documents on criteria for regular monitoring and evaluation, meeting minutes, review meeting minutes	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.15</b>	The institution has a policy for a Management Information System (MIS) for all its key operations. which is complete and current.	Policy documents, Corporate/Strategic Plan, budget allocation documents, technology development plans, agendas and minutes of meetings of technology infrastructure and operational committees showing planning, acquisition, deployment, maintenance and use of appropriate technologies for management of information and record keeping.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.16</b>	The university has a policy for the effective use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in support of open distance learning in management, communication, teaching and learning, research and community engagement.	ICT Policy documents in relation to management, communication, teaching, research and community engagement. MIS & LMS	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>1.17</b>	The university has policies to foster harmonious relationships and wellbeing of staff and students.	Policy documents on: welfare; grievance redress; fire safety & sanitation; curbing ragging, intimidation and harassment; promoting gender equity and equality; evidence of student unions, sports councils, societies, and various clubs.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.18</b>	There is a strong commitment by the university's leadership to reflect upon performance output/outcomes rather than processes and inputs	Monitoring committee documents; Strategic Plan and Action Plans and outputs; survey reports; self-review reports	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.19</b>	Quality assurance processes involve all sections (constituents) of the university effectively integrated into the normal planning and administrative processes.	Evidence of incorporation of QA policy and strategy in Institutional Strategic Plan and Action plans of institutes/ faculties/centres/units.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.20</b>	The stated policy and associated procedures for assurance of quality and standards are communicated to all stakeholders and implemented through internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms.	Evidence of QA policy, and procedures communicated to all stakeholders; established IQAC and IQAU with clearly defined TOR; evidence of internal processes for self-monitoring, self-analysis and assessment enabling continuous quality enhancement.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.21</b>	The university promotes internalisation of best practices in its various units as a move towards quality culture	Council, Senate, Faculty Board and other relevant committee minutes providing evidence of internalization of best practices in the various units; evidence of University/ HEI providing necessary resources, training of staff and leadership for creating a quality culture.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>1.22</b>	The university has an established and effective internal quality assurance system with internal IQAU and IQAC	Evidence of IQAC and IQAU in the University/HEI with clearly defined objectives, functions, composition and intended outcomes as given in the Internal Quality Assurance Manual (2013) of the UGC.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>



<b>1.23</b>	The university programmes/courses /awards are reviewed regularly against identified performance targets by the IQAU and IQACs and reported at the senate and Council and improvement plans are implemented by the faculties	Minutes of the IQAU and IQAC; Minutes of the Curriculum Development/ Evaluation Committee, Faculty Board, Senate and Council; SER of Institution/ Programmes completed/in preparation.	0    1    2    3 ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>1.24</b>	Recommendations /comments made by previous external quality reviews are adequately addressed by IQAU, IQAC, Faculties and monitored by IQAU.	Council/Senate approved policy on follow up of recommendations of the Institutional Review Report (IRR); evidence of IQAU following recommendations; Faculty Board, Senate and Council minutes; Progress reports on remedial actions based on past QA report.	0    1    2    3 ○   ○   ○   ○

## **Criterion 2 - GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

**Scope** - Legal Acts, establishment codes, rules, regulations, national policy framework, and strategies are integrated within the governance and management of the university. The university determines its own mission and objectives that reflects its values and standards, academic commitments, national needs and international context. The university has administrative policies ,procedures, appropriately qualified personnel, efficient management and administrative capacity , physical facilities, financial stability, and resources for adequate for operations and evidence-based strategic decision making.

The university has a well-defined and effective governance and management system which clearly defines the roles of institutional constituencies in policy development and decision making.

The organizational functioning of the university is based on the mission statement, institutional goals and values, strategic direction, and the development of effective relationship and teamwork between administration, university, staff and students and decisions making based on the principles of partnership, equity, accountability and ownership.

The university governance and management provides the means through which authority and responsibility are assigned, delegated, and shared in a climate of mutual support. Within this system of shared governance each major constituency carries out its separate but complementary roles and responsibilities.

The university fosters continued organizational improvement by evaluating outcomes and making changes to its structures and processes as needed and encourage administrators, university and staff to take initiatives in improving the practices, programmes, and services in which they are involved.

The university employs a variety of appropriate and adequate resources to help ensure the development of competent students and staff and, committed, caring professionals.

The university takes responsibility for ensuring the appropriate delivery systems and services are available for its learners. Technology services, professional support, facilities, software, and hardware are appropriate and adequate to support the university's management and operational functions, academic programmes, teaching, learning, and support services.

*Criterion 2 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good
<b>2.1</b>	The organizational structure, governance and management system are in compliance with respective Acts, relevant Ordinances and their amendments, Establishment Codes, rules and regulations issued by the relevant Ministries/Authorities or Articles of Association where relevant.	University Act and Ordinances; University Calendar and By-laws; Organogram; E-code, FRs, circulars, Manual of Procedures/ Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) approved by the relevant authorities.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>2.2</b>	Governance and administrative structures enable the university to fulfil its distinctive ODL mission and purposes and facilitate effective leadership through policy development and processes for accountability.	Corporate Plan/Strategic Plan; Action Plans of institutes/faculties/centres /units/RES, Organogram; Composition, TOR and minutes of Standing and Ad-hoc Committees; Minutes of Governing Boards, Senate/Academic Syndicate.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>2.3</b>	The Organizational structure of the university is clearly defined and is appropriate and the structure is widely communicated.	Organogram with defined roles, responsibilities and authorities, Corporate/Strategic Plan, policy manuals, handbook, documented internal delegations of powers and authority, websites, human resource plans, documented performance review and systems, efficiency of reporting and consequential action - to show that the governance structure provides for collegial decision making and overseeing of institutional activities ensuring overall quality of its provisions and communication to all staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>2.4</b>	University engages in participatory, systematic, and integrated planning, with all relevant stakeholders in alignment with the the corporate/strategic plan , assigning responsibilities to	Handbooks, University Brochures, Management Committee minutes, academic board records, evidence provided through interaction with all relevant stakeholders, procedures for nominations for committees, by-laws to show planning and decisions are	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

	them and communicated to all concerned	made on the principles of partnership, equity, accountability and ownership, encouraging and providing due consideration of the views and inputs of university, administrators, staff and students on matters in which they have a direct interest	
<b>2.5</b>	Mechanisms are in place to ensure effective coordination and communication among different entities of the institution.	Management committee records, academic board records, evidence provided through interaction with staff, procedures for nomination and appointment to committees, by-laws committee meeting minutes, Committee membership with appropriate representation of relevant constituencies in decision making processes; formal mechanisms and communication channels for liaison between committees to ensure proper coordination and dissemination of information among the various constituencies of the university;	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.6</b>	Mechanisms and approved procedures are in place to ensure implementation and monitoring of all institutional policies, and strategic management plans	Minutes of Council, Planning and development committee minutes, Senior Management Committee meetings, Progress reports of strategic plan and action plan of units, Annual reports	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.7</b>	Resource allocation is explicitly and transparently linked to activities identified by the annual plans of the respective years	Policies, guidelines and processes for resource allocation, receiving funds, fund disbursement, annual budget, Financial accounts, Strategic management plan; relevant committee minutes - as evidence for financial planning, monitoring of operating and capital budgets, reserves, investments, fund raising, cash management, and transfers; to demonstrate transparent linking of resource allocation to activities in annual plans; to demonstrate its financial stability with sufficient cash flow and reserves to support programmes and its services, and sustainability of the university (Ref: Council Minutes, Audit Reports	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.8</b>	University's financial procedures comply with the requirements of	University's Reports to COPE and COPE's recommendations; Minutes of Finance committee, Procurement	<b>0 1 2 3</b>

	national/university financial regulations and guidelines.	Committee, Audit and Management Committee; Council minutes; Manual of Financial procedures/ SOPs.	○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.9</b>	The university has well defined policies and procedures for seeking and receiving funds from external resources and fund disbursements.	SOP Manual; Council Minutes; Audit Reports.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.10</b>	Governance and management based on principles of transparency and participation are monitored through internal and external auditing systems.	Minutes of Audit and Management Committee; Internal Auditors and External Auditors annual reports; COPE submissions and reports.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.11</b>	The university has an effective system for the procurement, management and maintenance of equipment and facilities to ensure conducive learning and working environment for students and staff at all locations.	Corporate/Strategic Plan, budget estimates/allocations financial management information system, Management Information System, expenditure statements, budget estimates, procurement plan; maintenance procedures; minutes of maintenance and procurement committees, grievance and complaints committee documents and minutes; Information Communication Technology, operational committee minutes, university plan for use and maintenance of technology for teaching and learning; Human resource plan, organogram, maintenance department/unit structure, roles and responsibilities of staff, evidence provided through interaction with staff and student	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>2.12</b>	The university has a mechanism to adhere to high ethical standards and core values in its operations and gives clear prior notice of such policy in its publications.	Policies on ethical standards including conflict of interest, statements on code of conduct, copyright control, IP rights, defined course of contracts, by-laws and rules and regulations, Staff Communications, intranet, grievance committee reports, Minutes of management meetings- as evidence for availability of such policies; they are implemented on the part of university, administrators, and staff and are clearly communicated in publications to all at the beginning	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○

<b>2.13</b>	The university employs a sufficient number of qualified personnel to support its ODL operation functions with roles, responsibilities and accountability spelt out.	Human resource planning and development documents, documentations on staff roles and responsibilities documentation, codes of obligations and rights, documentation of performance review systems, work norms, job description and organizational charts to show that the job descriptions accurately reflect duties, responsibilities and authority of the positions.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.14</b>	The university recruits adequate, appropriately qualified and experienced staff through transparent mechanisms , take efforts to retain them and upgrade skills periodically to achieve performance targets	Recruitment and Promotion criteria circulars/ documents; Selection committee appointments; implementation of interview board's decisions; policy on retention of staff; SDC documents; interaction with staff; staff feedback survey reports; Annual Reports.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.15</b>	The university implements Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) for all key functions and communicated to all categories of staff for effective management.	Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) documents, Work norms documents, Performance appraisal documents; minutes of committees to show the implementation, communication and regular monitoring.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.16</b>	The roles responsibilities, obligations, and rights, of staff are clearly defined, documented and communicated to all concerned, implemented and reviewed regularly	Job descriptions of all categories of staff; staff charter; evidence of communication to staff and students.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.17</b>	The university implements duty lists/ work norms/ performance appraisal system/reward schemes for all categories of staff for effective management and these are communicated and monitored regularly.	Performance and appraisal committee structure, Terms of Reference and minutes of meetings, work norms of staff; action taken to enforce it; staff appraisal documents and feedback methods; rewards schemes; policies of self-appraisal, evidence provided through interaction with staff and Chief Executive Officer of university; training provided, rewards.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.18</b>	The university has appropriate structures and mechanisms to enhance performance of staff through staff development	SDC, training schedules; Board meeting minutes, workshops, seminars, training programmes, staff training guidelines	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

	programmes.		
<b>2.19</b>	The university has appropriate infrastructure, adequate ICT and technology systems to support its management and operational functions, academic programmes and support services and with update and replacement plans.	Corporate/Strategic Plan, policy documents, financial management information system, MIS, LMS, expenditure statements, minutes of maintenance and procurement committees, Information Communication Technology, operational committee, Planning and Development Committee documents and minutes of meetings, university plan for use and maintenance of technology for teaching and learning; Annual Report	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.20</b>	The university incorporates use of ICT in management, communication, teaching and learning, research and community engagement.	Policy documents on ICT; Strategic Plan; Handbooks; Planning and Development Committee documents; Annual Report; website, MIS & LMS.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.21</b>	All staff and students have access to efficient and reliable networked computing facilities including access to university-wide information service and are trained to use them	Policy documents on ICT; MIS, LMS; Minutes of IT committee; Feedback from students and staff; Documents from Staff Development Centre (SDC).	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.22</b>	The university has put in place an information system (MIS) which is complete and current.	MIS; evidence of maintenance of complete records and regular updates; website.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.23</b>	The university has documented procedures and systems to ensure the academic quality and integrity of all educational services offered in its name when the university contracts a distance learning programme to another agency, in part or full.	MOUs; Agreements; Policy documents and guidelines; ToRs	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.24</b>	The university has documented procedures and systems on internationalization that include international student recruitment, staff/student exchange, alliances with off-	By laws, Guidelines relevant to internationalization; surveys of international students; enrolment data; Annual Report.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

	shore universities, student support services and cross border delivery.		
<b>2.25</b>	The university adheres to an annual academic calendar that is followed meticulously	Year planners, operational schedules, prospectus and brochures of academic programmes, learning and teaching plan and evidence provided through interaction with students, MIS, website graduation/programme completion data as evidence for university's procedures for planning of academic activities and calendars with involvement of all units, divisions and departments; that academic calendar is made available to both students and staff at the beginning of the academic year; that the schedules are followed permitting students to complete on stipulated time	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>2.26</b>	The university has mechanisms for timely and quality assured production and delivery of course materials.	Planning implementation policy/framework, Committee structure and composition, agendas and minutes of relevant committees (Faculty Board, Operations, QA committee, etc.); activity schedules, printing schedules; documentation on staff and employees recruitment related to course development and ToRs, manuals and documentation on implementation; evidence provided through interaction with staff and students - to show availability of procedures for timely production of course materials, for development of course materials in compliance with institutional quality standards, assigned responsibility to assure quality at various levels and stages of production and delivery, etc.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>2.27</b>	The university has mechanisms in place to provide prompt response to the learners' needs for academic, administrative and personal support.	Corporate/Strategic Plan, policy documents, evidence of student counselling Centre/unit, its structure, functioning, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff for access personal counseling services; access to on-line services; Documents on adequacy of staff; documents on qualifications of staff;	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○



		documents on infrastructure facilities in the Centre and outreach Centres, evidence of technology applications and other academic, administrative and instructional support for effective delivery of programme	
<b>2.28</b>	The university has an established and effective Internal Quality Assurance system with an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) at the centre and Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) at the faculty level	QA committee structure at university, faculty and department levels; QA committee meetings	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.29</b>	The university has mechanisms and instruments in place for continuous and systematic evaluation, planning and improvement of policies, services, and implementation actions.	Progress of strategic management plan, Feedback data/reports with respect to physical, human and other resources to show that it has engaged in evaluation processes informed by appropriately analysed data and to demonstrate using the results of evaluation activities in academic offerings, student learning, and the student achievement to inform planning, changes in programmes, services and resources	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.30</b>	Recommendations/comments made in External and Internal Review Reports, are adequately addressed by IQAC, IQAU, Faculty Boards, Senate and Council and monitored by IQAU.	Review reports; Action plans; committee meeting minutes; monitoring procedures	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.31</b>	The university administers relevant welfare schemes for all staff and students of the university.	Documentation on available welfare schemes; evidence of established welfare facilities through Handbook, website or any other documents; records of students and staff availing of facilities minutes of welfare committee	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.32</b>	The university has transparent, fair, effective, and expeditious disciplinary procedures and grievance redress mechanisms for staff and students, which are communicated to all	Policy documents; strategies and action plans drawn and implemented; Disciplinary By-laws for staff and students; Disciplinary action taken; reports on progress made in curbing ragging, promoting GEE and deterring SGBV	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

	concerned and implemented.		
<b>2.33</b>	The university has a comprehensive policy and has strategies and action plans drawn up in line with the UGC prescribed policy and strategies to promote GEE and deter SGBV	Policy document on GEE and SGBV; Strategies and Actions Plans drawn and implemented; Reports on the progress made in promoting GEE and deterring SGBV.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.34</b>	The university has put into practice a comprehensive policy and has strategies and action plans drawn up in line with the UGC circular 919 to curb ragging and any other form of intimidation and harassment of students	Policy and Strategy document on curbing ragging; Student disciplinary by-laws; Mechanisms for preventing ragging and related misdemeanours; Reports on incidences of ragging and related misdemeanours and deterrent measures.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.35</b>	The university maintains fire safety, sanitation and other relevant standards in its administrative, instructional and accommodation facilities. NO	Policy documents and SOPs related to fire safety, sanitation etc., as evidence for compliance to regulations.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.36</b>	The university has mechanisms to promote harmonious relationships among key players through regular opportunities for communication and social interactions	Corporate/Strategic Plan; institutional practices for communication and social interaction, statistics of e-mail access, surveys of staff, student and other stakeholder awareness and opinions.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.37</b>	The institution has mechanisms to promote social harmony.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; policy documents, curriculum, course materials, website, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, evidence of cultural events; records of outreach activities and impact.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.38</b>	The university has a policy which promotes and rewards innovation in curriculum development teaching and learning, research and community engagement, and allocates resources accordingly	Corporate/Strategic plan; Minutes of Council/Senate/ CDC/Awards Committee/Finance Committee.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>2.39</b>	The university has an efficient administration that responds promptly to all student enquiries on admissions, programmes,	Web site with FAQs; Job descriptions of relevant staff; administrative structure; students' feedback; help desk.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

	examinations, fees, dues, graduation and scholarships etc. with accurate and complete answers.										
<b>2.40</b>	The university securely maintains, updates, and ensures confidentiality of permanent records of all currently enrolled learners	A comprehensive, up to date MIS with data on students; Evidence of measures such as firewalls, passwords etc. for maintaining security and confidentiality of records.	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
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### Criterion 3 - THE LEARNERS

Scope – Consistent with its mission, the university sets and achieves realistic goals to enroll students who broadly represents the population the university intends to serve.

There is a system of collecting detailed information about learners and using this information to inform all aspects of policy and planning, programme and course development, support services, and the overall processes of teaching - learning.

