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Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies

**STATE OF PLAY:  
REGIONAL QUALITY  
ASSURANCE IN  
SOUTHERN AFRICA  
SADC**

**DAAD**

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



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SADC**

Report prepared by  
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and Neil Butcher



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## FOREWORD

Regional quality assurance has been a key area of concern of our work for many years. In the frame of the DIES (“Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies”) programme, which is jointly coordinated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK), we have gained vast experience in supporting partners in developing countries in setting up quality assurance (QA) structures for the benefit of quality higher education which puts the students in the focus, stimulates innovation and creativity, and meets the demands of society and labour market. Although our QA capacity development activities are primarily meant to advance the skills of higher education managers and deal with QA at institutional or programme level, the scope of DIES projects has always been a regional one.

In Africa, the first DIES projects took their roots more than a decade ago. From 2006 to 2015, DIES supported the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in developing a regional QA system in countries of the East African Community. Since 2013, we have been active in Western and Central Africa in close collaboration with CAMES (Conseil Africain et Malagache pour l’Enseignement Supérieur) and further partners. In addition, within the frame of the EC-funded project HAQAA (Harmonisation, Quality and Accreditation Initiative) and as member of an African-European consortium, the DAAD has been contributing to the development of a harmonised QA and accreditation system at pan-African continental level.

Since the very start, our projects have been aiming at establishing a common language on QA and facilitating a joint understanding of values and principles involving all relevant higher education stakeholders, i.e. ministries, regulatory bodies, university managers, teachers, students as well as labour market representatives. We perceive transnational dialogue at eye-level within and between the regions a key success factor – not only for ensuring commitment and ownership but also for creating trust: Trust which forms the basis for facilitating recognition of credits and degrees, and thereby paves the way for increased mobility of graduates and students.

In 2017, we expanded our regional scope within Africa to the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

because of the strong commitment of regional stakeholders such as SAQAN and SARUA, which are relevant players for harmonisation of higher education systems in Southern Africa. A regional DIES seminar on identifying capacity building needs for the improvement of internal and external quality assurance in higher education, held in October 2017 in Pretoria, was the first step of this new initiative.

Against this background, we are delighted to publish the present study on the state of the art of QA in Southern Africa. This piece of research will be extremely helpful not only for the Southern African higher education community but also for ourselves to guide us in any of our future activities aiming at strengthening QA capacities in the countries which have been examined.

We are hoping that the success story of DIES QA projects can be continued, based on an increasing store of knowledge of the African contexts and a mutual dialogue with strong and committed partners such as SAQAN and SARUA. Finally, we wish to thank Neil Butcher and his research team, Sarah Hoosen and Yuraisha Chetty, for their engagement and diligent work in putting this impressive study together.

On behalf of the DAAD



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## ACRONYMS

<b>AAA</b>	Accreditation, Audit and Assessment	<b>ETP</b>	Education and Training Providers
<b>AAU</b>	Association of African Universities	<b>ETQA</b>	Education and Training Quality Assurance
<b>AfriQAN</b>	African Quality Assurance Network	<b>ETQA</b>	Education and Training Quality Assurers
<b>AGENATE</b>	Agence Nationale d'Évaluation (National Evaluation Agency)	<b>ETSIP</b>	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
<b>ANAQ</b>	Agence Nationale d'Assurance de la Qualité (National Quality Assurance Agency)	<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ASG-QA</b>	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	<b>EUA</b>	European University Association
<b>AQRM</b>	African Quality Rating Mechanism	<b>EWAQAS</b>	Enhancing West African Quality Assurance Structures
<b>AU</b>	African Union		
		<b>GIQAC</b>	Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity
<b>B.Eng</b>	Bachelor of Engineering		
<b>BIUST</b>	Botswana International University of Science and Technology	<b>HAQAA</b>	Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
<b>BOTA</b>	Botswana Training Authority	<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>BQA</b>	Botswana Qualification Authority	<b>HEA</b>	Higher Education Authority
		<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>CAMES</b>	Conseil Africain et Malagache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education)	<b>HEQAC</b>	Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee
<b>CATS</b>	Credit Accumulation and Transfer System	<b>HEQC</b>	Higher Education Quality Committee
<b>CEQUAM</b>	Centre for Quality Assurance and Management	<b>HEQSF</b>	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
<b>CES</b>	Conselho de educação superior (Council on Higher Education)	<b>HRDC</b>	Human Resource Development Council
<b>CHE</b>	Council on Higher Education	<b>HRK</b>	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (German Rectors' Conference)
<b>CNAQ</b>	Conselho Nacional de Avaliação da Qualidade do Ensino Superior (National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education)	<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>CoL</b>	Commonwealth of Learning	<b>IIEP</b>	International Institute for Educational Planning
<b>CONAQ</b>	Coordination Nationale d'Assurance Qualité (National Quality Assurance Coordination)	<b>IMEC</b>	Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
		<b>INAAREES</b>	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação, Acreditação e Reconhecimento de Estudos do Ensino Superior (Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education)
<b>DAAD</b>	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)	<b>INQAAHE</b>	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
<b>DHET</b>	Department of Higher Education and Training	<b>IQA</b>	Internal Quality Assurance
<b>DIES</b>	Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies	<b>IUCEA</b>	Inter-University Council for East Africa
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo		
		<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>EAQAN</b>	East African Quality Assurance Network		
<b>ECSA</b>	Engineering Council of South Africa	<b>LUANAR</b>	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
<b>ENQA</b>	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education		
<b>EQA</b>	External Quality Assurance	<b>MESCT</b>	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
<b>ESU</b>	Enseignement Supérieur et Universitaire (Higher Education and University)		