*Criterion 3 is captured in the following ‘Standards’.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
3.1	The university’s commitment to learners reflected in the mission is clearly and accurately documented, and documentation is made available/displayed to all stakeholders.	Handbooks; University Prospectus; website, display of mission at faculties/centres/main entrances/ other central locations	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>								
3.2	The university’s admission policy and procedures are orderly, ethical, clear and consistent with its mission and purposes.	Admission Policy documents and documented procedures; MIS, student profiles as evidence for compliance with the requirements concerning equality of educational opportunity; and to show standards for admission ensure student qualifications and expectations are compatible with university objectives	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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3.3	There is an up-to-date and integrated database about learners providing information on demographics, language, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic, educational backgrounds and special needs, where confidentiality of data is maintained.	MIS, student profiles, procedures and practices of record management, management of MIS, code of conduct and ethical standards, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, security measures in place to ensure the confidentiality of personal data	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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3.4	The university provides accurate and updated information to prospective students on programmes, avenues for financial support, academic calendar, examination system etc.	Handbook, University Prospectus, programme/course information package, brochures, website, other advocacy material including advertisements; documentation provided at orientation seminars/Open Day programmes;	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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	through print media and /or website and clearly specifies the entry requirements and other prerequisites for programmes and courses prior to entry.	evidence provided through interaction with students and staff; documentation on student performance to show it provides accurate and updated information to prospective students on available programmes/courses, entry qualifications, prior knowledge and skills required, delivery systems, support services, programmes, student learning outcomes, fee structure, avenues for financial support, academic calendar, examination system etc. to enable them to make informed choices prior to entry.	
<b>3.5</b>	Policies relating to recruitment, programmes and support services are informed by research conducted on the needs and expectations of learners and on the results of retention, completion and graduation rates.	Documented research data, Questionnaire, documented feedback data, evidence of consequential action taken	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>3.6</b>	The university has mechanisms in place to collect information about learners on their progress throughout a programme of study provide a prompt and constructive feedback and obtain feedback informally and formally about their performance	Stakeholder analysis feedback forms; database; documentation on workshops/meetings with outcomes; evidence of consequential action.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>3.7</b>	Learner information and feedback are used to design and revise programmes, courses, course materials and support services that are learner-centred.	Stakeholder analysis feedback forms; database; documentation on workshops/meetings with outcomes; evidence of consequential action such as revision of programmes/courses/course materials/resources, improvement of support services after analysis.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

<b>3.8</b>	The university is aware of and responds to learners with special/ appropriate learning needs such as appropriate infrastructure, delivery strategies, academic support services and guidance.	Corporate plan; documentation on available infrastructure facilities, MIS, programme information package, brochures, prospectus, website, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students; Stakeholder analysis feedback forms; database; documentation on workshops/meetings with outcomes; evidence of consequential action	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>3.9</b>	Staff have access to relevant information about learners.	MIS, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, reports/ relevant publications about learners.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>3.10</b>	The university has appropriate mechanisms to enable learners to participate in the decision-making processes of the university.	Committee structures to show student representation; feedback forms; documentation on workshops/meetings with outcomes; evidence of consequential action;	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>3.11</b>	The university has mechanisms to maintain and monitor the close links the staff have with learners.	Evidence –use of technology for communication; Prospectus, university brochures, programme/course information package, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, feedback forms and evidence of consequential action; societies	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>3.12</b>	There is a prompt response from the staff and leadership to the learners' needs for academic, administrative and personal support.	Policy documents, evidence of student counselling, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff; Documents on adequacy of staff; documents on qualifications of staff); documents on infrastructure facilities in the centre and outreach centres, evidence of technology applications – as evidence for providing learner support through appropriately qualified staff; for availability of appropriate academic, administrative and other instructional support for effective delivery of the programme; access to an effective personal counselling services for learners, evidence of action taken at appropriate bodies in response to the needs of the learner	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>3.13</b>	The university has arrangements for registration, induction, and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote effective integration of new entrants to the student community.	Induction and orientation programmes; measures to minimize/eliminate ragging.	<table> <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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#### **Criterion 4 - HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Scope -** The university has qualified and competent university and staff needed for effective high quality programmes and student services. Professional development of human resource is regularly organized for university and staff to assist in efficient and effective and creative and recognizes excellence in teaching and learning , research and community engagement, management of the design, development, and delivery of programmes and courses and student centred learning. University facilitates university and staff to be innovative.

The university assures the integrity and quality of its programmes and services by employing administrators, university and other staff who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support quality academic programmes through open distance learning and achieve its mission.

Through a mandatory induction programme all newly recruited staff are helped to acquire minimum skills and competencies required to perform satisfactorily in their assigned roles.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of human resources is regularly conducted for staff to assist in effective and efficient management of the university and to enhance the capacity of the university in the design, development, delivery of quality academic programmes and courses in an open distance delivery mode.

The university facilitates university and staff to be innovative and creative and recognizes excellence in teaching and learning, research and community engagement.

The university assures the effectiveness of its human resources in the provision of quality academic programmes and student learning by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals and encourages improvement in serving its student population.



*Criterion 4 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
4.1	The university has a comprehensive human resource policy covering recruitment, retention, performance appraisal, career development, promotion, leave, grievance, rewards, occupational health and safety and promotion of staff, provision of facilities, performance monitoring, staff development, recognitions of services and welfare system, and is communicated to all.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; university planning, policies and human resource (HR) documents relating to recruitment, retention, performance appraisal, career development, promotion, leave, grievance, rewards, occupational health, and safety; website, relevant circulars/internal memos	<table> <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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○	○	○	○								
4.2	The university implements policies and procedures for recruiting and defining roles and responsibilities of non-permanent staff (visiting, contract staff, etc.) which provide for their orientation, oversight and evaluation	Policies and procedure documentation, orientation provided; recruitment; evaluation mechanisms, copies of terms of reference	<table> <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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4.3	The organizational structure and qualifications of academic, administrative and support staff are appropriate for the operation of the university.	Organogram, Corporate/Strategic Plan, details of staffing structure of administration units, individual staff profiles of admin unit; university planning and HR documents.	<table> <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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4.4	Academic staff are suitably qualified, adequately trained in pedagogy, and experienced for their particular teaching responsibilities, research and outreach activities	Qualification profile of existing academic cadre (cadre books); retirement and succession plans.	<table> <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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○	○	○	○								

<b>4.5</b>	The university has ensured that all faculties/ regional/study centres/ units have adequate and qualified academic and non-academic cadre as per the approved faculty/department staff : student ratio	Student ratio norms based on faculties and departments.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.6</b>	Clearly specified job descriptions that accurately reflect position, duties, responsibilities, and authority are communicated to all categories of staff at the time of appointment.	Organogram, Corporate/Strategic Plan, details of staffing structure of administration unit, individual staff profiles of admin unit; university planning and HR documents.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.7</b>	The university has ensured that all entities have adequate and qualified academic, administrative and non-academic cadre to support the effective educational, technological, physical and administrative operations of the university.	Organogram, Corporate/Strategic Plan, details of staffing structure of units/faculties, individual staff profiles of units/faculties; university planning and human resource (HR) plans/documents (including steps taken to fill the cadre, recruitment, retention, promotion, performance management, career development, records), MIS, staff: student ratio	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.8</b>	Newly recruited academic staff undergoes an induction programme which provides an awareness of their roles and responsibilities and imparts knowledge in competencies in their subject as well as ODL skills required to perform the assigned tasks.	Staff development training plan; Induction provided to staff, Training module information; feedback on training; Documented training identified	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.9</b>	The university has a system of mentoring for the guidance of newly recruited staff in their career development by the Senior staff.	Mentoring systems in place; Faculty/departmental procedures for mentoring, monitoring mechanisms	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.10</b>	Newly recruited academic staff are guided in their career development by the professors/senior academics and supported by the department /faculty and the university	Policy on career development of newly recruited staff; evidence of departments assigning professors to guide younger staff; evidence of faculty/department supporting this facility.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>4.11</b>	The university ensures that faculty members are competent in the ODL delivery mode in addition to their discipline/subject.	University development plans; staff trained in Outcome-Based Education (OBE), learner-centred instructional methods, and teaching skills relating to ODL delivery mode; quality of teaching at a distance based on evidence of student achievement/satisfaction	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.12</b>	The university ensures that allocation of workload to all categories of staff is transparent and fair.	Minutes of department meetings, annual staff work plans, Work norms and job descriptions of staff; individual staff profiles, performance appraisal data- to show workload of staff conforms to the work norms agreed upon by the university	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.13</b>	Using a clearly defined Staff Appraisal Form, staff are evaluated at stated intervals through documented criteria.	Performance appraisal reports, records of work and feedback as evidence for appraisal on all aspects of the job, including performance of assigned duties, participation in university responsibilities, and other activities assigned and actions taken following evaluations.	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.14</b>	And due recognition , incentives and rewards are given for outstanding performance in teaching, research, and community engagement	Policy on assessment of staff for outstanding performance in their different roles for recognition; staff performance appraisal reports; evidence of recognition and awards; survey data.	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.15</b>	Underperformance revealed by performance appraisal is adequately addressed and remedial action taken	Performance appraisal forms; action taken to address poor performance; staff surveys.	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.16</b>	The university has a mechanism to identify training and re-training needs of all categories of staff.	HR policy documents; SDC training programme, performance appraisal forms feedback, staff training and development schedules and manuals; evidence provided through interaction with staff; need assessment surveys among different staff categories and special requirements stated by stakeholders	<b>0   1   2   3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>4.17</b>	The university has an adequately resourced staff development centre which conducts induction programmes, for new staff and regular continuous development programmes for all categories of staff, and assessment of regular application of new skills by trained staff.	Evidence of resources of SDC; past and present training schedules of SDC; evidence of relevant training to all levels of staff based on identified training needs; mechanisms for assessing the improvement in performance of staff vis-à-vis the training programme; Peer observation forms.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.18</b>	Satisfaction and training needs are regularly obtained through staff feedback and addressed adequately.	Staff feedback on their achievement, satisfaction; documentation of identified needs and action taken	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.19</b>	The university has an effective staff development and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes to continually improve the competencies of all staff.	University development plans for capacity improvement including teaching skills; In-service Continued Professional Development (CPD) programmes; feedback on impact of CPD programmes on the performance of trainees; monitoring tools/systems, and remedial action taken	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.20</b>	Recognition, incentives, and rewards are given for outstanding performance relevant to their duties of all categories of staff.	Recognition, incentives and reward systems in place; no of recipients	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.21</b>	There is an effective employee welfare system with appropriate, fair and transparent procedures that respond to employee/s needs	Corporate/Strategic Plan; policy documents, ordinance, act, service conditions, budgetary allocations, employer/employee union constitutions, roles and responsibilities of welfare unit staff – as evidence for welfare provisions that responds to employee's needs with designated welfare officer or unit to coordinate and monitor implementation of the various welfare schemes	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>4.22</b>	Staff are encouraged and trained on outcome-based education and student centred learning	Staff development training schedule on staff induction and professional training; evidence of training on outcome-based education and student-centred teaching; Peer observation forms; programme specifications; Student feedback.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

## **Criterion 5- PROGRAMME DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Scope** – Programme of study is defined as a stand-alone approved curriculum followed by a student, which contributes to a qualification of a degree awarding body. Where a programme is made up of more than one self-contained, formally structured units, those are referred to as courses/modules. The university's programmes of study are congruent with its mission, goals and objectives and are based on recognized higher educational fields of study in line with ODL philosophy approach.

Programmes of study should reflect university's mission, goals and objectives. They are offered according to needs analysis based on an audit of existing courses and programmes, market research, liaison with industry, national and regional priorities and according to approved procedures. Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and requirements of professional bodies act as valuable guide /external reference points when formulating a structure and content of a new degree programme. Curriculum is outcome driven and equips students with knowledge, skills and attitudes to succeed in the world of work and for lifelong learning.

Programme design is initiated by describing the graduate outcomes of the programme followed by a clear mapping of course/module outcomes to the programme outcomes. Learning outcomes are developed and described with reference to a particular level of study in compliance with the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) and other external reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and professional standards. All programme outcomes should be clearly aligned with course outcomes, content, teaching learning and assessment strategies (constructive alignment). Programmes seek to engage students in a variety of learning activities that would encourage diversity, flexibility, accessibility and autonomy of learning, and produce compatibility between curriculums, student centred teaching methods assessment procedures. Essentially the final curriculum is an interaction between learning outcomes, methods of assessment, teaching methods and content.

The aims and ILOs of a programme of study, deliberative process through which the programme and ILOs were determined, how the curriculum enables the ILOs to be achieved and how assessments test the student's achievement of the ILOs, demonstrate which reference points have been used to inform the design of the programme and its aims and ILOs, how the courses/modules are combined into whole qualification etc. are described in "Programme Specification" which can be used by the university to communicate information about the programmes it offers to students (prospective and current), as well as to staff, external examiners, employers, internal and external reviewers and others.

*Criterion 5 is captured in the following ‘Standards’.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	Score Guide 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
5.1	The university systematically and consistently maintains conformity of academic programmes with its mission, goals and objectives with regular monitoring and review of programmes.	Strategic Management Plan; programme design and development plans, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff, minutes/notes of programme development committees/ teams.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5.2	Programme offer core and elective courses to allow greater develop a range of skills to achieve ILOs.	Prospectus; Handbook; programme information package; Planning documents which the requirements of Accreditation agencies/ professionals.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5.3	Access to programme is as open as possible with flexible entry and exit points where applicable.	Curriculum and programme development and accreditation policies, credit exemption and transfer policies.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5.4	The university adheres to institutional policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of the academic programmes and awards.	Minutes of the academic advisory committee, faculty board, Curriculum and course development, by laws, Senate, council and UGC and accreditation policies; university prospectus, university’s teaching and learning plan, student feedback, employer feed back	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5.5	The policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of academic programmes and awards are widely communicated to all stakeholders and implementation is ensured.	Minutes of academic boards and academic review process; evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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5.6	The university has made available to its learners clearly stated transfer-of-credit/exemptions policies in order to facilitate the mobility of learners and recognize prior learning and experience.	Prospectus, website, By Laws, learning and teaching plans, academic review processes, credit transfer/exemption committee minutes, employer and stakeholder surveys.	<table> <tr> <td>0</td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> <td><input type="radio"/></td> </tr> </table>	0	1	2	3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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<b>5.7</b>	Programmes are designed based on systematic need analysis to determine the learner needs and viability of the programme.	Need analysis reports; employer surveys, student satisfaction surveys, institutional learning and teaching plan, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies, availability of appropriate curriculum and learning support needs of the target group.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.8</b>	Programme design and development pay attention, as far as possible, to gender equity, multiculturalism, social justice and cohesion, ethical values and environmental sustainability.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; programme objectives, programme/course materials, handbook, academic information package, need analysis reports; employer surveys, university learning and teaching plans, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.9</b>	University ensures stakeholder participation at all key stages of programme planning, design, development, monitoring and review.	Stakeholder meetings and documentation; review reports; feedback reports, reports on need analysis; Minutes of development/advisory committee, Minutes of Programme / Course development Committees.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.10</b>	Programme design and development are carried out through a programme development team which includes expertise from within and outside the university.	Minutes of Programme / Course development Committees, Course team documentation; Appointment letters.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.11</b>	Programmes comply with SLQF and are guided by other reference points such as Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS), and requirements of professional/statutory bodies.	Policy and procedures on Curriculum and course design; evidence of compliance with SLQF, SBSs and Professional body requirements; programme evaluation instruments, needs analysis reports.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.12</b>	The university ensures that appropriate learning outcomes are clearly identified in the programme for work – based placement/ industrial training / internship and for students and the external organisations of their specific responsibilities.	Programme approval documents, Course profiles, terms of reference of external organisation, student feedback & feedback from external training organizations.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>5.13</b>	The programme curriculum encourages development of knowledge, skills and attitudes as per SLQF requirements	Handbook; Prospectus; curriculum of individual programmes; SLQF mapping document.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.14</b>	For each academic programme there is a comprehensive blueprint of the Programme.( Programme Specification)	Curriculum development committee meeting minutes/Senate approved programme documents; Programme specifications/ course specifications specifying programme objectives and course outlines, Learning Outcomes (LO) teaching learning strategy assessment methods, Credits to be earned, workload defined by notional hours, entry and exit pathways including fall back options.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.15</b>	For each academic programme there is a comprehensive blueprint of the Programme. (Programme Specification), which adopts an Outcome Based Education (OBE) where programme outcomes are clearly aligned with the course/module outcomes; and the teaching and learning activities and assessment strategy aligned with the learning outcomes of each course (constructive alignment).	Curriculum development committee meeting minutes/Senate approved programme documents; Programme specifications/course specifications specifying programme objectives and course outlines, Learning Outcomes (LO) teaching learning strategy assessment methods, credits to be earned, workload defined by notional hours, entry and exit pathways including fall back options. evidence of compliance with respective Qualification Descriptors of SLQF	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.16</b>	The blueprint of the Programme (Programme specification) is communicated to prospective students, learners, staff and public, through print and electronic media; curricula and content are up-to-date with recent developments in pedagogy, subject/discipline-based advances and changes in professional standards.	Prospectus, Handbook, programme information package, website, student comments through questionnaire, evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>



<b>5.17</b>	The university periodically reviews and revises the academic programmes (5-year cycle) with relevant stakeholders for continuing validity, in relation to external Quality Assurance (EQA) frameworks.	Internal/external review reports; EQA reports, reports from professional bodies; accreditation reports; feedback from stakeholders; remedial measures taken.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>5.18</b>	The programme evaluation process is an on-going process of the University, informed by current research and needs and incorporated to the planning process of the course design and development.	University teaching and learning plan, curriculum and course development and accreditation policies, academic boards and academic review process; Performance indicators such as graduation rates, employment rates, career progression rates, admission to further study rates, etc are used to evaluate performance of academic programmes.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>5.19</b>	University regularly collects and records information from prospective learners, learners, graduates, employers and other relevant stakeholders and thereafter use these for the planning and improvement of the programme.	Adoption of policy and procedures in curriculum design and improvement of programmes; means of tapping student and staff opinion, data from test audits of student administration, surveys of student opinions of student services, documents reporting the efficiency of student services, programme/ course experience questionnaire data; improvements made on the results; Tracer studies.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>5.20</b>	Learner satisfaction of the programmes is regularly evaluated.	Corporate/Strategic Plan; Course evaluation studies; satisfaction surveys & analysis, evidence of dovetailing feedback	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>5.21</b>	When academic programmes are discontinued /suspended, or programme requirements are significantly changed, the University implements appropriate arrangements to ensure enrolled students complete their education with minimum disruption and phasing out plans are communicated to relevant students in advance.	Policy and procedures for phasing out, Minutes of academic boards, Senate and Council minutes, correspondence with students.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

<b>5.22</b>	Programme design and development procedures includespecific details relating to entry and exit pathways including fallback options; Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs); qualification levels criteria, and qualification type descriptors; teaching, learning and assessment processes to enable achievement of ILOs that are congruent with the programme mission and goals; alignment with external reference points such as SLQF and SBS.	University policy documents on programme design and development; programme/course specification, template approved by the university; curriculum development committee meeting minutes indicating the adoption of the procedures.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.23</b>	The University uses profile as the foundation for developing learning outcomes at the levels of programme, course/modules.	University Handbook/Prospectus with graduate profile; programme/course specifications reflecting constructive alignment.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.24</b>	The academic standards of the programme with respect to its awards and qualifications are appropriate to the level and nature of the award and are aligned with the SLQF and where available SBS.	Evidence of use of SLQF and /or SBS in determination of awards and qualifications.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.25</b>	Programme design and development integrates appropriate learning strategies for the development of self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork into the courses	University Programme design policy and procedures; minutes of Programme development committee; programme/course specifications; student feedback; programme evaluation reports over 3 years.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>5.26</b>	Content, teaching learning strategies and assessment are carefully structured to facilitate the achievement of learning outcomes and programmes are assessed on the basis of the students' attainment of learning outcomes.	Senate approved programme with assessment methods aligned to ILOs; examination papers; student achievement survey data; annual and periodic evaluation data.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.27</b>	The University offers supplementary courses such as vocational, professional, inter-disciplinary & multidisciplinary to enrich the general curricula	Handbook; Prospectus; curriculum of individual programmes.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.28</b>	All programmes are outcome based and reflected through indicators such as retention rates, time taken for completion of a programme, graduation rates at first attempt, employer satisfaction, admission rates to advanced degree programmes, participation rates in fellowships, internships, societal impacts, etc.	Results of surveys of employment rates: tracer studies; surveys to determine numbers obtaining scholarships/ fellowships/internships; outcome surveys on benefits to society; evidence of admission to PG/advanced programmes	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.29</b>	The University has in place a mechanism for annual tracer studies on graduate employment.	Evidence of conducting tracer studies annually; survey data; Annual Report.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>5.30</b>	Effectiveness of programmes are regularly monitored at least annually by all relevant stakeholders to ensure appropriate actions are taken to remedy any identified shortcomings.	Adoption of policy and procedures in curriculum design and improvement of programmes; data obtained; improvements made on the results; IQAU/IQAC reports; Senate approvals.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

## **Criterion 6 - COURSE/MODULE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Scope** - Courses are components of a programme of study offered in consistence with the programme objectives/outcomes. Course design and development follows an approved policies and procedures of the Senate and a standard format ensuring that appropriate key elements are included in the course curriculum. The key elements include intended learning outcomes (ILOs) at the course level, content that is appropriate to the levels of study and to the ILOs, teaching learning, and the assessment strategies congruent with course ILOs, modes of delivery and learning support approaches appropriate for ODL. Course design also takes into account the needs of differently abled students. Course credits conform to the guidelines prescribed in the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF).

Student's needs are matched with multiple learning opportunities using teaching techniques to engage students actively in the learning process. This would ensure that students are successfully equipped with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required after they exit. The teaching learning, assessments and learning outcomes are closely aligned so that they reinforce one another.

The university assumes responsibility through regular monitoring and evaluation by internal quality assurance mechanism for ensuring continued alignment of courses with programme objectives, attainment of course ILOs by learners through appropriate teaching learning methodologies, and assessments that test the attainment of course ILOs and continuing currency and validity of courses in the light of recent developments.

Course Specification for each of the course that is part of the programme of study describes course aims and ILOs, teaching learning methods , and description of assessment and weighting and is used to communicate to students.

**Criterion 6 is captured in the following ‘Standards’.**

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	<b>Score Guide</b> 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
<b>6.1</b>	Course design pays attention to national and international trends.	Course materials, minutes of the course planning and course design committees, evidence provided through interaction with students, staff, professional accrediting bodies, governments, and employers.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>
<b>6.2</b>	University has approved policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of courses.	Curriculum development documents with programme evaluation policies and procedures. Organizational arrangements for curriculum development and approval; TOR and guidelines for Senate and Faculty level curriculum development committees.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>
<b>6.3</b>	Policies, rules, regulations and processes for the design, development, approval, monitoring and review of courses are widely communicated to all stakeholders involved in course development and implementation is ensured.	Course materials; Evidence provided through interaction with staff; intranet.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>
<b>6.4</b>	The courses are designed to meet the stated programme objectives and programme learning outcomes and reflect knowledge and current developments in the relevant subject areas.	Course curriculum, Course profiles, mapping of course objectives with programme objectives and slqf and other professional frameworks alignment with SBS.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>
<b>6.5</b>	The course curriculum encourages development of creative and critical thinking, independent and life-long learning and interpersonal communication and team work skills.	Course curriculum, course profiles, course contents, schedules of academic activities, student reports, assignments, observations of group work, feedback from students.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>
<b>6.6</b>	Each course is designed in a manner that contents, learning activities and assessment methods are systematically aligned with the course learning outcomes which in turn are aligned with the programme learning outcomes.	Course curriculum, course profiles, course material, schedules of academic activities, student reports, assignments, assessment methods, marking schemes, feedback from students.	<div> <b>0    1    2    3</b>  <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/>   <input type="radio"/> </div>

<b>6.7</b>	Courses maintain an appropriate balance with respect to notional hours, among didactic, laboratory, outside work (field work, experimental/ practical work) independent learning as applicable within the course specified in course profile.( course specification)	Course profiles. ( course specification) Prospectus.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.8</b>	Courses are designed and developed by a course team with the involvement of internal and external subject experts together with other relevant experts with each member being aware of his/her respective roles and responsibilities.	Course materials, information package, minutes of the course planning and course design committees as evidence to show that the courses are developed through course teams including relevant experts in the subject areas, in instructional design and in course delivery and to indicate that the course development was based on a plan that details the processes, timelines, finance, infrastructural requirements and resources.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.9</b>	Mechanisms are established to encourage linkages with national and international agencies for course design and development.	Policy documents, MOUs, minutes of course development committees, Minutes of meetings with external experts; evidence provided through interaction with students and staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.10</b>	Mechanisms for course adoption and adaptation are established to encourage recent advances and trends for course design and development.	Policy documents on course design models/methods, use of OER, course material.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.11</b>	The courses are designed in compliance with SLQF and is guided by other reference points such as SBS where available, and requirements of professional/ statutory/ regulatory bodies.	Policy and procedures on curriculum and course design; evidence of compliance with SLQF, SBSs; Course specification (course synopsis) document reflecting mapping of ILOs with graduate attributes Planning documents which address the requirements of Accreditation agencies/professional Institutes if any.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>6.12</b>	Course design and development has integrated learner-centred teaching strategies and appropriate media enabling students to be actively engaged in their own learning guided by tutors/ facilitators.	Course development plan, course materials, online courses, audio visual material, information package, assessment and evaluation schemes, assignments and question papers to show that the Learning activities are designed to contribute to the development of the specified generic skills; that the integration of student centred strategies such as teaching methods, learner activities, use of appropriate ICTs in the course design process.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.13</b>	Instructional design recognizes diversity of learners, learning contexts, learning styles, and learning needs, and integrates appropriate learner support into it.	Course materials, Course development plan, information package, research studies to show the incorporation of variety of activities that accommodate different learning styles in the course materials and use of appropriate adaptive technology to address the needs of the differently-abled learners; evidence provided through interaction with students, staff and course developers.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.14</b>	Each course has a clear ‘Course profile’ that provides the credit value of the course, workload and notional hours, course LOs, content outline, teaching learning strategy, assessment strategy, appropriate learner support and learning resources.	Instructional package, course specification (course synopsis/profile), Minutes of relevant committees, course information sheets - as evidence to show that the instructional package is comprehensive and contains a learner friendly description of the syllabus, course plans, learning outcomes, assessment and evaluation details, credit hours, teaching/learning strategies.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.15</b>	Course profiles are communicated to relevant learners and staff, and are publicly available in print and digital formats.	Programme brochures/guides, course information sheets, website, minutes of relevant committees, etc.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.16</b>	University use approved standard formats/ templates for course/module design and development are complied with during the design and development phases.	Course templates, course materials, QA checklist for each course, Minutes for the course planning and course design committees, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and course developers, training materials and feedback data as evidence to show the adherence of formalities and templates to courses.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>6.17</b>	Appropriate and adequate resources are available and accessible for the university for effective course design and	Training manuals, templates, guidelines, LMS, document management system, physical resources, human resources.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.18</b>	There are clear mechanisms to obtain copyright clearances where necessary.	Mechanisms approved by academic boards for copyright clearance; number of copyrights agreements, institute guidelines and mechanisms.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.19</b>	Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the quality of the course design and development process at the following stages; during development, mid-life and at the end of course delivery.	Course policy documents, approval records, Approval processes, Internal monitoring tools/forms, Pilot tested material, end of course evaluations, midlife evaluations, forms.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.20</b>	University ensures that appropriate and adequate personnel, resources and procedures are in place to ensure the timely production and distribution of course materials to learners	Quality Assurance Framework; Course Development plans; Operation schedules, Training schedules for staff.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.21</b>	Staff involved in instructional design and development, has been trained for such purposes and are being regularly upgraded.	Recruitment policy, procedures, training plan to show the university has a mechanism to ensure the relevant competence of the content developers, technical and support staff and others involved in course	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.22</b>	The staff is provided with required training in outcome-based education & student-centered learning approach (OBE-SCL) and the staff is provided with teaching training facilities implement OBE-SCL.	Inspection of facilities, observation of teaching sessions; stakeholder feedback, and evidence for staff training programmes/sessions/workshops; e.g. workshop attendance sheets, training material, workshop participant feedback, training agenda with training objectives and names of	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.23</b>	Teachers engage students in self-directed learning, collaborative learning, relevant contexts, use of technology as an instructional aid while being flexible with regard to individual needs and differences.	Course specifications; course development committee minutes; student feedback; course evaluation reports.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>6.24</b>	Teachers adopt both teacher directed and student-centred teaching-learning methodologies as specified in the course specifications.	Course specifications; course development committee minutes; direct teaching practice observation reports; student feedback.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>



## **Criterion 7 - LEARNING INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES AND LEARNER SUPPORT**

**Scope** – The University’s strategic, operational, and financial plans recognize, adequacy, appropriateness, and optimal use of physical and technological infrastructure sufficient to support its operations at all its centres. They are constructed, maintained and upgraded to assure access, safety, security, and conducive learning environment.

The university recognizes in the strategic plan that learning resources are fundamental to all educational and research programmes. The university provides and maintains adequate and appropriate educational equipment, materials and services including learning centres, library collections, computer laboratories, learning technology, tutoring, counseling, ongoing instruction and training for users of these services, co-curricular activities and student associations and other services aimed at learner success and facilitate holistic progression of learners.

The university has adequate provision for the safety and security of its learners and their property at all locations where it offers programmes and services, and has a strategy and mechanism to deal with critical incidents that appear threatening in terms of harm to self or wellbeing of other learners or staff.

These provisions are made known to learners and prospective students through university website, intranet, and relevant published materials such as Student Charter, and handbooks, orientation sessions, Department of Student Affairs, Student Counsellors, and Personal Tutors.

The university has structures and mechanisms to identify and develop, maintain, evaluate, and improve appropriate resources and support for learners with disabilities.

The university regularly and systematically evaluates the quality of learning support services using feedback from learners, university and staff assure their adequacy in meeting learners’ needs and uses the assessment data to continuously improve learner support programmes and services.

*Criterion 7 is captured in the following ‘Standards’.*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good
<b>7.1</b>	Information, adequate resources and student-centred services are provided to support the social and personal development of all students.	Student satisfaction surveys and analyzed data. Course Materials and additional resources such as videos etc. visits to physical facilities and library; MIS, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students as evidence for providing Contact sessions, Laboratory/field professional practice sessions, Online learning, multimedia, support for learners with special needs, support for self-study, etc.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>7.2</b>	The University ensures that adequate, appropriate and accessible resources are provided and maintained for the support of teaching and learning activities, with user surveys to assist in monitoring and improvement.	University Annual Budget Estimates; evidence of final allocations through respective programme budgets; students’ feedback; user surveys; relevant infrastructure. Visits planned to observe physical and technological facilities, evidence provided through interaction with staff and students, information package, student handbook; Learner satisfaction surveys evaluation studies.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>7.3</b>	Staff are aware of their responsibilities for provision of support to learners in the programme of study.	Documents related to informing staff about academic support, technical support, administrative support, etc., that needs to be provided for learners on the programme of study. Visiting academic training schedules, minutes of the faculty board, RES board meetings, feedback from academic staff and all support staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

<b>7.4</b>	Academic staff are accessible to the learners through a range of services.	Prospectus, handbooks, instruction sheets, website emails, SMS, LMS, MYOUSL as evidence to show that staff communicate with students with respect to academic activities.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>7.5</b>	Administrative staff are accessible to the learner through a range of services.	Documents on websites online help desk, emails, MYOUSL, SMS, official communication as evidence to show that staff communicate with student during the academic year, evidence at meetings with students.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>7.6</b>	The university has an efficient administration that responds promptly to all student enquiries on admissions, programmes, fees, dues, graduation and scholarships etc. with accurate and complete answers.	Web site with FAQs; Job descriptions of relevant staff; administrative structure; students' feedback; help desk.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>7.7</b>	Programmes provide learners the choice of using a wide range of technologies for learning to achieve the desired learning outcomes.	Course materials as a package with different formats - such as print, online, multimedia, video conferencing, etc.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>7.8</b>	Programme utilizes appropriate methods to orient the student towards self-study and to provide sufficient assistance to serve the needs.	Brochures, prospectus, website; documentation on programmes/ workshops/ orientation sessions, meetings providing assistance with outcomes, student feedback	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>7.9</b>	The University has arrangements for registration, induction and orientation of new students and ensure that these arrangements promote effective integration of new entrants to the student community.	Induction and orientation programmes; measures to minimize/eliminate ragging.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○

<b>7.10</b>	The University has built into the design of all study programmes and courses, a student support system that promotes teacher - student and student-student interaction	Evidence of student support system in Programme/ Course specifications; job descriptions of staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.11</b>	Programmes ensure that the tutor (teacher)? : learner ratio is optimal to enable the tutors to provide adequate support in educational activities of all courses of programmes.	Student handbook, information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, attendance sheets of contact sessions, online transcripts of online courses, appointment letters of visiting staff student / stakeholder feedback surveys.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.12</b>	Appropriate training is provided for all relevant staff, to enable them to provide effective individual counseling and academic support for learners in the programme of study.	Evidence obtained through interaction with management, staff training records, records of orientation sessions, Staff development programmes.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.13</b>	Mechanisms exist to regularly monitor and evaluate , the quality adequacy, and accessibility of physical and technological resources, including facilities and equipment, including those of outreach Centers and appropriate remedial measures taken when needed	Monitoring plan, surveys on accessibility of resources, recommendation reports, remedial action plans, procurement plan, cadre requests with respect to the programme of study.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.14</b>	The University provides appropriate delivery strategies, academic support services and guidance to meet the needs of differently-abled students.	Policy documents on facilities for differently-abled students; evidence of identified needs of differently-abled students and provision of support and services; students' feedback; appropriate infrastructure.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>7.15</b>	The University has a means of determining students' satisfaction after the completion of their programme of study and use the feedback for remedial action.	Student satisfaction survey data; evidence of use of findings of feedback survey for continuous improvement.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.16</b>	The university ensures staff and learners in the programme of study have sufficient and appropriate library facilities, services and accessibility for effective teaching and learning	Learner satisfaction feedback on library, Observational studies, number of user oriented services, number of physical resources and e-resource gateways available, interactive websites and presence of social media, annual budget allocation for library facilities, utilization of allocated funds, university programme links with library resources.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.17</b>	The University provides and maintains adequate learner support resources including counselling, ELTU, computer facilities, library, career guidance, field areas and service centres; residential facilities; welfare services; health and medical facilities; facilities for sports and recreation and cultural and aesthetic activities .	Availability of resources in the field areas and service centres; medical records of students attending the health centre; presence of facilities for sports and recreation, and cultural and aesthetic activities; recording systems showing the use of services and facilities; students' feedback forms and reports.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.18</b>	The university ensures staff and learners have sufficient and appropriate facilities for laboratory classes / clinical placements/ teaching practice placements/ field studies for effective teaching and learning.	Learner satisfaction surveys on facilities provided, teacher satisfaction surveys, visits to contact sessions, annual budget allocation/ utilization for upgrading/strengthening physical facilities at all centers, agreements, terms of references, training schedules where facilities other than OUSL facilities are used.	<b>0    1    2</b> <b>3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>7.19</b>	The university ensures staff and learners have sufficient and appropriate computer facilities for effective teaching and learning.	Learner satisfaction surveys on computer facilities, teacher satisfaction, Observational studies, evidence of expansion of computer facilities, and evidence of purchase of new computer, strengthening computer labs in centers.	<b>0 1 2</b> <b>3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.20</b>	The university ensures there is adequate and appropriate technology systems and infrastructure for learner support services are available to effectively conduct the programme of study	Handbook, information package; evidence of availability of Wifi zones, video conferencing facilities, reading rooms, SMS service, LMS, etc.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.21</b>	The University library and its branches use ICT-led tools to facilitate the students to access and use information effectively for academic success, research and lifelong learning.	Availability of library services for students; evidence of use of ICT-based tools; library training/ orientation schedules and user surveys; Annual report; Minutes of Library Committee meetings.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.22</b>	The university provides current and accurate information in an accessible manner through a variety of modes to all registered students of the programme.	Web, information sheet, MYOUSL, SMS as evidence to show that the information is accessible to learners on enrollment procedures, academic programmes and courses, learning outcomes of programmes and courses; programme and course completion requirements, Rules, regulations and By-Laws for conduct, rights and responsibilities, tuition fees, other dues, payment methods, refund policies, opportunities and requirements for financial aid academic calendar.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>7.23</b>	The university encourages the student unions / associations to contribute to support student learning.	Student staff meeting minutes, Faculty board reports on student requests, Constitutions of Associations in place, Activities of such associations.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

7.24	Programme provides co-curricular and extracurricular activities to contribute to the social and cultural dimensions of the educational experience of learners.	Schedule of co-curricular activities, Minutes of meetings as evidence to show the conduct of co-curricular activities for sports and aesthetic programmes, established societies, allocation, sponsorships, estimates, etc.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
7.25	The University provide opportunities for peer interaction to empower learners to share knowledge and information and develop interactive and collaborative learning skills.	Student handbook, information package, minutes of the course Coordinators' meetings, feedback, year planner, schedules, course materials, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and management, facilities available for peer interaction.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
7.26	Annual monitoring and evaluation of learner support services are implemented and outcomes are communicated to all relevant stakeholders.	Monitoring/review reports on facilities provided at teaching and learning centers, recommendation reports, Action plans based on recommendations.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
7.27	The University regularly monitors learner retention, progression, completion and graduation rates, in the context of learner support services and takes remedial measures deemed necessary	Student admission, progression dropouts and graduation data, student satisfaction surveys, programme evaluation, employment studies, tracer studies, annual reports; support programs introduced, course revisions	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
7.28	The University has put in place the policies, practices, systems and opportunities that facilitate students' progression from one stage of a programme to another and for qualifying for an award.	Records of student usage of academic and career counselling services and other facilities; student feedback reports; and regular tracer studies on graduates.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

## Criterion 8 - LEARNER ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Scope - The university has a developed and structured process to assess and evaluate the defined Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) of programmes, courses and competencies prescribed in the Sri Lankan Qualification Framework (SLQF).

Assessment is an integral part of the university's approach to facilitate student learning. The university has effective assessment systems, both in-course and end of course, that reflect academic standards and measure the accomplishment of the ILOs for individual programmes/courses through the use of a variety and a combination of methods. The assessment methods can be diagnostic, formative, or summative.

Student assessment approaches are documented for each course and programme offered. The university ensures that principles, procedures, and processes of all assessments are explicit, fair, transparent, valid, and consistent while ensuring confidentiality and integrity.

The university demonstrates successful student achievement by maintaining acceptable course completion rates and graduation rates in comparison to international standards in ODL setting.

The university regularly reviews the effectiveness of the policies, processes, and By-Laws with respect to assessment of learning and amend accordingly.