<b>MESUPRES</b>	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research)	<b>SER</b>	Self Evaluation Report
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education	<b>SETA</b>	Sector Education and Training Association
<b>MQA</b>	Mauritius Qualifications Authority	<b>SHEC</b>	Swaziland Higher Education Council
<b>MSTVT</b>	Ministry of Science Technology and Vocational Training	<b>SINAQES</b>	Nacional de Avaliação, Acreditação e Garantia de Qualidade do Ensino Superior (National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education)
<hr/>		<b>SIP</b>	Self-Improvement Plan
<b>NQA</b>	Namibia Qualification Authority	<b>SQA</b>	Seychelles Qualification Authority
<b>NCES</b>	Conselho Nacional de Educação Superior (National Council on Higher Education)	<b>SRR</b>	Self-Review Report
<b>NCHE</b>	National Commission on Higher Education (South Africa)	<hr/>	
<b>NCHE</b>	National Council for Higher Education (Malawi)	<b>TCCA</b>	Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation
<b>NCQF</b>	National Credit and Qualifications Framework	<b>TCU</b>	Tanzania Commission for Universities
<b>NQA</b>	Namibia Qualifications Authority	<b>UEMOA</b>	Union Economique et Monétaire de l'ouest Africaine (West African Monetary Union)
<b>NQF</b>	National Qualifications Framework	<b>UoM</b>	University of Mauritius
<b>NRA</b>	National Regulatory Agency	<b>TEC</b>	Technical Evaluation Committee (Tanzania)
<b>NUL</b>	National University of Lesotho	<b>TEC</b>	Tertiary Education Commission (Mauritius)
<b>NUST</b>	Namibia University of Science and Technology	<b>TEC</b>	Tertiary Education Council (Botswana)
<hr/>		<b>TQM</b>	Total Quality Management
<b>ODL</b>	Open and Distance Learning	<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<hr/>		<hr/>	
<b>PAQAF</b>	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework	<b>UAN</b>	University of Angola
<b>PMS</b>	Performance Management System	<b>UB</b>	University of Botswana
<hr/>		<b>UCT</b>	University of Cape Town
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance	<b>UNAM</b>	University of Namibia
<b>QAA</b>	Quality Assurance Agency	<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>QAAD</b>	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division	<b>UNIMA</b>	University of Malawi
<b>QAMS</b>	Quality Assurance Management System	<b>UniSey</b>	University of Seychelles
<b>QFL</b>	Qualifications Framework for Lesotho	<b>UNISWA</b>	University of Swaziland
<b>QMS</b>	Quality Management System	<b>UoM</b>	University of Mauritius
<hr/>		<b>UQF</b>	University Qualifications Framework
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community	<hr/>	
<b>SADCQF</b>	Southern African Development Community Qualifications	<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Monetary Union
<b>SAQA</b>	South African Qualifications Authority	<hr/>	
<b>SAQAN</b>	Southern African Quality Assurance Network	<b>ZIMCHE</b>	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education
<b>SARUA</b>	Southern African Regional Universities Association	<b>ZOU</b>	Zimbabwe Open University
<b>SAUT</b>	St Augustine University of Tanzania	<hr/>	
<b>SAZ</b>	Standards Association of Zimbabwe		
<b>SEES</b>	Secrétaire d'Etat à l'Enseignement Supérieur (Secretary of State for Higher Education)		





**EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) jointly developed the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) programme, which offers training courses and dialogue events, fostering the competencies of academic staff and contributing to enhancing institutional management at universities in developing countries. DAAD/DIES recognizes that Southern African countries are currently working on strengthening their national quality assurance (QA) systems and on harmonizing standards and structures regionally through the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) and the African Union's (AU) Pan-African QA and Accreditation Framework. DAAD/DIES is considering working on supporting these QA efforts through regional capacity building, but this requires sound information about the state of quality assurance in the region. It thus commissioned Neil Butcher and Associates to conduct a research study to provide information about QA in the region as a basis for future work of DAAD/DIES and the regional and national partners. This report presents the findings of the research exercise.

The key aim of the research was to gain an understanding of existing QA frameworks in the region. The main research questions that framed the research were:

- What types of external QA systems already exist in all SADC member states?
- How do Higher Education Institutions in SADC organize their internal quality assurance (IQA)?
- What are the defined purposes of the systems?
- What are the roles of individual stakeholders in the existing QA systems?
- What are the needs, demands and priorities of the individual stakeholders?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing systems in the SADC region?
- What are the potential areas for future capacity building in external quality assurance (EQA) and IQA?
- Are there commonalities among the systems which might allow for intra-regional harmonization?

The research sought to cover QA systems in all 15 SADC countries. An initial desktop research was undertaken to identify QA practices in each country. More in-depth research was conducted via questionnaires, to understand EQA and IQA systems in higher education (HE), focused on needs, demands, and priorities in QA in each country. Three separate questionnaires were prepared for QA agencies (QAA) and Ministries of Education (MoEs) responsible for QA, higher education institutions (HEIs), and experts/consultants who have worked with QA in Africa. Draft questionnaires were disseminated to DAAD, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa, and the Southern

African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) for feedback and comment. The questionnaires were then finalized based on feedback received. Convenience sampling was used, and the questionnaires were disseminated to 15 QAAs/MoEs, 46 HEIs, and four consultants. Responses were received from 14 QAAs, 17 HEIs, and two consultants.

Country reports were prepared, primarily based on the questionnaire responses received from QAAs and HEIs. These are presented in the appendices. Each of these country reports were shared with respondents to the survey for verification.

## OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO QA SYSTEMS

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QA has been introduced in many HE systems worldwide in the last two or three decades as an instrument to make universities' achievements in HE visible and comparable. QA frameworks set common standards and guidelines, which, in turn, create mutual trust for stakeholders (for example, regional labour markets and employers) in the quality of the programmes provided and degrees awarded by the HEI in countries. While the concept of QA is not new, the range of terminology and methodologies now used to define, develop, and apply it are growing. There are many different perceptions of what is meant by quality in higher education.

Literature indicates that there are three main approaches to QA in higher education: accreditation, assessment, and audit. Accreditation focuses on whether a programme or institution meets a certain standard and qualifies for a certain status. Assessment focuses on making graded judgements about quality (going beyond the binary judgements of accreditation), with the focus being on the quality of outputs, while audit focuses on the extent to which an HEI achieves its own objectives and considers whether the HEI's processes are effective. Another key feature in QA in HE is the focus on EQA and IQA. EQA refers to the monitoring of the quality of HEIs by an external quality assurance agency, such as a national commission/council for higher education, while IQA refers to the institution's mechanisms to ensure and improve its own quality. Quality is most commonly assessed at an institutional or programmatic level. At the institutional level, the focus tends to be on mission, governance, effective management, academic programmes, teaching staff, learning resources, students and related services, physical facilities, and financial resources. Programmatic level EQA takes individual programmes as the unit of analysis. Compulsory QA systems require all institutions or programmes to periodically

undergo accreditation at specified cycles, with the focus of verifying minimum standards, while, in voluntary QA systems, institutions and programmes are not obliged to participate.