*Criterion 8 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

No.	Standards	Examples of Evidence	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
<b>8.1</b>	The Programme of study has By-laws, Rules and Regulations for assessment and evaluation of learners to ensure awards made meet the national and international academic standards.	By laws, Rules and Regulations; assessment strategies in line with SLQF guidelines; accreditations.	<table><tr><td><b>0</b></td><td><b>1</b></td><td><b>2</b></td><td><b>3</b></td></tr><tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td><td><input type="radio"/></td></tr></table>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>								



<b>8.2</b>	The University has effective procedures for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies for programmes and awards; implementing policies and procedures rigorously through appropriate assessment practices to ensure that the academic standards of the awards are maintained.	By-laws, examination rules and regulations; Curriculum; past question papers; random samples of answer scripts; marks sheets; theses and dissertations; undergraduate project reports; in-course assessment records.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.3</b>	The University ensures that assessments diagnostic/summative/formative are conducted with rigour, honesty transparency and fairness and with due regard to security and integrity.	By-laws on Examinations; Manual of examination procedures; Appeal mechanisms; evidence of adherence to above; students feedback reports; Exit survey reports.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.4</b>	Assessment strategy is aligned to the relevant level descriptors of the SLQF, the LOs and teaching learning strategies of programme/courses and clearly stated in the programme/course specifications.	Curricular of programmes/courses with availability of diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies; alignment of assessment to LO and teaching methods (Course Synopsis), Student feedback survey reports.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.5</b>	Progression within between courses is clearly explained and available.	Curricular of programmes/courses; Course Synopsis; Rules and Regulations of Programmes; Handbooks.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.6</b>	The programme includes formative assessments and summative assessments.	Rules and regulations, course materials, minutes of the course planning and course design committees, student handbook, course information package, continuous assessment/final examination schedules, marks /grade lists, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>8.7</b>	Learners are informed about the different types assessment and assessment techniques for the course.	Rules and regulations, course materials, student handbook, course information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.8</b>	There are systems of tracking and recording to provide detailed and accurate feedback on their performance/progress in a timely manner.	OMIS, MYOUSL, evidence provided through interaction with administrators, students and staff; Students' feedback forms; Answer scripts of formative assessments; evidence of release of formative assessment results on time.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.9</b>	The University ensures that assessment decisions are documented accurately and systematically, and that the decisions of relevant assessment panels and examination boards are communicated to learners without undue delay.	Documented records of all formal meetings related to assessments, procedures in place to maintain confidentiality and accuracy of such records, evidence of timely communication of results.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.10</b>	There is an appeal system to allow learners to query grades/marks awarded and the feedback provided.	Evidence for an appeal system; minutes of the grievance and disciplinary committees; student handbook; information package.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.11</b>	Code of Conduct of examinations and assessments/Manual of Examination is available and updated and communicated to all staff Involved and enforced strictly.	Examination manual, documents; website; evidence for enforcement, workshops conducted for evaluators and supervisors.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.12</b>	The University adhere to policies and regulations Governing the selection/nomination and appointment of both internal and external examiners.	Policy documents on appointing of external examiners, by-laws of examinations, senate minutes, letters of appointment for examiners	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○

<b>8.13</b>	The University maintains academic standards and assessment criteria are consistently applied by moderation of examination question papers by external examiners.	Senate documents, moderated documents, appointment letters.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.14</b>	The University adopts independent second examiners/external examiners in examinations as part of quality control and assurance of academic standards where relevant.	Manual of examination procedure, By-laws on examinations, records of adopting guidelines and using in examiners reports.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.15</b>	Detailed marking schemes / guidelines are provided to all examiners and procedures are available to ensure that examiners apply the marking scheme in a consistent manner to ensure transparency, consistency and fairness in marking.	Marking schemes; Quality assurance mechanisms and policies of the university, policy documents, corporate plans, records on QA, QA mechanisms of relevant regulatory bodies and university's rules and regulations, documents relating to meetings with marking examiners, and pilot marking.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.16</b>	Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the integrity of work submitted (assignments, reports, etc.) by students for evaluation and communicated effectively to students and examiners.	Code of conduct and ethical practices, student handbook, course information package, evidence provided through interaction with management, students and staff.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>8.17</b>	Disciplinary procedures for handling malpractices such as copying, and plagiarism are in place and strictly enforced and communicated to relevant staff and all students.	By-laws for examination offenses, manual of examination procedures, evidence of enforcement disciplinary procedure; handbook, course information package.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○

<b>8.18</b>	The University ensure that staff undertaking work related to assessment are competent to undertake their assigned roles and responsibilities and have no conflict of interest.	Evidence of knowledge about Manual of examination procedures, By-laws, regulations; training schedules for academics; Declaration forms.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.19</b>	The University reviews and amends assessment regulations periodically as appropriate, to assure itself that the regulations fit for purpose.	Minutes of review meetings; amended rules and regulations; Curriculum Development Committee minutes; Memos and minutes of Faculty Boards and Senate; question papers, samples of answer scripts, mark sheets.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.20</b>	Graduation, course completion and retention rates are monitored on a continuous basis and appropriate action taken.	Results, MIS, database; reports; minutes of the course coordinators' meetings, relevant reports; feedback, evidence provided through interaction with staff, students and alumni; action taken on feedback.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>8.21</b>	The University ensures that the degree awarded and the name of the degree complies with the guidelines (qualification descriptor), credit requirements and Competency levels (level descriptor) detailed in the SLQF.	SLQF in possession; evidence of staff awareness and use of SLQF during course development; programme/ course specifications.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

## **Criterion 9 - POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION**

**Scope** – University has adequate infrastructure and administrative and financial mechanisms for research and postgraduate degrees. The university generates new knowledge through research and this is done in conjunction with other stakeholders such as Industry. The university is able to attract competitive research funding nationally and globally.

Research influences teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. There is an obligatory exposure to research for all undergraduates while post—graduate degrees are primarily research based or professionally oriented. Research degrees sharpen critical thinking and transferable skills to a high degree and prepare students for a wide range of careers both in academia and outside.

The nature of postgraduate, undergraduate and staff research enables multidisciplinary and collaborative research. The findings of the research are disseminated through scholarly forums such as, research conferences, academic and professional fora, in the form of research papers, posters, etc. The results of research are published in indexed peer reviewed journals, research monographs and in other appropriate publications (Compilations, collective papers, proceedings, etc.). The university shall have mechanisms to promote innovations and to obtain relevant patents and copyright certifications arising out of innovations.

Research influences teaching at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Research degrees sharpen critical thinking and transferable skills to a high degree and prepare students for a wide range of careers both in academia and outside.

Systematic and transparent monitoring and assessment mechanisms are in place to ensure students' progress. The requirements for the awards are consistent with the respective SLQF levels. Ethical aspects of research are adequately addressed.

Research is actively promoted to build linkages with industry, business, community and public organizations which foster close relationships between the world of work and the world of learning for the students.

*Criterion 9 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
<b>9.1</b>	The university recognizes postgraduate training, research innovation, scholarship and commercialization as core functions as reflected in the Strategic Plan and Organizational Structure.	Corporate plan/Strategic Plan; evidence of facilities available for postgraduate training/research, comparable with national and international benchmarks; Handbook; Prospectus; Websites; Industrial affiliations	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
○	○	○	○								
<b>9.2</b>	The university has established By-laws, Rules and Regulations for research and postgraduate research degrees and made available to applicants, learners, staff, supervisors and examiners.	By-laws and regulations for postgraduate degrees; subject-specific guidelines where appropriate; Prospectus; Evidence of dissemination to prospective students and registered students; Websites.	<table> <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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○	○	○	○								
<b>9.3</b>	The university has clear and transparent procedures for selection, admission and induction of postgraduate students.	Evidence for established admission criteria and procedure. Evidence of admission procedure that match students with a programme of research, level of academic entry standard, academic references etc.; Evidence to show that offer letter to admitted students includes: fees, enrolment and registration arrangements, name(s) of supervisor(s), period of study, direction of study, codes of practice and student responsibilities; Schedules of induction programmes	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
○	○	○	○								

<b>9.4</b>	The university encourages and facilitates research by academic staff.	Administrative structures/procedures for support in research; Minutes of Probationary study leave committee, Training schedules on project preparation/writing research papers etc., Evidence to show the mechanism for providing study leave, support in project preparation, providing sponsorship/grants, physical facilities etc.,	<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>9.5</b>	The university encourages and facilitates research by learners.	Administrative structures/procedures for support in research; Training schedules on project preparation/writing research papers etc., Evidence to show the support in project preparation, providing sponsorship/grants, physical facilities etc.	<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>9.6</b>	Research culture and research excellence within the university is promoted through offering incentives and rewards to those who excel in research and innovations and dissemination.	Institutional Policy and Procedures of Incentives and Rewards system; Research grants and travel grants; Records on awarding incentives, research awards, publications, Patents etc. & records of past recipients	<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>9.7</b>	The university has in place arrangements to maintain and fulfil academic standards and enhance the quality of postgraduate programmes in alignment with SLQF.	Evidence of using SLQF as a reference point; By-laws of programmes on offer; Programme specification documents reflecting the component courses and their weightage in relation to the research component aligned to SLQF; Lists of postgraduate qualification holders, their registration and completion dates; action taken to improve enrolment and completion rate	<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○
<b>9.8</b>	The university provides training programmes to the academic staff to develop a range of research skills and assesses formally the development of these skills.	SDC activity plan; evidence of attendance and assessment of skills development; student feedback obtained and action taken	<b>0</b> <b>1</b> <b>2</b> <b>3</b> ○   ○   ○   ○

<b>9.9</b>	The university provides training programmes to the research students to develop a range of research skills and assesses formally the development of these skills	Faculty level / unit level skill development programmes: evidence of attendance and assessment of skills development; student feedback obtained and action taken	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.10</b>	The university has in place defined criteria for the appointment of supervisors and ensure appointment of supervisors with appropriate skills, subject knowledge, and with sufficient time to support research students and to monitor the progress effectively.	Approved By-laws and Guidelines for postgraduate degree programmes; documents on procedures for postgraduate student supervision; feedback from postgraduate students	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.11</b>	The university has in place clearly defined guidelines on the role, responsibilities, and conduct of postgraduate research supervisors and ensures their compliance.	Guidelines on the role, responsibilities and conduct of postgraduate research supervisors; Students'/Graduates' feedback	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.12</b>	Postgraduate assessment, monitoring and review procedures are documented in By-laws and complementary guidelines and effectively communicated to all students, relevant staff, examiners and supervisors.	By-laws and Regulations on postgraduate degrees; Prospectus; website; student and staff feedback; Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in force; documents on monitoring and review meetings; discussion with students; records of formative assessments; seminars;	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.13</b>	The university has in place transparent mechanisms to monitor and review progress of postgraduate programmes annually.	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in force; evidence of data collection, analysis and feedback from stakeholders; action taken.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>



<b>9.14</b>	There are relevant mechanisms and procedures to monitor and evaluate research studies within the university.	Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in force; documents on monitoring and review meetings; records and reports of research grants; seminars; evidence of data collection, analysis and feedback from stakeholders; action taken; Administration and support mechanism for effective monitoring and facilitation of research	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.15</b>	The university promotes and facilitates dissemination of research through seminars/ conferences and publication of research in accredited/refereed journals and apply for patents where relevant.	Approved publication policy with authorization procedures; evidence of academic, financial and editorial support for researchers to publish their work; number of papers published; number of patents; support services provided by the research unit	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.16</b>	The university has clear policies on criteria for authorship of research output, and publication of papers, innovation, patents, and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and ensures staff and students adhere to them.	Policy documents on authorship; publications; IPR; number of papers, patents.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.17</b>	Postgraduate learners and researchers adhere to a Code of conduct on ethical practices implemented through an ethical review committee.	Code of practice documents on ethical practices, IPRs, authorship criteria, etc.; Codes of practice distributed to students and staff through print and online on admission to a programme; approval of research projects/areas prior to commencement of research by ethics review committee. records of attendance at a formal induction process where the concepts are defined and communicated to student.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

<b>9.18</b>	The university has clearly formulated policies regarding potential conflicts of interest communicated to research students and staff.	Policy documents on conflict of interest and enforcement procedures; evidence of action taken	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>9.19</b>	The university has policies and procedures which are enforced to deal with research misconduct, such as plagiarism, deception, fabrication or falsification of results.	By-laws governing misconduct; procedures for enforcing; evidence of action taken.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>9.20</b>	The University has in place publicized fair, transparent, robust and consistently applied complaints and appeals procedures related to research.	Policy and procedures for appeals and complaints; number of complaints and appeals received; action taken.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>9.21</b>	The university has a policy on collaboration/partnerships for research with local, national, regional and international organizations with criteria for monitoring and evaluation	Policy for collaborations/partnerships to share knowledge, expertise, human resources, services and research; Institutional mechanisms/procedures/services to promote collaborations/partnerships; Corporate plan; Council approved MOUs; evidence of progress on activities of MOUs and evaluation of outcomes.	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○
<b>9.22</b>	The university facilitates interaction with industry and wider society providing new avenues for applied research.	Signed agreements and MOUs with industries; projects conducted	<b>0 1 2 3</b> ○ ○ ○ ○

<b>9.23</b>	The University has policies, institutional arrangements and procedures for research/ innovation and commercialization.	University's Annual finance report; IPR policies; Commercial management plan linked to Strategic Plan; Transparent budget; Business planning partnership agreement with exit strategies; Project monitoring/litigation procedures; Staff training programmes on finances and business skills; list of commercialized products; Annual Report.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.24</b>	The University ensures a conducive academic, social and research environment that inculcates scholarship, critical inquiry, innovation, and commercialization where relevant.	Availability of Code of practice endorsed by the Council and Senate; evidence of opportunities to exchange and develop ideas and networking with other researchers; adequate learning and research tools.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.25</b>	The University ensures an appropriate policy for postgraduate supervision with guidelines to supervisors and students.	Manual of examination procedures; examination regulations; documents on supervisory staff.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.26</b>	The University demonstrates that its PG programme has a balance of taught courses and independent research component with appropriate weightage in alignment with SLQF.	By-laws of programmes on offer; Programme specification documents reflecting the component courses and their weightage in relation to the research component aligned to SLQF.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>9.27</b>	University has a clearly defined mechanism for monitoring the progress of research students including formative assessments where relevant.	By-laws on postgraduate degrees; documents on monitoring and review meetings; discussion with students; records of formative assessments; seminars.	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

## **Criterion 10 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, CONSULTANCY AND OUTREACH**

**Scope -** The University is responsive to the needs of the community and supports community outreach by providing consultancies and extension services. Continuous encouragement of university to offer consultancy to build up the reputation of the university, engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) work and to augment institutional image and social acceptance while providing new areas for research.

*Criterion 10 is captured in the following 'Standards'.*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Examples of Evidence</b>	<b>Score Guide</b> 0. Inadequate 1. Barely Adequate 2. Adequate 3. Good								
<b>10.1</b>	The university has a policy and strategy to foster and promote consultancy and extension services to build linkages with industry and community.	Corporate/Strategic Management Plan; Institutional procedures on linkages with industry brochures on consultancy and extension services; Monitoring and evaluation records of consultancies undertaken; Community outreach projects undertaken	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
○	○	○	○								
<b>10.2</b>	The university has appropriate mechanisms and adequate resources to facilitate and encourage staff and learners to engage in community services, consultancy services, and outreach activities.	Documents on policy and strategy on community engagement; co-curricular activities; websites, leaflets, brochures, and newsletters for awareness creation and publicity on expertise and resources available for community services; sponsorships sought for financial support	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
○	○	○	○								
<b>10.3</b>	The university is responsive to community needs and conducts relevant extension and awareness programmes.	Corporate/Strategic Management Plan; Information pack; prospectus; handbook; Student information materials; MIS; Needs surveys conducted; evidence provided through interaction with staff and students; extension activity committee minutes; records on extension activities; annual reports and budget.	<table> <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>	○	○	○	○
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>								
○	○	○	○								

<b>10.4</b>	The university collaborates with industry, business and state sector universities for work-based placement learning as part of the programme of study with clearly defined Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs).	Policy on collaborative provisions and placement learning; Programme specifications; Council/Senate approved proposals for educational collaborations, written agreements, MOUs and institutional support	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>10.5</b>	The university ensures that the supervisors/mentors involved in teaching of work-based or industry placement assignments are appropriately qualified and competent. to fulfil their role.	Qualifications and profile of persons involved in teaching; Documents to show monitoring mechanisms to review the competencies of supervisors/mentors	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>10.6</b>	Professional courses have access to appropriate service facilities as required, where appropriate, to provide a professional service to the Public.	Policy and procedures for professional development programmes/courses of the university providing service facilities to the public; evidence of service to the public; e.g., pre-school, clinic services, MOUs with relevant Ministries	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>10.7</b>	The university has a policy and procedures for sharing the remuneration earned through consultancy between the internal and external partners and the university.	Corporate/Strategic Management Plan; Policy documents; research committee minutes and findings; guidelines; rules and regulations and roles and responsibilities of various members; finance committee records; institutional mechanisms to conduct and promote consultancies; consultancies undertaken	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>10.8</b>	The university monitors community perceptions of its activities and adopts appropriate strategies to improve the understanding and enhancement of its reputation.	Periodic surveys to assess the impact on social transformation; documents and newspaper articles where community leaders have testified to the usefulness of the programmes; interactions with schools and communities; Alumni activities	<b>0    1    2    3</b> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

### 3.3. Procedure for Use of Standards for Assessment of Performance of the Institution

This procedure will describe how the standards of the ten criteria based on the evidence given against each standard by the Institution and the score guide are used by the external peer review team in arriving at the final assessment of performance of a Institution. The Institution may also use this procedure in self-assessment of their performance.

The terms mentioned below will be used in the validation and the subsequent judgement on assessment of the Institution.

- Standard-wise judgement giving ‘standard-wise score’
- Criterion-wise judgement giving ‘raw criterion-wise score’
- Application of weightages to obtain ‘actual criterion-wise score’
- Calculation of ‘Institution score’
- Grading of overall Institution performance on Institution score

The procedure is described in a series of 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 3.1)

**Table 3.1 – Score Guide for Each Performance Indicator**

Score	Descriptor	Explanation of the Descriptor
3	Good	No issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
2	Adequate	Few issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
1	Barely Adequate	Major issues/concerns about the strengths and quality of the evidence provided
0	Inadequate	No relevant evidence provided

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

Step 3 - Performance of each Criterion is derived by totalling the scores gained in all the standards in respect of the Criterion. The value obtained is the ‘raw criterion-wise score’.

### 3.4. Weightages of Criteria

Recognizing the variance in their relative importance in a Institution, different criteria have been allotted differential weightages on a thousand scale. The weightages given in Table 3.2 will be used for calculating the ‘actual criterion-wise score’.

Step 4 - Based on the weightages listed in Table 3.2 and the formula given in Box 1, the ‘raw criterion-wise score’ is converted into an ‘actual criterion-wise score’.

**Table 3.2 – Differential weightages of Criteria**

No.	Assessment Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale
1	Vision, mission and planning	80
2	Governance and management	150
3	The learners	50
4	Human resource development	100
5	Programme design and development	100
6	Course design and development	120
7	Learning infrastructure, resources and learner support	150
8	Learner assessment and evaluation	100
9	Postgraduate studies, research, innovation and commercialization	100
10	Community engagement, consultancy and outreach	50
Total		1000

Taking Criterion 6 which has 24 standards as an example, and a fictitious value of 56 for the raw criterion score given by the review team, the actual criterion-wise score for *Course design and development* (Criterion 6) is estimated as 93. (Box 1)

**Box 1 - Formula for converting ‘raw score’ to ‘actual score’ on the weighted scale**

- Maximum raw score for each criterion = total number of standards for the respective criterion x 3 which is the maximum score for any criterion
- Raw criterion-wise score = total score gained in all the standards in respect of the Criterion
- Actual criterion-wise score = (Raw criterion-wise score/ Maximum raw score for each criterion) x weightage in a 1000-point scale

**Example: Criterion 6 with weightage of 120 (Table 3.2) and 24 standards**

*Raw criterion-wise score (given by the peer team) = 56*

*Maximum Score = (24 standards x 3) = 72*

*Weightage on a 1000 scale = 120 (as in Table 3.2)*

*Actual criterion-wise score = (56/72)\* 120 = 93.3*

Step 5 - The Institution score is derived by totalling all the ‘actual criterion-wise scores’ of the ten criteria and converting the total to a percentage as exemplified in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 – Institution Score Conversion to Percentage**

No.	Assessment Criteria	Weighted minimum score*	Actual criteria-wise score
1	Vision, mission and planning	40	40
2	Governance and management	75	70
3	The learners	25	25
4	Human resource development	50	75
5	Programme design and development	50	75
6	Course design and development	60	93
7	Learning infrastructure, resources and learner support	75	80
8	Learner assessment and evaluation	50	52
9	Postgraduate studies, research, innovation and commercialization	50	55
10	Community engagement, consultancy and outreach	25	26
Total on a thousand scale		1000	591
%			59.1

\*Represents 50% of the values given in Table 3.2

Overall Performance of a Institution is graded as shown in Table 3.4

**Table 3.4 Grading of Overall Performance of an Institution**

<i>Expected number of criteria with weighted minimum score</i>	<i>Overall Institution score %</i>	<i>Grade</i>
10 (Ten)	$\geq 80$	<b>A</b>
	70 – 79	<b>B</b>
	60 – 69	<b>C</b>
	< 60	<b>D</b>
9 (Nine)	$\geq 70$	<b>B</b>
	60 – 69	<b>C</b>
	< 60	<b>D</b>
8 (Eight)	$\geq 60$	<b>C</b>
	< 60	<b>D</b>
7 (Seven) or less	Irrespective of Institution score	<b>D</b>



### 3.5. Final Assessment of the Performance of an Institution

For an Institution to receive an 'A' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

- i) Overall Institution Score of  $\geq 80\%$  and
- ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for each of all 10 criteria (Table 3.3).