## OVERVIEW OF APPROACHES TO QA IN SADC COUNTRIES

In Africa, regional common market blocks have focused on the need for appropriate frameworks for harmonization of education systems and mutual recognition of qualification. They have also focused on enhancing regional collaboration in education delivery and cross-border education systems for promoting regional integration requiring harmonized regional systems of higher education, frameworks for quality assurance based on benchmarking, and accreditation systems. In QA, the SADC region has recently seen the development of the SADCQF, the purpose of which is to facilitate easier movement of learners and workers across the SADC region and internationally. Currently, pilot countries are conducting self-assessment to position their countries to align with the SADCQF. Another relevant regional initiative is the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), a voluntary-membership organization open to all Southern African countries. Other regional blocks in Africa also have initiatives on QA in HE (and some SADC countries also belong to these regional blocks). These include the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) and the East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) hosted by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). On a continental level, the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) was established to assist institutions concerned with QA in higher education in Africa. Harmonization of quality assurance on the African continent is being driven by the Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative. The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA) have been developed within the frame of the HAQAA project.

## PRESENCE OF QA BODIES IN SADC COUNTRIES

The research revealed that all 15 SADC countries have a body/unit responsible for QA. These may be in the form of dedicated QA bodies or sub-divisions within HE ministries focused on QA. In some countries, there is more than one body responsible for QA; one may focus on assessments and audit, while the other may focus on accreditation. Further, 13 of the 15 countries have national standards and guidelines for QA.

## PURPOSE OF QA SYSTEMS IN THE SADC REGION

All SADC countries have a body/unit responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education in respective countries. This provides some evidence that all countries have established some EQA mechanisms at the national level. The presence of institutional level QA is less clear, as this research was based on a small sample of universities (and thus may not adequately capture all IQA practices). However, there is evidence that some HEIs may have a dedicated office or unit to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

### EQA in HE systems in SADC countries

For EQA, different approaches are used by QAAs. In most instances, there is a combination of accreditation and audits, and these are usually conducted on a cyclical basis. Accreditation and audits may be focussed at different levels. For example, accreditation may be at the institutional and programmatic level, while audits may be at the institutional level, or different QA processes may apply to public and private HEIs (for example, there may be programme accreditation for private providers and quality audits for public universities). Other QA measures used are: programme validation, compliance visits, registration of institutions, and support visits to institutions. Additionally, programmes may be accredited by professional bodies. Whilst some countries are implementing various EQA processes, others have plans that are yet to be implemented. Most EQA agencies appear to be focused on ensuring compliance, although there is evidence of some countries adopting a more 'developmental' approach or may be more supportive in nature. There were also mixed responses regarding whether QA focuses on the institutional or programmatic level, or both. There are often different QA approaches to institutional and programmatic QA. For example, in Mauritius, registration of private education providers is done at the institutional level, and accreditation for private providers and quality audits for public universities is done at the programme level. However, in Lesotho, audits are conducted at the institutional level and accreditation is at the programme level. Similarly, in Zambia, registration and audits is done at institutional level, while accreditation is at the programme level.

### IQA in HE systems in SADC countries

The presence of institutional level QA is less clear, as this research was based on a small sample of universities in the SADC region. The research therefore does not reflect all IQA practices. There is evidence, however, that some HEIs may have a dedicated office or unit to monitor the quality of

teaching and learning. HEIs are also at different phases in developing their QA policies and practices. Some are still in the planning phase, while others have a detailed QA 'map' that stipulates QA procedures at every level. Most respondents to the survey noted that they have institutional plans, policies, and/or other documents that describe their QA approach. Some have committees at faculty level, others have introduced QA to several institutional policies, and others tie in their IQA processes to meet the requirements of the EQA (though some have tried to shift towards a quality enhancement or quality improvement model as opposed to just meeting EQA reporting requirements).

## ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS

Within HE, there are many stakeholders including parents, students, government lecturers, employers, professional bodies, the private sector, and the public. Each of these stakeholders may have different perceptions about quality. Key stakeholders include

- The state/government (primary role of providing funding);
- Quality assurance agencies (developing and implementing QA and performing a regulatory function);
- Students (active agents and/or participants in their educational or learning experience, participants in QA process, providing feedback and input into programmes);
- Parents (provide feedback and financial support);
- Higher education institutions (developing and implementing IQA policies and structures);
- Staff (improving the quality of education, providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and suggestions for improvement, providing feedback on university services, developing curricula, delivering programmes, and managing finances and administration at HEIs);
- HEI leadership (establishing and maintaining good relationship with regulators, overseeing policy and quality implementation);
- International bodies (inter-university collaboration, financing of projects);
- International institutions (conducting external examination, collaborating on activities, verifying qualifications, and establishing qualification pathways and credit transfer mechanisms);
- Professional bodies/councils (participate in programme development, accreditation of programmes, registration of qualified personnel, verification of programme quality, and regulating the practice of professions); and
- Employers and industry (input into programme/curriculum development and review, providing feedback on quality and suggesting improvements, providing information to HEIs on their needs to allow programme alignment to needs, and employing graduates).