For an Institution to receive a 'B' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

- i) Overall Institution Score of  $\geq 70\%$  and
- ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for at least 9 out of the 10 criteria (Table 3.3).

For an Institution to receive a 'C' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

- i) Overall Institution Score of  $\geq 60\%$  and
- ii) A score equal to or more than the weighted minimum score for at least 8 out of the 10 criteria (Table 3.3).

For an Institution to receive a 'D' Grade, the following conditions are applicable.

- i) Overall Institution Score of  $< 60\%$  irrespective of weighted minimum criterion scores. (Table 3.3)

Table 3.6 Interpretation of Grades

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Performance descriptor</i>	<i>Interpretation of descriptor</i>
<b>A</b>	<i>Very Good</i>	<i>High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; should move towards excellence</i>
<b>B</b>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; room for improvement</i>
<b>C</b>	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>Minimum level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; definitely requires improvement</i>
<b>D</b>	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Inadequate level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution: Needs significant degree of improvement in all aspects</i>

## **Part III**

### **Quality Assessment Guidelines For Institutions and Reviews**



## **Chapter Four**

### **Self-Evaluation Process and Report**

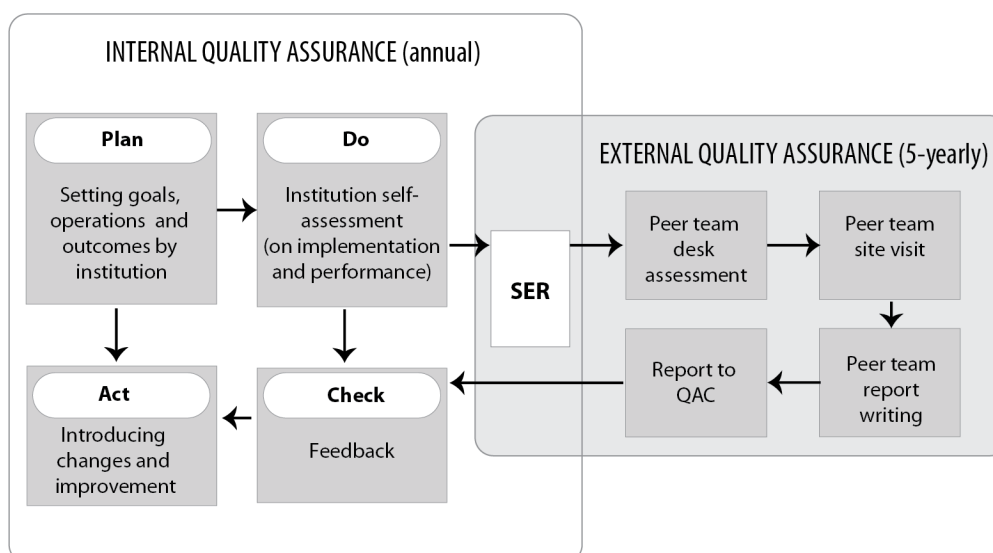
This chapter takes its premise that reputation is a key factor of higher education through open and distance learning (ODL) initiatives at course, programme, and institutional levels and that demonstrable quality, through systematic internal quality assurance mechanisms, is a necessary condition for ensuring quality outcomes of higher education through ODL. The nature of ODL, unlike the traditional face-to-face educational paradigm, predicated on the separation in time and pace of the teacher and the learner, demands that its quality assurance systems have a different focus. Within the institutions responsibility for the institution's quality assurance work rests with the Council's QA unit in concert with the Faculties, Departments, Divisions, Centres, and Units of the Central Campus together with the network of Regional and Study Centres.

#### **4.1 Annual Internal Quality Monitoring**

Quality assurance arrangements should ensure that:

- i. The standard quality assurance (QA) procedures on the operation of courses and programmes, student feedback, student performance and other measures of quality of student learning experience and services, throughout the preceding year are time-tabled across the year, with prompts to ensure that necessary actions have been taken at the appropriate time to check whether the expected activities take place annually throughout the preceding year, the outcomes of which in turn should inform processes, particularly the periodic programme review and institutional review. This annual internal quality monitoring is the building block of the university quality QA and quality enhancement (QE) processes.
- ii. For administration, management and academic programmes and services there are appropriate records of all quality monitoring discussions /decisions at the appropriate levels which serve as evidence;
- iii. The appropriate flow of information takes place between Faculties/Departments/Divisions/Units/Centres and the Council's quality assurance unit and all of them both at the central campus and Centres across the country.

In this context annual internal quality monitoring undertaken regularly by the institutions with evidenced documents, besides serving as information for the institution, also provide the foundation to prepare the self evaluation report (SER) for external reviews (EQA), truly reflecting quality processes of the internal routine functions of a university over every five-year period (EQA 5-year cycle). (Figure 4.1)



**Figure 4.1 integration of IQA and EQA for continuous quality improvement**

In this circuit, SER coming through the internal quality monitoring (IQA) serves as the first step in EQA and recommendations in the Institutional Review Report serves as feedback to IQA which in turn spearheads the follow up actions on the findings. This integration of IQA and EQA provides the mechanism for continuous quality improvement /enhancement.

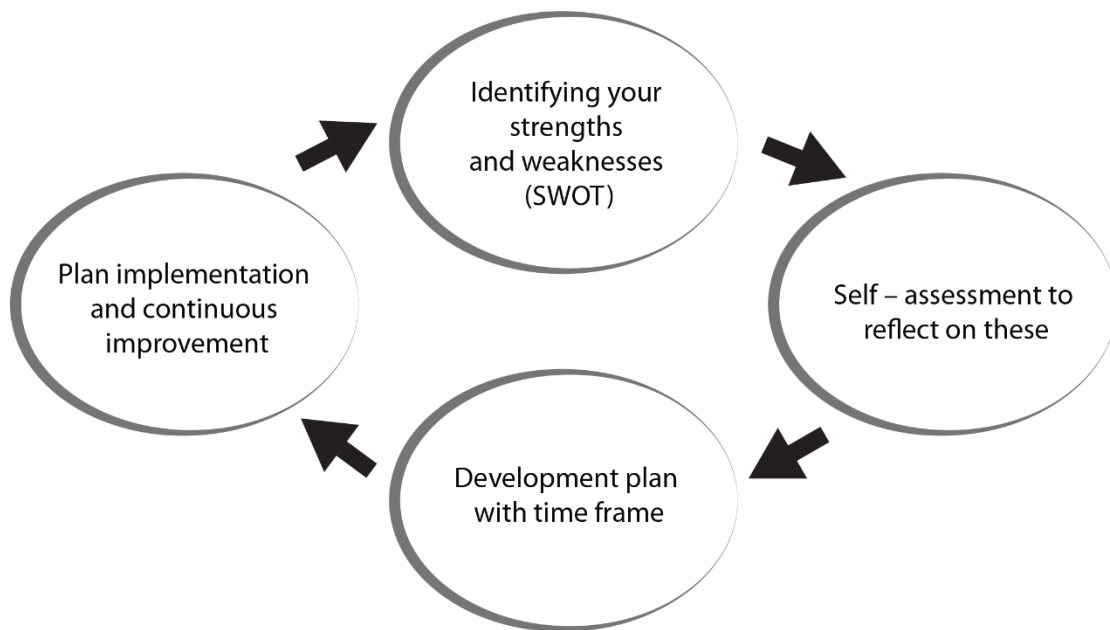
Where the institutions do not practice an annual planning cycle of internal quality monitoring (self evaluation), a systematic self evaluation of all the 10 quality criteria in this Manual must therefore be carried out before the external peer review and the results of the self- evaluation must be documented in a Self Evaluation Report (SER). A clear and structured procedure must be employed, which focuses on relevant quality areas.

## 4.2 Self-evaluation

Self-evaluation is a systematic and progressive evaluation process, whereby Institutions reflect on their own practices in order to ascertain more broadly the extent to which they are ensuring the highest standards of quality in the provision of education and training.

It is an opportunity as an institution for higher education to reflect on the institution and its outputs/outcomes with a view to improving its own systems and services.

It is a self-reflective process (Figure 4.2) on its own inputs, process and outcomes (Figure 4.3), where the institution collects evidenced data and analyses it in order to make judgment about its own performance in relation to established standards in this Manual, with a view to improving its own systems and services towards achieving /enhancing quality. The driving force of a successful quality improvement strategy is self evaluation.



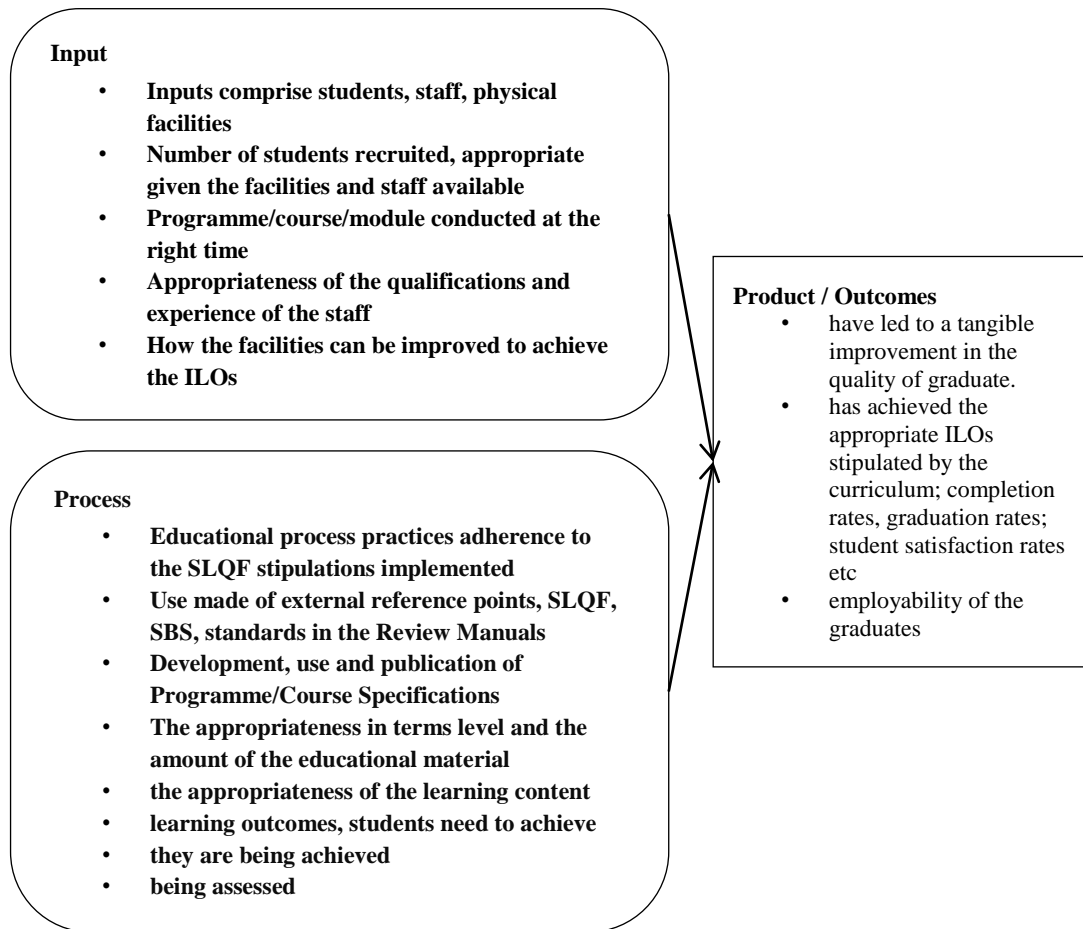
**Figure 4.2 Reflective Learning Approach**

Self-evaluation will establish ‘where we are now’ in relation to ‘where we want to be’ and propose actions and measures to narrow the gap between ‘current reality’ and the ‘goals of the institution thus, continuously promoting and enhancing the quality of the core activities of the institution as a whole.

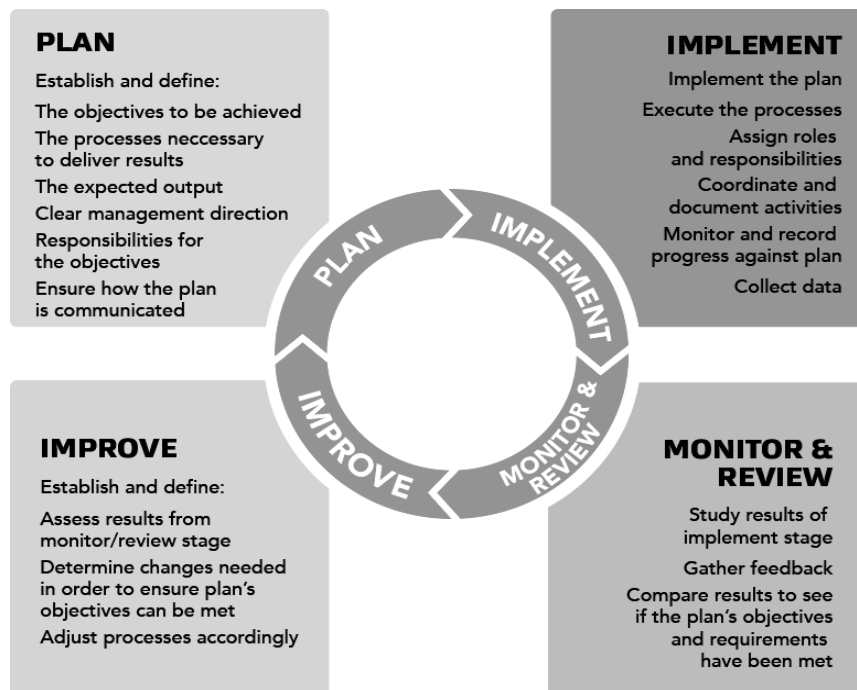
Self-evaluation would involve answering four fundamental questions: (Figure 4.4)

- What are we trying to do (**plan**, process)
- How are we trying to do (procedure and **implementation**)
- How do we know it works (**monitor & review**)
- How do you improve (revise plans- **improve**)

The ***Plan, Implement, Monitor/Review, Improve*** quality assurance and continuous improvement model should be embedded in all aspects of the university work.



**Figure 4.3 Inputs, processes and outputs of the system**



**Figure 4.4 Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement Model**

## Why self-evaluate?

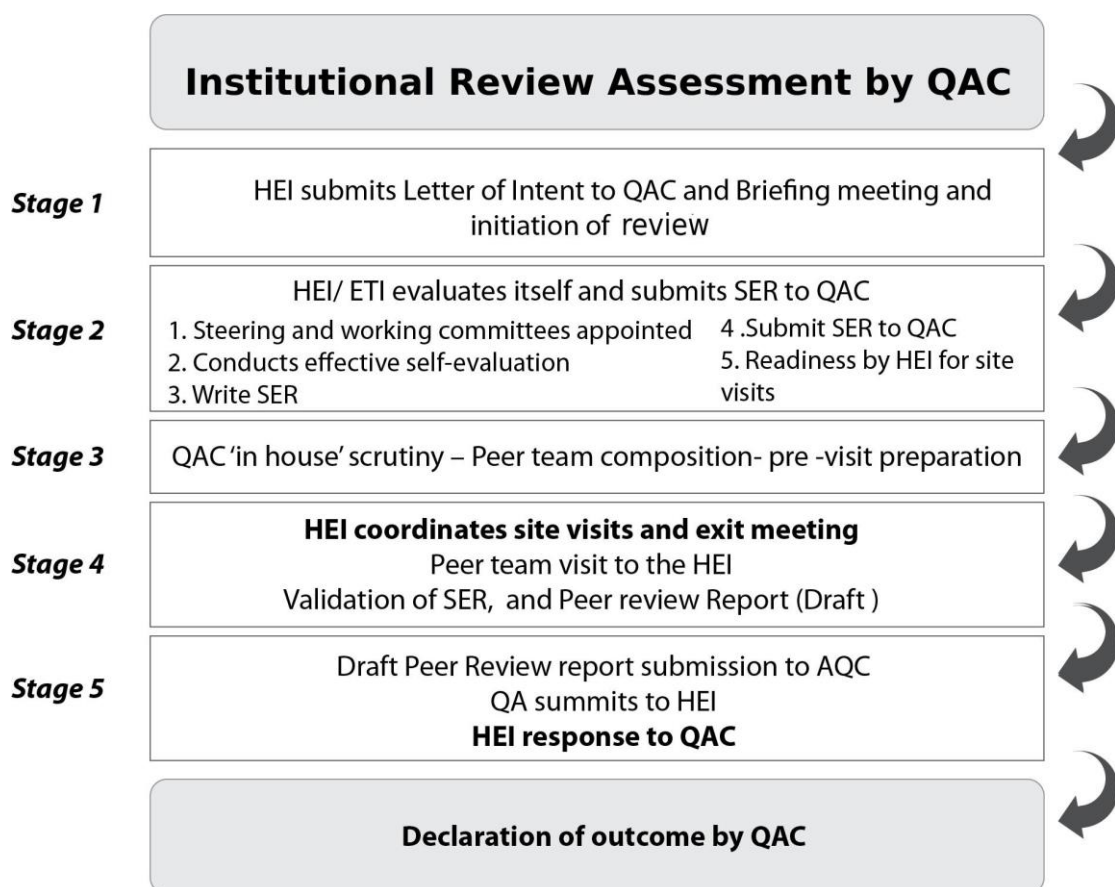
Responsibility for quality and standards lie primarily within university. Internal monitoring and evaluation is the corner stone of quality assurance in higher education. Institutional self-awareness informed by periodic self-evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement provide the principal source for any external review process.

## How does self-evaluation fit into the review process?

Review process has three distinct process:

- 1- Preparation
  - a) by the Institution
  - b) by the review team
- 2 - The review visit
- 3 - The review report and process prior to publication

In part 1 which is the preparation by the Institution, soon after the Institution submits the letter of intent to QAC Institution is notified of the date for submission of the SER. Institution undergoes the process of self-evaluation to complete its SER by a date agreed. SER prepared by the Institution becomes a key document for the Institution and the review team. SER while helping the Institution to understand its own strengths and weaknesses, also helps the review team to plan its review process more effectively and efficiently. **Section 4.4** provides guidance on how to prepare the SER.



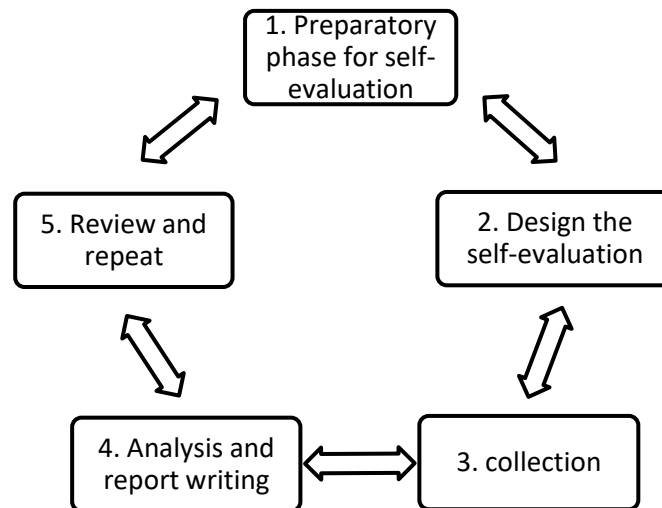
**Figure 4.5 Major stages in the Institutional Review Process**



### 4.3 Organisation of the Self Evaluation Process

Completing the self-evaluation process comprises five key steps: (Figure 4.6)

- 1 - Preparatory phase
- 2 - Designing and planning
- 3 - Data collection
- 4 - Analysis and report writing
- 5 - Review and repeat



**Figure 4.6 Steps in Conducting Self-Evaluation**

#### 4.3.1 Preparatory phase

Pre-requisites for an effective self-evaluation process are:

- Adequate financial, physical and material resources.
- Most recent review reports, previous self-evaluation reports, annual reports etc.
- Time for staff involved.
- Comprehensive time table and plan for self-evaluation. A convenient and effective method for establishing a time table is to work back from the date set for submission of SER to QAC. Time needs to be allowed for gathering data and analysis, review drafts, final editing, and rewriting, and institutional circulation and submission to QAC.

#### 4.3.2 Designing and planning

The design will provide the framework for guiding the sources of data, the data collection methods, the participants in the process, and the resource requirements

- Who will carry out the self-evaluation?
- How will it be carried out?
- What are the systems for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on performance?
- When the stages will be carried out?
- how the results will be reported?

## Steering Committee

Self-evaluation should never be the work of a single person or few persons. It is desirable to set up a steering committee coordinated or chaired by a senior academic (IQAU Head) appointed by the Head of the Institution/HEI (Figure 4.7)

To make the process more participatory the Chair of the steering Committee may establish small working groups, each representing the various operational units and led by a steering committee member

Composition of the Steering Committee:

- Chair
- Registrar or nominee
- Bursar or nominee
- Librarian or nominee
- Director SDC
- Representing faculties (Dean or nominee)
- Other relevant officials

Each working group could be assigned to investigate and report on one or more criteria and their associated standards. TOR for the activities of the working groups should be clearly defined as part of the planning process. Capacity building of all members should be briefed on their role, the scope, standards and best practices and self-evaluation process and procedure for evidence-based assessment.

Use of working groups helps in providing for the participation of the faculty as contributing to the completion of the task skillfully and within a timeframe.

Membership of a group of this sort should also be regarded as a useful professional development exercise providing experience in QA process and insight into the effectiveness of their own activities as providers of their own programme/course.



**Figure 4.7 Institutional Review Steering Committee with working committees**  
**Responsibilities of the Steering Committee**

- Planning and monitoring the process
- Ensuring that the staff and students who would be involved are briefed about the process
- Provide leadership to the entire self-evaluation processes
- Determining the key issues for self evaluation
- Preparing the design
- Develop responsibilities to working groups and coordinate their work
- Regularly meet with Chairs of Working groups if Steering Committee members are not chairing the working groups.
- Realistic and detailed time table to be established and implemented
- Use institution's intranet as an effective resource for sharing information. Another possible approach is to create an electronic repository on the intranet or the website.
- Complete drafts of the working groups into a draft report
- Arrange the workshops with all stakeholders for finalizing the draft: Evidence to be shared with the institution and the relevant stakeholders, who have a knowledge of data and who can contribute to the analysis of data and evidence are involved in the process where appropriate.
- Overseeing completion of the SER

### **Engagement of internal and external stakeholders**

- Learners should be involved in the working groups
- Feedback from learners should be gathered through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, and surveys
- Learners' level of satisfaction with their programmes and destination of learners after graduation should be included
- Key partners and employers - About student participation in work placements, and/or entering employment market, and the relevance of employment opportunities have to be adopted
- Database - Compiling and analyzing existing data is an essential element - e.g. recent evaluations, progress reports, annual outcome assessment reports and SERs

### **Communication**

- Self evaluation process should be open for faculty students and other stakeholders to participate and offer suggestions
- The steering committee should meet regularly with the working groups in order to monitor the progress and make any adjustment in the plan, if required.
- The steering committee ensures that the working groups interact effectively within the university community during the process

### Triangulation of evidence from multiple sources

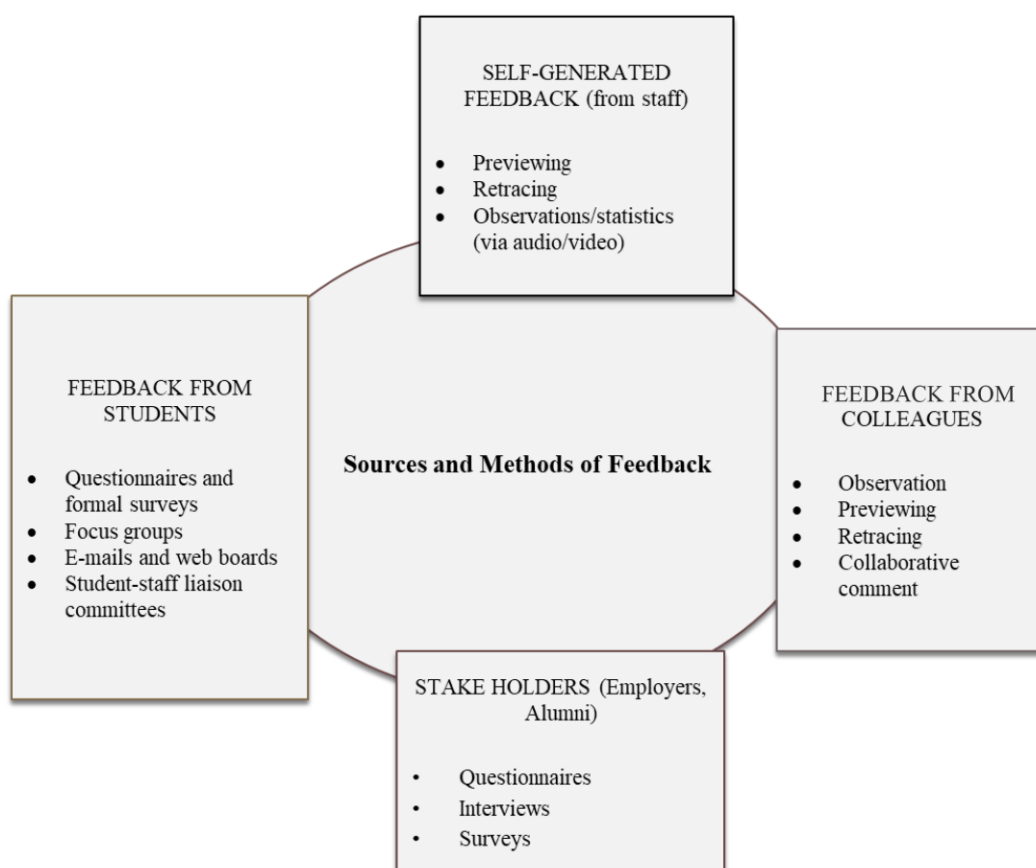
- All of the standards require judgement to be made about an aspect of the work of the institution
- These will take the form of inferences based on evidence drawn from various resources
- Some of the judgements will be relatively simple to make, and will be based on evidence which bears directly on the judgement being made
- Most judgements will have to be supported by more than one piece of evidence, coming from different sources (triangulation) (Figure 4.8)
- Multiple sources of evidence required to prove for e.g. a processes, is given below



**Figure 4.8 Triangulating evidence (adapted from COL, 2008)**

#### 4.3.3 Data collection (Figure 4.9)

- Both qualitative and quantitative data should be collected depending on the issues being explored
- Quantitative data may include financial information, numbers of students trained over a specific period
- Qualitative data can include observational records, interviews, case studies,
- Data sources can be both internal and external



**Figure 4.9 Sources and Methods of Feedback**

#### **4.3.4 Analysis and Report writing**

- Analysis and report writing must be guided by honesty and frankness
- A report in compliance with the structure stipulated in the IR Manual, must be written on the outcomes of evaluation.
- Draft reports with respect to each criterion checked by the chairs of the working groups should then be forwarded to the steering committee.
- The steering committee edits the reports of the coordinators of the working groups with respect to each criterion submitted by the coordinators of the working group.
- Steering committee compiles a draft SER for institution for discussion with a wider audience.
- The steering committee might organize a workshop or seminar with all relevant stakeholders to discuss the draft SER written according to the prescribed guidelines in the Manual before finalizing it.
- A cross section of university community, council members, other relevant stakeholders, is expected to participate in the finalization of the SER and own it.

The underlying assumption in insisting on conducting an effective self-evaluation is that an institution that really understands itself-its strengths and weaknesses, its potentials and limitations-is likely to be more successful in carrying out its educational mission than one without such self-awareness.

The fact that the SER is not to be a mere compilation of data on the achievements and functioning of the institution is emphasized by all QA Agencies. They also insist that the report must be analytical, evaluative, and hopefully self-critical. The guidelines on institutional preparations promote the participatory approach to ensure wide involvement of the campus community in preparing the report.

A suggested formatting and style sheet is provided in Appendix 1.

In summary, an effective and useful evaluation process has to balance two needs:

- 1) to be organized in a manner best fit for the Institution's mission and processes,
- and 2) to address the requirements of the QAC.

Regardless of how the Institution chooses to align these needs, there are a number of principles that support a successful self-evaluation process. It should:

- address the institutional assessment standards, QAC policies, and meet other QAC requirements,
- provide content and evidence for the Institutional Self Evaluation Report,
- include institution-set standards for student achievement and learning outcomes,
- provide and analyze existing evaluation planning and improvement data,
- lead to an assessment, based on analysis of data, of the quality of the institution and services and its program effectiveness as well as the formulation of plans and actions for improvement, and
- involve the Institution stakeholders who have a role in improving quality of the institution

#### **4.3.5 Review and repeat**

In keeping with the culture of continuous quality improvement the process is reviewed and repeated.

#### **4.4 Self Evaluation Report**

Every university or HEI is committed to a policy of self-evaluation of all its programmes, services, procedures and administrative mechanisms on an annual basis which encompasses a quality self-assessment. This is because the responsibility for quality and standards in higher education lies primarily within the university/HEI, not outside of it. Institutional self-awareness, informed by periodic self-evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement provide the principal point of reference for any external review process.

Therefore, the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) prepared by the University/HEI, becomes a key document both for the University/HEI and for the review team. A carefully and concisely prepared SER, while helping the University/HEI to understand its own strengths and weaknesses, also helps the review team to plan its review process more effectively and efficiently. This chapter provides guidance on how to prepare the SER that will help maintain uniformity in SERs prepared by all Universities/HEIs.

#### 4.4.1 Purpose of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

The purpose of the SER is to provide the review team with an account of how the University/HEI knows that it meets the expectations of stakeholders and the wider society in terms of the Standards and Best Practices set out in this Manual, and those of statutory professional bodies where relevant. Section 3.2 of this Manual has Tables under each criterion with the standards listed in the second column and examples of sources of evidence alongside each standard in the third column. Therefore, the citation of all pertinent evidence becomes a major requirement of the SER and the review team expects provision of all relevant documentary evidence to support each claim that the university or the HEI makes with regard to the standards. Evidence may include one or more which have been listed in the Tables in section 3.2 and any which the institution considers appropriate.

#### 4.4.2 Scope of the SER

**Scope:** The SER reflects the following aspects pertaining to the institution

- a) Degree of internalization of best practices and level of achievement of Standards
- b) Degree to which the claims are supported by documented evidence
- c) Accuracy of the data and statements made in the SER

##### ***a) Degree of internalization of Best practices and level of achievement of Standards***

The SER accomplishes the above mentioned purpose by demonstrating the degree of internalization of best practices by the Institution/HEI and the level of achievement of Standards set out under ten Criteria prescribed in chapters 2 and 3 of this Manual. In doing so, the SER would demonstrate the commitment of the Institution /HEI to uphold its mission of producing graduates with desired attributes. The SER should describe and analyze in depth with supporting evidence and comments the effectiveness of the ways in which the Institution/HEI discharges its responsibility for maintaining academic standards, quality, ethical behavior, and adherence to good practices.

This will include adherence to the best Practices and Standards given under the ten criteria in Chapters 2 & 3 of this manual:

- Criterion 1: Vision, Mission and Planning
- Criterion 2: Governance and Management
- Criterion 3: The Learners
- Criterion 4: Human Resource Development
- Criterion 5: Programme Design and Development
- Criterion 6: Course Design and Development
- Criterion 7: Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner support
- Criterion 8: Learner Assessment and Evaluation
- Criterion 9: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialisation
- Criterion 10: Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach

The SER should indicate the ways in which the institution/HEI has responded to national policy and guidelines in safeguarding standards and promoting high quality.

The SER should also indicate how the Institution/HEI has responded to the recommendations of previous institutional reviews and programme/subject reviews, supported by documentary evidence. It is not the responsibility of the review team to seek out evidence to support the institution's claims but it is the Institution/HEI that should furnish the evidence required during the visit.

***b) Degree to which the claims are supported by documented evidence***

Every claim of compliance and level of attainment has to be supported with multiple sources of documentary evidence. Citation of all pertinent evidence becomes a major requirement of the SER. Therefore it is the responsibility of the Institution/HEI to furnish all relevant all documents. Claims not supported by documented evidence will not be considered by the review team. Section 3.2 of this Manual provides examples of sources of evidence relevant to each standard and the template given in the Annex demonstrates the way the evidence should be coded and presented.

***c) Accuracy of data and statements made in the SER***

It is imperative that the University/Institution's claims and evidence mentioned in the SER are accurate and verifiable. It should not be used to make unsubstantiated claims. In instances where changes are in progress and evidence not yet available, the Institution/HEI should state so. In such instances, the Institution/HEI should seek to address why the changes were necessary, how it is managing the process of change, and the expected outcomes of the changes.

#### **4.4.3 Focus of the Report:**

The main focus of the SER is to describe the ways in which the Institution/HEI safeguards the standards of the awards made in its name through maintaining quality of the ten areas of its functioning as identified by the ten criteria mentioned in Chapter 3 of this Manual. The SER should reflect the extent to which these matters are dealt with by the Institution/HEI clearly, convincingly, and honestly.

A good Institutional Self Evaluation Report should concisely state the institution's current and sustained compliance with institutional standards and QAC policies. If additional work remains for the future, the SER should generate concrete details and actionable improvement plans including timelines and outcomes for that work. A good report must be meaningful and useful to the members of the faculty, as well as provide sufficient information for the peer evaluation team about the institution, evidence of its achievements, and how it meets the QAC standards.



#### **4.4.4 Guidelines for Preparation of SER**

The universities /HEIs are expected to prepare the SER according to the structure given below:

- Section 1. Introduction to the institution
- Section 2. Process of preparing the SER
- Section 3. Compliance with Criteria and Standards
- Section 4. Conclusions /Current action list

The contents of each section are outlined below;

##### **1. Introduction to the Institution**

The Introduction section that begins with the vision and mission statements of the institution will include its brief history comprising its establishment, and major milestones of its development; size in terms of faculties, academic departments, units, and centers; number of students and teachers; number of administrative and supporting staff etc. It should contain a description of the context within which the institution operates by providing an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) it is faced with. This information will help the review team to contextualize the institution and plan the review process.

Additionally, it should describe the major changes since the last review, and the implications of the changes and challenges for safeguarding academic standards and quality of students' learning opportunities.

This section should also include a brief outline of the process followed to prepare the SER; for example, who was involved in the process and what actions were taken to gather information etc.

##### **2. Process of preparing the SER**

This section should contain an account of the process of preparation of the SER and may include the following:

- Appointment of SER writing team with TOR
- Composition and responsibilities of working teams in charge of the chapters and criteria
- Familiarization of the institutional review manual and the methodology of the review process
- Activity schedules of the working teams and methods of collecting information
- Collation of data and evidence and analysis and synthesis of the draft report by the working groups
- Compilation into a draft SER by the Chairperson of the writing team
- Forum to discuss the draft report
- Finalizing the report and submission

### **3. Compliance with Criteria, Standards, and List of Evidence**

In compiling the second section of the SER, Chapter 3 on Standards for Assessment could be used as a guide. It will be logical to structure this section in line with the Standards described under the ten Criteria. Accordingly, this section will have ten major sub-sections describing the extent to which the Institution /HEI has adhered to the ten Criteria and the relevant Standards elaborated in Chapter 3.

It is suggested that the SER writers will compile the ten sub-sections in tabular form, one table for each sub-section (ie. for each Criterion), using the template given in the Appendix.

A coded list of relevant documentary evidence should be included at the end of this section to support its claims that the Institution upholds the standards stipulated in this manual. Examples of sources of evidence are mentioned against each of the Standards under the 10 Criteria in Chapter 3 (section 3.2) of this manual. It is imperative that each of the documents is coded and that the code is mentioned in the 4<sup>th</sup> column of the tables in this section of the SER, indicating the adherence to the standards under each criterion along with relevant evidence.

Performance of self-evaluation includes consideration of performance in relation to compliance to standards in this manual and completing the rating scales of the templates. Rating scales are likely to indicate that some are done well and some poorly and some not at all. This would provide information on the standards where future improvements are needed.

### **4. Conclusions/Current Action List**

It would be helpful to the review team if the Institution/HEI draws meaningful conclusions from its self-evaluation. It should convey to the review team how the Institution/HEI reflects on its own policies and practices pertaining to all of its educational activities in accordance with its vision and the mission, and the effectiveness of such policies and practices in maintaining the quality of its educational programmes and awards. The Institution/HEI should identify a list of actions that are being undertaken at present or to be taken in the future to redress any weaknesses or failures. It is useful if the SER mentions any specific issues that it needs to discuss with the review team.

#### **4.4.5 Length of the SER**

The self-evaluation document should be concise and analytical, with references to all relevant evidence. It should be between 18,000 and 20,000 words (using Times New Roman in 12-point font size with 1.5-line space on A 4 size pages) excluding appendices. Appendices should be kept to a minimum and contain illustrative or statistical information essential to the main text.

A good self-evaluation document should be readily understandable to a reviewer. All sections should be self-explanatory as far as possible, minimizing the need for the review team to request further clarifications.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Review Team and the Review Visit**

The knowledge, experience and professional standards of the members of the review team and its chairperson are crucial to the conduct of a credible and high quality institutional review. It is also of equal importance that reviewers and the HEIs are aware of each other's roles and responsibilities in order to ensure that the review process takes place in a timely manner without any obstacles or conflicts. This chapter will provide guidelines on the selection of reviewers, their training and attributes, composition of the review team, profile of the reviewers, attributes of the review chair, review visit arrangements and schedules of meetings etc.

#### **5.1 Important specific requirements and characteristics of the review procedure**

- A focus on the people involved and their interests and needs;
- Objectivity and impartiality of the peers;
- Transparency of all elements of the procedure to all persons involved;
- Confidentiality rules on the use of results which are to be set up in advance and are to be adhered to by all persons involved;
- Avoidance of conflicts of interest and direct competition between peers and the reviewed institution;
- Promotion of openness, integrity, and sincerity as a pre-requisite for mutual learning;
- Promotion of inquiring mind and critical attitude both in the peers and the reviewed institution;
- Gender-sensitive language is used in all reports and during the peer reviews;
- The design and implementation of peer review not as a typical bureaucratic procedure but as a dynamic and motivating process which both the reviewed institution and the peers can benefit from;

#### **5.2 Selection of Reviewers**

The QAC will maintain a pool of institutional reviewers from which it will select and appoint reviewers for each institutional review. The reviewers will be senior academics; either those who are holding or have held managerial or other senior positions such as current or past Vice-Chancellors, Directors of Institutes, Deans, or Professors and one member from outside of academia. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of institutional reviewers:

- Self-declaration by the reviewer of any involvement with a particular Institution / institute / subject department / programme which may lead to a conflict of interest and render an individual ineligible as a member of an external review team.
- Undergone training as a reviewer.
- Experience in quality assurance activity in areas appropriate to the review.