## QA NEEDS, DEMANDS, AND PRIORITIES

Given the diverse positions of countries in implementing QA in HE, the corresponding needs, demands, and priorities of countries in SADC are also diverse. The following list summarizes the priorities, needs and demands of QAAs and HEIs in the SADC region:

- Develop QA bodies and policies (for countries in early stages of developing QA bodies, policies, and frameworks);
- Develop a culture of quality (through awareness raising and capacity development of all stakeholders);
- Manage various QA processes in contexts where there are multiple agencies responsible for QA in a country;
- Enhance existing EQA processes (examples of which are maintaining high levels and standards of programmes, conducting institutional reviews, developing standards for qualifications, developing online systems to support QA systems, aligning learning programmes to national frameworks, streamlining QA processes, and reviewing QA tools);
- Achieve institutional accreditation (accrediting all institutions and programmes and improving the performance of HEIs);
- Develop IQA processes and systems (creating IQA policies and structures, supporting development of institutional QA processes and systems, establishing IQA units, developing strategies for continuous enhancement of quality such as monitoring, review, and evaluation of student experiences, revising quality indicators, improving dialogue and engagement with stakeholders, and undertaking projects to support implementing recommendations after EQA audits);
- Foster information exchange and collaboration (sharing information and experiences at workshops and conferences, increasing collaboration between QAAs in the region and internationally, sharing best practices, and collaborating in activities such as staff exchanges and peer audits);
- Create a HE repository and information systems for monitoring and evaluation; and
- Source and mobilize funding to achieve QA goals.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

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The following strengths and positive impacts of QA in SADC countries were noted:

- Increased political support and legislation to support national QA processes;
- The presence of a national QA regulatory body;
- The presence of a national QA framework in most countries;
- Increasing visibility and awareness of QAAs and their work;
- Increased knowledge and improved awareness of QA at the institutional level;
- High successes with EQA processes in achieving accreditation and/or audits of institutions;
- Increased institutional compliance to EQA processes;
- Enhanced collaboration and networking efforts in the region, and participation in international workshops; and
- Increased capacity and competency and transparency in QA processes.

The following weaknesses in existing QA systems was identified:

- Lack of legislative and political support for QA, and the need for more autonomy of the QAA in some countries;
- Absence of qualifications frameworks, and in applying frameworks/putting regulations into practise;
- Insufficient information on QA at institutional level;
- Resistance to change, possibly linked to the recent establishment of QA bodies (in comparison with the more established HEIs);
- Lack of relevant experience and expertise in both QAAs and HEIs;
- Multiple regulatory bodies with overlapping QA requirements, which may lead to over-regulation;
- Difficulty executing QA tasks;
- QAA management and logistical challenges, including adhering to timelines, transport, and lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools;
- QAA staff shortage and budget constraints that hamper QA implementation;
- Ineffective IQA processes, aggravated by budgetary constraints, under-funding of HEIs, lack of understanding of IQA, resistance to change, lack of accountability, and the high teaching load of academic staff which means little time to carry out QA activities;
- Lack of QA capacity at the institutional and national level, aggravated by 'brain drain';

- Inadequate stakeholder engagement leading to difficulties achieving buy-in from stakeholders; and
- Lack of adequate technology infrastructure to complete QA tasks.

## POTENTIAL AREAS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

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Respondents from both QAAs and HEIs called for capacity building and enhancing QA skills in their institutions and agencies. They highlighted the general lack of training in QA and the need to develop skills in QA. Respondents were asked to identify skills gaps and areas that need to be strengthened in QA in their countries. The following list indicates some potential areas identified by respondents to focus capacity building efforts:

- Increase awareness and understanding of QA, including understanding QA concepts, approaches, and processes;
- Develop and revise policies and frameworks, and create awareness and easy access to these policies and frameworks;
- Understand how QA systems work, including mechanisms and practices that can allow measurement of quality of all dimensions of HE;
- Develop specific skills related to conducting institutional audits and site visits, conducting programme reviews, setting standards, and conducting accreditation, monitoring and evaluation, conducting self-evaluations, and benchmarking;
- Design and development of QA tools for assessment, analysis of data and develop and implement improvement plans;
- Incorporate quality issues in curriculum development and evaluation, and develop capacity around teaching, assessment, and research skills;
- Research and writing skill to collect data and prepare assessment reports;
- Develop ICT skills and systems relevant to QA work; and
- Establish and manage QA units, developing and implementing internal QA systems, and internal quality management.

## POSSIBILITIES FOR INTRA-REGIONAL HARMONIZATION OF QA SYSTEMS

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The research data suggests that there are synergies between countries regarding their QA approaches, as they all focus mainly on registration, accreditation, and audits. It has also been noted that there is a strong tradition of

peer review in most countries that have accreditation and they have developed good mechanisms to ensure the independence of the process. There have been several efforts focusing on creating synergies and regional harmonization of QA systems, notably via SADC, which is currently conducting a pilot project to align QA mechanisms with the SADCQF. All respondents from the QAAs reported that they are aware of the SADCQF, with six countries participating in the pilot project. Responses about the value of the SADCQF in the HE sector were almost all positive, with benefits such as increased mobility being highlighted. It also provides an opportunity for encouraging accreditation among institutions. Respondents further emphasized their keenness to work closely with other countries in developing QA. The responses thus point to interest in, as well as specific measures towards, harmonization. However, this does create challenges. For example, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in Mauritius identified the absence of qualification frameworks in some SADC countries as a limitation. Additionally, the SADCQF has not influenced Angola's approaches and views about QA due to language limitations. This indicates possible future areas of work focussing on addressing language barriers (for example, by facilitating the creation of frameworks in multiple languages) and working with countries that do not have a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to support their development.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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All higher education systems in SADC countries have created QA systems in higher education, as evidenced by the presence of structures and systems dedicated to QA. However, countries are in different stages in implementing their QA systems, and may have different priorities. In most instances, EQA agencies adopt a combination of accreditation and audits in their approach to QA, and these are usually conducted on a cyclical basis. At the institutional level, institutions are also at various stages in implementing QA procedures, and evidence suggests that universities are engaging with IQA issues, creating institutional QA plans and implementing QA processes across the institution. There have been several significant impacts in the implementation of QA systems. These include increased political support and legislation to support national QA processes, the presence of a national QA regulatory body and a national QA framework in most countries, increasing visibility and awareness of QAAs and their work, increased knowledge and improved awareness of QA at the institutional level, and high successes with EQA processes in achieving accreditation and/or audits of institutions increased institutional compliance to EQA processes.

Respondents noted keenness to collaborate in regional initiatives, and there may thus be potential to conduct regional capacity building workshops, or specific projects fostering the sharing of ideas and plans. Given this, the following recommendations are made to further develop national systems and develop capacity in QA:

- The alignment of national QA frameworks to the SADCQF necessitates that countries have a QA framework, and thus efforts can focus on fostering the development and/or improvement in frameworks to facilitate the alignment process.
- QAAs would benefit from capacity building focusing on managing their inputs (strategic management and planning processes, aligning budgets with activities, and so on). To improve their effectiveness, it may also be useful for these agencies themselves to undergo an evaluation of their operations and management to streamline their processes.
- All countries have some sort of national QA systems, but some are more developed than others. It may thus be useful to create a mechanism that would allow countries to share information, and look at how others have addressed certain issues. There may thus be merit in creating data 'dashboards' that can be used to enable rapid comparison of QA practices across the region.
- Given that an area of capacity identified relates to understanding QA concepts, it may be worthwhile considering developing simple practical guides to assist those new to QA to understand processes. These could then be tailored by country QAAs to suit their needs and contexts.

Future research might focus on the following:

- 1) Increasing the sample of HEIs to obtain a more representative sample of IQA practices in SADC. Extended research would enable construction of a bigger and more representative sample, while covering a full spectrum of diversity of institutional types. Widening the base of the IQA research would provide valuable guidance to SAQAN and all EQAs in the region, as well as to universities themselves.
- 2) The survey instruments focused on a first, high-level and descriptive assessment of IQA and EQA activities in the region. Building on this initial dataset, there may be value in a second round of questions, focused on a deeper level of analysis of QA practices.
- 3) While QAAs and HEIs may engage in various activities or interventions to improve quality, it is unclear how effective these have been in leading to improvements in quality. This is a major gap

because many QA practices are being replicated across countries and institutions without a strong evidence base to justify their implementation. Equally, it is essential for both QAAs and HEIs to be able to make informed decisions regarding what QA practices are most likely to have a positive effect on the student's educational experience. It may thus be useful to conduct longitudinal studies researching the effectiveness of QA activities and interventions.