- Awareness of national, professional and employers' requirements of graduates.
- Acceptability to the Institution being reviewed, as independent reviewers with suitable subject or institutional expertise.
- Knowledge and understanding of the guidelines prescribed by the QAC codes of practice and other key reference points, including the SLQF.

### **5.3 Composition of the Review Team**

The review team would be ideally composed of five members with adequate gender representation. It is essential that one of the members should be selected from outside of the academia, who can look at issues from a more industry-related or professional perspective. The QAC will identify the review chair from among the team of five members selected for the review team.

### **5.4 Profile of Reviewers**

Reviewers have a key role to play in institutional review. Their qualities as individuals and the coherence and effectiveness of review teams are vital to the success and credibility of an external review process. Informed, constructive and perceptive reviewers are extremely persuasive ambassadors for the process within and beyond higher education.

The 'reviewer profile' below, describes the attributes and characteristics expected of Institutional Reviewers:

- High degree of professional integrity
- An enquiring disposition.
- Personal authority and presence.
- Ability to act as an effective team member.
- Good individual time management skills.
- Ability to readily assimilate a large amount of disparate information.
- Good command of analysis and sound judgment.
- Ability to make appropriate judgments in the context of complex institutions different from their own, particularly those dedicated to ODL mode
- Experience in organization and management, particularly in relation to teaching and learning matters in ODL.
- High standard of oral and written communication, preferably with experience in writing formal reports.
- Knowledge and understanding of the review topics, principles, and concepts.
- Knowledge of the special characteristics and conditions of the educational provision to be reviewed.
- Knowledge of quality assurance and quality enhancement procedures.

In addition, the QAC expects reviewers to have: a broad knowledge of HE institutions and educational practices in Sri Lanka and abroad; wide experience of academic management and quality assurance; knowledge and understanding of the review

process; and a detailed working knowledge of and commitment to principles, national guidelines and other aspects of quality assurance in higher education.

### **5.5 Review Chairs - Training and Role**

Review Chair functions as the formal point of contact with the UGC-QAC and the institution being reviewed, before, during, and after the review. The success of the review team depends mainly on the Chairperson. All Review Chairs must possess extensive experience of HEI in general, and ODL in particular and familiarity with assurance of standards and quality. Wherever possible, Review Chair will receive the same training as that provided for reviewers. They may also be required to attend workshops and conferences arranged by the QAC.

The duties of the Review Chair besides managing the conduct of the review, include writing certain sections as agreed upon, and facilitating the compilation and editing of the review report. Above all, the Review Chair must enable the team to analyze the documents provided by the institution and develop a robust evidence base on which to make judgments.

The review chair is responsible for maintaining an overview of the range of review activities in the institutional review, and for helping the reviewers to apportion their time effectively. The achievement of an appropriate balance between the various activities requires planning in advance of, and co-ordination throughout the review.

Above all, the review chair must enable the team to develop a robust evidence base on which to make judgments.

### **5.6 Review Chair - Knowledge and Skills**

In-depth knowledge of all aspects of higher education is a necessary pre-requisite to provide leadership to be a senior academic with high professional standing. Additionally, the review chair also needs to possess certain managerial skills to be able to effectively and efficiently lead the review team. Therefore, the Review Chair is expected to have;

- Ability to lead and manage small teams;
- Ability to work within given timescales and adherence to deadlines;
- Ability to lead a team of experts;
- Ability to communicate effectively in face-to-face interaction;
- Experience of word processing; and ability to produce clear and succinct reports on time
- knowledge and understanding of current issues;
- Knowledge and understanding of the assurance of standards and quality; and experience in liaison with senior management and staff at all levels
- Must look at the institution as a whole;
- Must maintain a friendly and cordial atmosphere throughout the review proc.

The essential qualities outlined above may be reinforced by experience in teaching at institutions dedicated to ODL mode; experience of programme accreditation by

professional or statutory bodies; programme approval or validation events; and internal reviews.

### **5.7 Conduct of Reviewers**

Reviewers will strive to uphold the highest standards of professional practice throughout the review process, exemplified by

- respectful, professional conduct towards staff and students at all times;
- application of guidance provided through reviewer training on the conduct of peer observation;
- acceptance of the privacy of review business for the duration of a review visit;
- acceptance of individual responsibility for assigned tasks within the review team;
- acceptance of collective responsibility for the review team's judgments.

### **5.8 Review Visit Arrangements**

Consistency and clarity in interactions between a review team and a HEI will be facilitated by:

- Designation of the review team Chair as the team's formal point of contact with the HEI before, during and after the review.
- Designation of the Chair/Secretary of the IQAU of the respective HEI to co-ordinate communications between the HEI and the review team and to provide logistical support.
- Acceptance in advance of a review visit that hospitality provided by the HEI for the visiting reviewers should be no more than is necessary to enable the team to carry out its work efficiently and effectively.
- Commitment to openness and transparency in communications other than instances where sensitive information requires agreement to confidentiality.

### **5.9 Schedule of Meetings**

The review team will divide its time between meetings with staff and students and reading documented evidence provided by the institution. It may also request a tour of the main campuses, and few regional centres, though the extent and purpose of this should be judged in the light of the team's view of its main lines of inquiry.

The Review team having read the SER beforehand will suggest a schedule of meetings in advance of the visit. The team may request meetings with individuals or small groups, for example with:

- representative group of the Institution council/governing body (or equivalent)
- the Vice-Chancellor/Director
- members of the senior management team
- representative group from Senate / academic syndicate
- Deans of faculties, Librarian, Heads of Departments / units / centers
- a cross section of academic / administrative / support / non-academic staff
- students and student representatives

- external examiners
- external stakeholders including employers, industry, private sector involved with the Institution activities
- community representatives with links to or involvement with the Institution.

The review team will also carefully read the documentation provided by the institution as evidence. It will endeavor to keep to a minimum the amount of documentation it requests during the visit. The aim is to consider evidence furnished by the institution and to focus on discussions with staff and students to get a clear picture of the institution's processes in operation. The review team should always seek to use all information requested in arriving at a judgment. The visit should conclude with a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor / Director and senior staff. The team may give a general indication of its overall findings at this point.





## **Chapter Six**

### **Institutional Review Report**

The Institutional Review Report (IRR) is compiled by the Review Team once the institutional review has been completed and is the final outcome of an Institutional Review.

The IRR is self-contained and will provide a concise account of the review process and findings supported by evidence, an analysis of the issues identified and discussed with members of the Institution together with the team's reflections and conclusions. The report will culminate in an overall judgment of the level of accomplishment by the Institution with regard to the quality of its education provision and the standards of its awards. The IRR will be made available to the institution concerned. The IRR will enter the public domain subsequently depending on the policies adopted by the QAC of the UGC.

#### **6.1 Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of the IRR is to inform the institution and external parties of the review findings and to provide a reference point to support and guide staff in continuing quality assurance activities towards quality enhancement and excellence.

The IRR will include the following:

- a brief introduction to the Institution and its review context
- a brief description of the review process (The review visit programme or schedule of meetings as an appendix)
- the review team's view of the Institution's self-evaluation report (SER)
- commentary on the criterion wise scores (weighted according to degree of importance) achieved by the institution under the ten criteria of the institutional review listed in Box 1
- overview of the Institution's approach to Quality Assurance
- final assessment of performance of the institution in terms of Quality based on the institution wise score
- commendations and recommendations
- summary

## Box 1 Criteria and Standards

Criterion 1: Vision, Mission and Planning Criterion 2; Governance and Management Criterion 3; The Learners Criterion 4: Human Resource Development Criterion 5: Programme Design and Development Criterion 6; Course Design and Development Criterion 7: Learning Infrastructure, Resources and Learner support Criterion 8: Learner Assessment and Evaluation Criterion 9: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization Criterion 10: Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach
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Under each of these ten criteria, a variable number of standards will be assessed by the review team after careful scrutiny of the documentary evidence provided by the institution for each criterion.
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## 6.2 Review Judgments

Under the national quality assurance system, this new Institutional Review Manual identifies ten broad areas for scrutiny that all institutions dedicated to ODL mode in Sri Lanka will be subject to at regular intervals of time. (Five years in general).

Institutional Review is a complex process. It involves analysis of data and commentary on complex processes and an awareness of a particular institution's mission and stated objectives which makes inter-institutional comparisons difficult. Thus review judgments should take into account the areas where minimum standards and proper inter-institutional comparisons can be made. Not all of the institutional review aspects will be of equal importance to all institutions. Therefore, the review team will look at areas to which one institution may give particular emphasis while another may seek to excel in something else.

Institutions affirm different missions and there are acknowledged differences in size, age, and maturity of institutions. It is important that the review process does not unreasonably and inaccurately measure all institutions by a fixed 'gold standard'.

At the same time, all institutions are expected to be able to account for arrangements for quality assurance which support and sustain the standards expected. These standards and quality should reflect agreed national guidelines. Therefore clear and concise outcomes are expected of the IRR which will enable the wider public to form a picture of each institution's effectiveness in maintaining the standard of its awards and the quality of education offered in its name.

### **6.3 Format of the Report**

The following structure or format is recommended when writing the report. Each section should comprise a description, analysis and commentary followed by judgment.

#### ***Section 1- Brief introduction to the Institution and its review context:***

This will introduce the reader to the Institution and the context for the review. It will describe the background of the Institution such as the year of establishment as an Institution under the Universities Act No 16 of 1978. It will list the number of faculties and departments, number of programmes and courses, number of students enrolled, number of academic, administrative and academic support and nonacademic staff etc. to enable the reader to get an idea of the size, age and maturity of the institution. Understanding the context is important so as to enable the review team to make a realistic assessment of an institution within existing constraints.

This section will also summaries the outcomes of previous institutional and subject reviews. It will identify any key issues within the ten criteria of institutional review which the team has identified for particular scrutiny from the Institution's self-evaluation.

#### ***Section 2-Review team's view of the Institution's Self-evaluation Report (SER):***

This presents the review team's view of the Institution's self-evaluation and its relationship to the findings of previous subject reviews and institutional review reports, if any. The SER should have been prepared according to the guideline given in this manual. The SER should have mentioned the issues identified and recommendations contained in previous IR reports and state whether remedial action had been taken to correct any deficiencies in order to instill confidence among all stakeholders that the institution was striving to achieve and maintain the quality of educational provision and the standard of its awards. The SER should also have presented an analysis carried out by the Institution in terms of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT).

In this section of the report, the review team needs to identify the strengths and limitations of the SER, the sufficiency, and the reliability of the evidence provided, comment on the SWOT analysis and mention areas that have been identified for particular scrutiny during the current review. The review team should also comment on the Institution's Corporate Plan and the Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives contained therein, and whether clearly identified strategies and activities are in place along with personnel responsible for implementation according to a given time-frame. Review team will mention the strengths and weaknesses of the SER and any particular areas that have been identified for particular scrutiny by the review team during the current review. A commentary by the Review Team on the universities Corporate Plan, Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives with clearly identified strategies and activities within a given timeframe along with personnel responsible for implementation could be included in this section as this should have been made available with the SER to the Review Team.

### ***Section 3- A brief description of the Review Process:***

This will describe the steps involved in preparation by the review team and by the institution prior to the institutional review. It will also outline details of the review visit such as the schedule of meetings, the personnel interviewed, processes observed, evidence examined and meetings of the review team at intervals during the review visit. It will also mention the review team's satisfaction with the arrangements made by the institution to facilitate the conduct of the review in a cost effective manner with minimal wastage of time during the five-day period. The degree of commitment of the institution to openness, transparency, communications and logistical support should be recorded in this section.

### ***Section 4-Overview of the Institution's approach to Quality and Standards:***

This presents the review team's observations on the overall approach of the Institution to quality assurance and management. Although the Institution's approach to quality assurance has been dealt with as the last criterion in the above section, it deserves special mention under this section. Internal Quality Assurance is an ongoing process which is built into the day to day routine activities of an institution.

This section will describe the key features of the Institution's approach and arrangements to quality assurance, any recent and proposed developments and evidence from the SER of the Institution's capacity to take action to remedy weaknesses and seek improvement. More importantly this section should deal with whether the Institution has a well-established IQA developed in accordance with the Internal Quality Assurance Manual for Sri Lankan Universities, February 2013 and whether the quality culture is now well entrenched within the Institution since the first cycle of IR.

The commentary could include whether

- internal quality assurance processes being looked at by the Institution involve one or more of those listed in the IQA manual,
- whether existing practices within these processes have contributed to maintenance of standards and whether
- the institution has taken necessary steps to identify and implement measures that would enhance quality to achieve excellence.

### ***Section 5 -Commentary on the ten criteria of Institutional Review:***

This presents the review team's analysis of the effectiveness of the Institution's processes under each of the ten criteria identified in this manual. Where appropriate, reference will be made to national guidelines and/or local codes of practice as a baseline for the review team's commentary. The commentary would focus on the objective (quantitative) assessment of standard-wise scores and actual criteria-wise scores calculated according to the respective weightages allotted to the ten criteria described in Chapter 3. This section will conclude with a commentary on the overall (global / qualitative) impression of the review team on the capacity of the Institution

to achieve and maintain the highest standards and quality expected under the ten criteria within the existing constraints of the particular Institution.

### ***Section 6 – Grading of overall Performance of the Institution***

This will set out the review team's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution based on the grading of performance of a Institution under the categories of Grade *A*, *B*, *C*, or *D* as indicated in Chapter 3 under Procedure for use of Standards for Assessment. Table 3.4 from Chapter 3 is reproduced below for convenience of the reader and members of the review team.

The Institution score is derived from the sum of all actual criterion-wise scores expressed as a percentage. The Institution percentage together with minimum weighted criterion-wise score for each criterion will give a Grade of *A*, *B*, *C*, or *D* to the Institution that has undergone the Institutional Review. (Please refer section 3.4 for further details).

Where a Institution obtains an overall Grade of *A*, the Institutional Review Report (IRR) will indicate the grade and encourage the Institution to continue working towards quality enhancement and excellence.

When the Institution receives a Grade of *B* or *C*, the IRR will indicate the grade and also mention the criteria which have received less than the minimum weighted score and the standards which have received a grade of inadequate or barely adequate (score of 0 or 1). The Institution will make a note of the recommendation made in the IRR and take remedial measures to bring about improvements in quality overall with particular emphasis on the standards and criteria that had scored less than the expected minimum.

When the Institution obtains an overall grade of *D*, it is expected to take remedial measures to improve the quality of all criteria and standards before the next cycle of Institutional review.

**Table 3.4-Grading of Overall Performance of Quality by an Institution**

<b><i>Expected number of criteria with weighted minimum score</i></b>	<b><i>Overall University score %</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>
10 (Ten)	$\geq 80$	<b><i>A</i></b>
	70 – 79	<b><i>B</i></b>
	60 – 69	<b><i>C</i></b>
	$< 60$	<b><i>D</i></b>
9 (Nine)	$\geq 70$	<b><i>B</i></b>
	60 – 69	<b><i>C</i></b>
	$< 60$	<b><i>D</i></b>
8 (Eight)	$\geq 60$	<b><i>C</i></b>
	$< 60$	<b><i>D</i></b>
7 (Seven) or less	Irrespective of University score	<b><i>D</i></b>

***Section 7 - Commendations and Recommendations:***

This will list the commendations of areas of good and innovative practice, policy and procedures for higher education, quality of research and publications, approval, monitoring and review of programmes and awards, quality of teaching and students' assessments, community engagement, national and international collaborations, management information systems etc. This list is not all inclusive and any comments on quality pertaining to excellence in higher education could be included under commendations.

This section will also make recommendations for remedial actions needed to bring about improvement and quality enhancement.

***Section 8 – Summary:***

This will be a summary of the review team's main findings as given under the different sections of the report and will be no longer than 1000 words.

**6.4 Procedure for submission of the Report**

Members of the review team will take responsibility for individual sections of the report. Assistance with preparation of the report may be given by a project assistant.

The Chair of the Institutional Review Team will coordinate the sections of the report to produce the final comprehensive report agreed to by the team. The review team will submit a draft report to the QAC. The QAC will send a copy of the draft report to the Institution.

#### **6.4.1 Request for discussion**

The review team would already have given an indication of its conclusions at the final meeting with the Vice-Chancellor and senior management of the Institution, at the conclusion of the review visit where the latter have had an opportunity to sort out any factual errors and misinterpretations made by the review team. However on receiving the draft report from the QAC, the Institution may ask for a further discussion with the review team about the contents of the report, prior to publication. The Institution should notify the QAC of its wish to take up this opportunity within two weeks of receipt of the first draft of the report, highlighting the particular areas it wishes to discuss.

The discussion meeting should take place within three months of the Institution making the request and may last up to one day. The meeting should normally be chaired by a member of the QAC. The chair of the meeting should not be a member of the Institution concerned, nor should he or she have any other close links with it.

Others present at the meeting will be members of the review team (all if possible, but at least two), and representatives chosen by the Institution, who are likely to be staff who participated in the review and members of the senior management of the Institution. Detailed notes of the meeting should be taken, if possible by a representative of the QAC.

The discussion is likely to focus on one or more of the following:

- A request from the Institution for clarification of one or more of the statements made in the draft report.
- A request from the Institution that one or more of the statements in the report be changed.

The notes of the meeting will be approved by the Chair after consultation with colleagues on the QAC. He or she will then make a final decision on amendments if any to the contents of the report, which will then be published.

#### **6.5 Publication of the report**

The report will be published by the QAC.



# Appendix

## 1) Template for Section 3 of the Self-Evaluation Report

It is suggested that the SER writers will use the following template in tabular form when compiling the eight sub-sections of Section 3 on “Compliance with the Criteria and Standards” of the SER as described under 4.3 of this Manual. As recommended therein, for each criterion, a separate table should be used, so that the Section will comprise of eight tables. It will be more convenient to use the landscape layout for this section

<b>Criterion No.</b>			
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Claim of the degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards</b>	<b>Documentary Evidence to Support the Claim</b>	<b>Code No. of the Evidence Document</b>
<i>Mention the standard and its number as stated in the first column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).</i>	<i>Describe degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards (Compliance with the 08 Criteria mentioned in the second column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).</i>	<i>(Mention the titles of all documents that you will produce for the Review Team to substantiate the claims you have mentioned in Column 2. Examples of Evidence are mentioned in the third Column of the Tables in Section 3.2 of the Manual, pp. 35-78).</i>	<i>(Mention the code No. you have given to each document mentioned in the third Column of this Table.</i>
<b><i>A criterion-wise summary statement on how the programme has complied with standards relevant to the respective Criterion</i></b>			

An example for Standard 1, under Study Programme Management is given overleaf

**1) Sample for Criterion 1, Standard 1.3**

<b>Criterion 1. Programme Management</b>			
<b>Standard</b>	<b>Claim of the degree of internalization of Best Practices and level of achievement of Standards</b>	<b>Documentary Evidence to Support the Claim</b>	<b>Code No. of the Document</b>
1.3 The Faculty maintains regular communication with students and staff ...	Regular communication with students and staff is maintained through; (a) making provision for two student representatives to attend the meetings of the Faculty Board; (b) Students' Handbook; (c) posting of printed notices on notice boards; (d) university web site; and (e) public print and electronic media	Minutes of the meetings of the Faculty Board; Students' Handbooks; samples of printed notices displayed in the past; hard copies of notices posted on the website of the HEI; samples of /or links to notices published in the print and electronic media	3. FB/Hum/2013/3 4. FB/Hum/2013/4 8. FB/Hum/2013/8 11. SHB/2014 12. SHB/2015 26. Notice/14/9 26. Notice/15/3 15. Web/March/3 23. Paper Advert/Daily News 2014/4/18 27. TV/ITN/News/ 2013/6/
Summary of how the Study Programme has internalized the Best Practices under the Criteria No. 1			

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# Glossary

Term	Definition
Academic calendar	the schedule of planned events of an institution for the academic year giving details such as scheduled dates of re-opening for the academic year, commencement of semesters, holidays, examinations, release of results, convocation, etc
Academic quality	the overall level of performance of the academic unit in the context of its mission as measured by the extent of accomplishment of the unit's intended learning outcomes, operational outcomes and broad-based goals; describes how well the study programme is designed and administered, and learning opportunities available help students to achieve the intended learning outcomes and awards. It encompasses provision of relevant curricula, effective teaching, learning support, assessment and learning opportunities.
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 and provisions in order to offer greater opportunities for a much wider range of applicants in flexible terms than the traditional system.
Accountability	the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in the light of agreed expectations
Accreditation	formal process of enquiry against a set of agreed criteria and standards/benchmarks, undertaken by a formally constituted body and will lead, if successful, granting a formal status (i.e., an accredited institution or accredited programme or accredited degree).
Action plan	description of specific activities related to short and long term strategic objectives including outcomes and outputs with detailed roadmap, planned milestones or key performance indicators, details of resource commitments and time lines.
Active learning	interactive instructional techniques that engage students in such higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and reflection. Students engaged in active learning might use resources beyond the faculty. 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.
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 inferences to a topic. Sometimes called self-assessment questions (SAQ), in-text questions, 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 procedure for dealing with challenges to a rule or decision, or for reviewing a judgement 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. It can be formal or informal and formative or summative.
Assignments	student-centred learning exercises given during a course at pre-determined intervals and according to defined criteria to achieve in fulfillment of assessment requirements. Work submitted by the learners may be assessed and feedback given.
Audio-visual	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.
Award	a certificate or title conferred by an academic institution signifying that the recipient has successfully completed a prescribed course of study that leads to a qualification such as a degree, diploma or certificate or other formal recognition.
Benchmarking	measurement of the quality of an organization's policies, products, programs, strategies, etc., and their comparison with standard measurements, or similar measurements of its peers.
Blended learning	a formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through delivery of content and instruction via digital and online media with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

Bridging course	A course designed for learners who have difficulty in coping up 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.
Code of conduct	expectations of behaviour mutually agreed upon by the institution and its constituent members.
Collaboration	the process by which people/organizations work together to accomplish a common mission.
Collaborative learning	method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project.
Community engagement	a working relationship between an institution and one or more community groups to help both to understand and work together to meet the needs in a mutually beneficial manner.
Competencies	ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject.
Compliance	a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements or legislation.
Constituencies	key branches/departments/units/entities in an institution which need act together in coherent and complementary manner
Continuous improvement	a management process whereby the procedures, services, content, material, teaching/learning processes of study programmes are constantly evaluated in the light of their efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility, and appropriate and timely improvements are made on a continual basis to achieve the desired benchmark/ excellence.
Continuous quality improvement	a philosophy and process for analyzing capabilities and processes and improving them on a continual basis to achieve the stated objectives and stakeholder satisfaction.
Counselling	the provision of academic, personal and emotional support and guidance to learners.
Course	a planned series of learning experiences in a particular subject/discipline offered by an institution; a self-contained, formally structured unit of a programme of



study.

Course completion rate	percentage of students in the total enrollment for the course/programme who have satisfactorily completed 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 material production
Course materials	materials in print or electronic format which are provided to the learner to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
Course specification	a concise description of a course with respect to its aims(s), objectives, intended learning outcomes, volume of learning in terms of credits, course contents/synopsis, teaching and learning methods, assessment procedures, learner support available, recommended reading material, including the information on the programme for which the course is prescribed, department responsible for offering it, and prior-learning requirements.
Credit	a unit used in the expression and calculation of the academic value/volume of learning of the courses taken by a learner. The value of a credit is normally determined by the number of notional learning hours required to provide face to face instructions, assignments, practical, clinical, research and assessments, and self-study by students. According to SLQF norms 1 credit is equivalent to 50 notional hours.
Credit transfer	procedure of granting credit to a student for educational experiences or courses undertaken at another institution. This not only facilitates smooth transfer of learners from one programme to another and from one institution to another nationally but also enables transnational mobility.
Criterion	a principle by which something may be judged or decided.
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 and sets norms and standards for evolving and sustaining the institutional culture.

Curriculum	The total planned structure of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and educational experiences that make up a programme of study that enable the learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes of the programme of study
Data base	A collection of data fundamental to an operation , organized in some pre-defined structure , typically held on a computer
Developmental testing	field trial or pilot trying out of draft course material with a small group of learners in the hope of developing improving those materials for the benefit of the learners
Differently abled learners	learners who have a physical or mental impairment which effect their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
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 separation/distance of place and/or time between instructor and learner, amongst learners, and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media.
Drop out	a term used for learners who cease to be active in a particular programme/course of study before its completion
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	the use of technology to improve teaching and learning
Equity in education	the absence of differences in educational opportunity or achievement based on social class, ethnicity, caste, gender, disability, area of residence which are clearly preventable and unfair.
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 periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness impact and/or sustainability of an activity or intervention.
Experiential learning	learning acquired through workplace or other previous experience
Extension programmes/courses External quality Assurance (EQA)	educational training/courses provided by HEIs to individuals who are not enrolled as regular students. assessment performed by an organization external to the institution to assess the status and standards of operation of the institution or its programmes to see whether it meets the pre-determined standards/benchmarks
Face-to-face interaction	interaction between two individuals or groups in the same physical space
Feedback to learners	formative and evaluative comments made to individual learners by their tutors in response to tasks or written assignments that enable learners to improve their learning.
Feedback mechanism	systems for obtaining information from participants in a process that contributes to the assessment of its quality and effectiveness.
Formative assessment	assessment of learning that is carried out during a course to provide feedback to students.
Formative evaluation	evaluation that occurs while a project or course is in progress, with the aim of identifying short-comings in the course.
Generic skills	skills that can be applied across a variety of subject domains; 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 basic/fundamental skills such as literacy, numeracy, analytical skills, technical skills: people-related skills; conceptual skills; learning-to-learn skills; personal skills and attributes; innovative and entrepreneurial skills; entertainment skills etc.
Goal	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.
Governance	managing an organization based on pre-determined policy, rules, regulations and standards; providing leadership and standards, managing and coordinating the use of physical and human resources, effecting procedures and processes,

	in a transparent and efficient manner to successfully achieve the vision of the organization.
Grievance redressal	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.
Handbook	a publication produced by a Faculty/HEI for prospective students giving details about the institution, its resources, its programmes/course offered including and admission requirements, codes of conduct for students, students' by-laws relating to discipline, etc.; this may also be referred as Student handbook provided by an HEI for registered students of an institution containing information on all matters relevant to students for their academic progress in the institution.
Independent learning	instructional system in which learners are encouraged to carry out their studies by themselves beyond the classroom instruction so as to prepare them for lifelong learning.
Independent study	mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.
Induction/ Orientation programme	the process by which learners are introduced to a new organization/ environment; the learners are informed of their responsibilities, commitments, the study programme, facilities provided, expected conduct and behavior, etc.
Innovation	new knowledge/ technique/ tool generated through experimentation that will add value to product/tool/techniques or improve efficiency of a process/techniques/service.
Inputs	products, services and prepared materials used to produce the desired outcomes/outputs.
Institutionalization	formalization or internalization or adoption of a practice/ guidelines/ values/ norms which would add value to the institutional procedures and practices.
Instructional design	process of designing instructional materials in a way that helps learners to engage in learning effectively.
Instructional package	all essential instructions, guidelines, study materials of a course.
Interactive learning	learning that results from the two-way communication

between tutor and the 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 learner's interact with the tutor and with each other via a given medium.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	temporary grants of monopoly intended to give economic incentives for innovative and creative activity. IPR exist in the forms of patent, copyrights and trademarks.
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.
Internal Quality Assurance ( IQA)	internal system of monitoring to ensure that policies and mechanisms are in place and to make sure that it is meeting its own objectives and pre-determined standards.
Internal review	internal assessment or review process commissioned regularly by HEIs to assure internalization of best practices and achieving the standards/benchmarks with respect to its governance and management, and study programmes and allied activities
Learner-centred education	a system of education where the learner is at the centre of education with responsibility for learning while the teacher functions as the facilitator of learning
Learner profile	a description of an average potential learner or group of learners based upon knowledge of appropriate learner characteristics
Learning portfolio	a representative collection of a learner's work that promotes self-assessment, awareness and continuous improvement
Learner support	a supportive network of preparatory courses, skill development opportunities, personal and academic counselling to meet learners needs through a flexible approach to resources including individualized support from the teacher/facilitator.
Learner support services	physical and academic facilities made available to learners to enable every individual to achieve the stated learning outcomes through online support, tutor support, library and information services, laboratories and administrative

	support.
Learning activities	tasks designed and assigned to help learners to engage in analysis, synthesis by themselves, come up with explanations/solutions, constructively develop an argument, draw inferences, engage in critical review and relate their own ideas and experience to a topic.
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 independently and with a virtual cohort of learners.
Learning Management System (LMS)	a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) courses or training programs. Typically, a learning management system provides an instructor with a way to create and deliver content, monitor student participation, and assess student performance.
Learning outcomes	statements of what a learner is expected to know and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.
Learning resources	the resources of the learning process which may be used by a learner (in isolation or with other learners) to facilitate learning.
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, educational and occupational levels may be met, regardless of circumstances; a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the lifespan of individuals by learning to enhance the quality of life.
Lifelong learning skills	knowledge and skills which improve learners' competence and commitment at the time of learning and facilitate continuous learning throughout life.
Management Information System (MIS)	a computerized integrated information collection, collation, analysis and reporting system to support institutional management and decision making processes.
Market research	fact finding activities undertaken by an institution/individual to determine the demand for its programmes/ services/products

Mission	the overall function or purpose of an institution.
Module	a separate and coherent block of learning; a self-contained, formally structured unit of a programme of study.
Modular curricula	courses offered in units which are complete in themselves
Monitoring	A management tool that operates during programme implementation to carry out a continuous or on-going collection and analysis of information about implementation, and to review programmes 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.
Open access	A way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, pre requisite credentials or an entrance requirement
Open learning	An educational philosophy that also emphasizes giving learners choice about media, place of study, support mechanisms and entry and exit points.
Outcome-based Education	an educational theory that bases teaching learning and assessment components of an educational system around intended outcomes to ensure achievement of the desired learning outcomes by every student at the end of the educational experience; a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum, assessment and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits” (Tucker, 2004).
Open and Distance Learning	a way of providing learning opportunities 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 learning resources	educational resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and re-distribute
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 organization and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs
Organizational structure	a framework that shows the divisions of an organization and reveals vertical responsibilities and horizontal linkages, and may be represented by an organization chart
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 Institution community. Outreach is a one-way process in which the Institution is the provider either on a gratis basis or with an associated charge.
Outreach 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 and implementation processes.
Partner institutions/organizations	key institutions/organizations which are working in collaboration with another institution to achieve a common goal or to improve performance.
Partnership/alliance	a formal arrangement between two partners for a specific purpose; It is both a strategy and a formal relationship between the Institution and another major provider that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and the student population at large.



Peers	Are mostly colleagues from other universities/HEIs. They are external but work in a similar environment and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject. They are independent and “persons of equal standing” with the persons whose performance is being reviewed.
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.
Peer review	Is a form of external evaluation with the aim of supporting the reviewed educational institution in its quality assurance and quality development efforts.
Performance appraisal	a systematic assessment of an employee’s performance in order to determine his/her achievement of assigned tasks, training needs, potential for promotion, eligibility for merit increment etc, and training needs to enhance performance.
Performance indicators	criteria used by educational institutions in self-evaluation and by external evaluators when judging the quality of educational provision.
Policy	a statement of principles or intentions which serve as continuing guidelines for management in accomplishing the institution’s mission, goals and objectives.
Pre-requisites	For a lesson or 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 materials, as distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted communications
Prior learning	what has been learnt by an individual prior to enrollment in a particular programme by means of knowledge or skills acquired in an educational institution or previous experience gained from a workplace.
Process	a set of interrelated work activities characterized by a set of specific inputs and activities to achieve specific outputs/tasks.
Programme	structured teaching and learning opportunities which lead to an award; Refers to all activities that engage students in learning.

Programme of study	a stand- alone approved curriculum followed by a student , which contributes to a qualification of a degree awarding body.
Programme specification	a general overview of the structure and other key aspects of the programme, including concise description of the programme with respect to its aims, objectives, intended learning outcomes, volume of learning in terms of credits, courses, course contents, recommended readings, teaching, learning assessment procedures, responsible department, grading system, learner support, entry requirements, fallback options, requirements for the award of the degree.
Progression	vertical movement of learners from one level of education to the next higher level successfully or towards gainful employment.
Prospectus	a publication produced by an institution for prospective students giving details about itself, its programmes, courses and admission requirements.
Quality	the fitness for purpose of a product or service according to a set of required standards, with minimum cost to society.
Quality Assessment	a process of evaluation of performance of an institution or its unit based on certain established criteria.
Quality Assurance	the policies and procedures by which the universities can guarantee with confidence and certainty that standard of its awards and quality of its education provision and knowledge generation are being maintained. It also refers to the process of maintaining standards reliably and consistently by applying criteria of success in a course, programme or institution.
Quality review(external)	a systematic, independent examination by a third party to determine whether the institutional practices with respect to its governance and management, physical and human resources, academic development and planning, academic programmes and courses, teaching and learning, and assessment, learner support services an other allied activities and provisions comply with predefined quality dimensions (i.e. criteria, best practices and standards).
Quality enhancement	continuous institutional effort to achieve higher level of performance and quality that is understood to be reasonably better than which prevailed earlier. It is also defined as enhancing performance efficiency of a HEI system.

Reflective practice	thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge and / or skills to practice.
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 which involves systematic investigation to generate new knowledge/ products/ services
Self-appraisal	individual's or institution's evaluation of own performance.
Self-assessment	a process in which learners answer questions or carry out prescribed activities to determine whether expected learning has occurred.
Self-evaluation	is an evaluation carried out by the institutions themselves. It is an important approach for fostering quality assurance and quality enhancement at an institutional level.
Self-Evaluation Report (SER)	a document prepared by the Faculty/ Institute providing a description and analysis with supporting evidence of the effectiveness with which the Faculty/Institute discharges its responsibility for academic standards and adherence to good practices in ensuring the quality of the study programme
Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF)	a comprehensive document published by the Ministry of Higher Education, outlining a nationally consistent framework for all higher education qualifications offered in Sri Lanka, recognizing the volume of learning of students and identifying the learning outcomes that are to be achieved by qualification holders. Its objective is to have a uniform system in naming a qualification, the designators, and qualifiers of each qualification awarded by HEIs in Sri Lanka.
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
Standards	measurable indicators that provide the basis of comparison for making judgements concerning the performance of an instructional activity, programme or institution

Standard Operational Procedures	operational procedures developed and adopted by the governing authority/council of the Institution/higher educational institution by adhering to Acts, Ordinances, Circulars, Establishment Codes and letters issued by Parliament, Ministries and regulatory agencies, as the case may be, to guide the stakeholders to undertake their core functions; these are essential prerequisites for ensuring good governance and management.
Strategic plan	a specific and action-oriented, medium or long-term plan of the Institution/HEI for making progress towards achieving a set of institutional goals as dictated by its mission and vision
Student Charter	Student Charter sets out the general principles of the partnership between students, the HEI. It applies to all registered students of the HEI following taught or research programmes, whether studying on or off campus; student charter outlines values, principles, functions, responsibilities of the institution towards students and the students responsibilities and codes of practices, and also the consequences of breach disciplines
Student-centred learning	methods of teaching that shifts the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student; also known as learner-centered education; aims to develop learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students; focuses on skills and practices that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving.
Students' Feedback Analyses	gathering and analyzing feedback from students at the end of a study program or an individual course unit for improving and refining the education that the HEI provides; the strategies for gathering feedback from students may range from informal discussions with students to the use of feedback forms containing a mix of free-responses and quantitative questions using <i>Likert</i> scales.
Subject Benchmark Statement (SBS)	reference point that provides a description of a particular subject/discipline describing its general academic characteristics and standards, and articulating the attributes that a graduate should be able to demonstrate. It describes expectations about standard of awards in a subject/discipline and what gives a subject/discipline its coherence and identity. Subject Benchmarks are used when developing or revising course syllabi.
Summative evaluation	evaluation that occurs at the completion of a course or project, which provides a summary account of its

	effectiveness and the extent to which it meets its goals and objectives
Transparency	institutional processes that are characterized by openness, communication and clearly assigned accountability.
Tracer Studies	Information gathering methods/ studies conducted by an HEI to evaluate the relevance of their educational programmes in terms of employability and professional development of its graduates; obtain information about the state of employment of former graduates, labour market signals, professional success for retrospective evaluation of study programmes, curricular development, continuing education etc.
Triangulation	the approach of including different methods and sources in collection of evidence contributing to the quality of the evaluation in terms of objectivity, reliability, and validity. Soliciting different points of view from different stakeholders during the peer visit will enable the peers to gain a more accurate and complete picture.
Tutoring	an interactive approach to disseminating knowledge that helps students to improve their learning in order to promote empowerment and independent learning process of confirming the appropriateness of something;
Validation	determination of the effectiveness of instructional materials or system by the use of appropriate summative evaluation techniques.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)	a Web-based platform for the digital aspects of courses of study, usually within educational institutions. VLE is a system for delivering learning materials to students via the web. These systems include assessment, student tracking, and collaboration and communication tools. This is also defined as a set of teaching and learning tools designed to enhance a student's learning experience by including computers and the Internet in the learning process. This is also referred as LMS
Vision	a short memorable statement that paints a vivid picture of an ambitious, desirable future state aligned with institutional values. Its purpose is to inspire and act as a guide for decision-making and planning.

## About the Author

Uma Coomaraswamy is a Professor Emeritus of Botany, former Vice-Chancellor of The Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). She holds a BSc Degree from the University of Ceylon and a PhD from the University of London, UK. She served the University of Colombo (1965-1981), Eastern University, Sri Lanka (1982-1991) and The Open University of Sri Lanka (1991-2006), in several capacities as senior administrator, academic, and researcher with heavy involvement in outreach activities. After retirement from university service she served as a national consultant on quality assurance (QA) in the ADB Distance Education Modernization Project (DEMP, 2006-2009) during which period she produced QA tools, systems and processes for distance higher education in Sri Lanka and she spearheaded the initiative of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) to make the national QA tools produced by DEMP more generic for use by member states of the Commonwealth and published by COL as Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education: Institutions and Programmes in 2009 which is being used by several commonwealth countries in their QA efforts. She has also served as a resource person in the Higher Education for the Twenty First Century (HETC) of the World Bank and as a member of the authors of quality assurance manuals for the External Degree Programmes and for review of Conventional universities published by UGC and HETC.

In the context of ODL she has served as a member of the Commonwealth of Learning Editorial Advisory Group for the series “World review of distance education and open learning” published as 6 volumes by the Common Wealth of Learning (COL). External Reviewer of QA for COL RIM model of quality assurance for Sri Lanka and South Asian Countries; COL Consultant for developing national policies for ODL in Sri Lanka and Maldives; COL Consultant for the Lifelong Learning for Farmers Project implemented by some universities in Sri Lanka and author of chapters on QA for distance learning in various publications.

Currently she serves as the Director of the UGC Centre for Gender Equity/Equality; Advisor/ UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance; Member, UGC Standing Committee on Gender Equity/Equality; Member, Board of Management, National Science Foundation; Member, Board of Management, Postgraduate Institute of English.