- 4) The current study did not place much focus on regional harmonization. To probe the possibilities for intra-regional harmonization in the SADC, future research could focus on identifying criteria for harmonization and consider the economic, political, and socio-political landscape that may shape or influence implementation of harmonization initiatives.



A stylized white outline map of the African continent is centered on a solid tan background. The map shows the major landmasses of Africa, including the continent and Madagascar. The word "INTRODUCTION" is printed in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically over the map.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) jointly developed the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) programme, which offers two main programme components, training courses and dialogue events. These foster the competencies of academic staff and contribute to the enhancement of institutional management at universities in developing countries. DAAD/DIES recognizes that Southern African countries are currently working on strengthening their national quality assurance (QA) systems and on harmonizing standards and structures regionally through the Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) and the African Union's (AU) Pan-African QA and Accreditation Framework. DAAD/DIES is considering working on supporting these QA efforts through regional capacity building, but this requires sound information about the state of quality assurance in the region. It thus commissioned Neil Butcher and Associates to conduct a research study to provide sound information about the state of QA in the region as a basis for future work of DAAD/DIES and the regional and national partners. This report presents the findings of the research exercise.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Objectives

The key aim of the research was to gain an understanding of existing QA frameworks in the region. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- 1) Describe the status quo of existing systems of external quality assurance (EQA) and internal quality assurance (IQA) in higher education systems in SADC countries.
- 2) Undertake an assessment to:
  - a) Critically analyse existing systems using a comparative perspective;
  - b) Concisely present the most significant documented impacts of the implementation of different systems; and
  - c) Identify areas in need of future capacity building efforts.
- 3) Make concrete and practical recommendations:
  - a) For the development of national systems, taking developments at regional and international levels into account;
  - b) For capacity building activities in higher education institutions (IQA) and Ministries/Higher Education Commissions/QA Agencies (EQA).

### Research Questions

The key research questions that frame the research are:

- What types of external QA system already exist in all SADC member states?
- How do higher education institutions (HEIs) in SADC organize their IQA?
- What are the defined purposes of the systems?
- What are the roles of individual stakeholders in the existing QA systems?
- What are the needs, demands and priorities of the individual stakeholders?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing systems in the SADC region?
- What are the potential areas for future capacity building on EQA and IQA?
- Are there commonalities among the systems that might allow for intra-regional harmonization?

The research sought to cover QA systems in all SADC countries, viz. Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

To understand the status quo, an initial desktop review exercise was undertaken. This sought to identify and describe quality assurance practices in each of the 15 SADC member countries. Additionally, more in-depth research was conducted via questionnaires. These sought to understand the systems of internal and external quality assurance in higher education, focused on needs, demands and priorities in QA in each country. Three separate questionnaires were prepared for:

- QA agencies (QAAs) or Ministries of Education (MoEs) responsible for QA (where there was not a separate QA body in the country);
- Higher education institutions (public and private);
- Experts/consultants who have worked on QA in Africa.

Draft questionnaires were disseminated to DAAD, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa, and the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) for feedback and comment. They were then finalized based on feedback received.

Convenience sampling was used. Questionnaire respondents were identified from the desktop search, and relevant contacts were received from the CHE in South Africa and from DAAD. Questionnaires were disseminated to the following institutions:

Table 1 Survey sample

Country	QAA	HEI
Angola	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação, Acreditação e Reconhecimento de Estudos do Ensino Superior (Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education/INAAREES)	Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos Universidade Katyvala Bwila Catholic University of Angola Jean Piaget University of Angola
Botswana	Botswana Qualifications Authority	University of Botswana Botswana International University of Science and Technology Botho University Limkokwing University
Democratic Republic of Congo	Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (CONAQ)	Université de Lubumbashi Université de Goma Hope University of Congo Université Catholique de Bukavu Université Officielle de Bukavu
Lesotho	Council on Higher Education	National University of Lesotho
Madagascar	Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research	Université d' Mahajanga Université d' Antananarivo
Malawi	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)	University of Malawi Mzuzu University Catholic University of Malawi Malawi Assemblies of God University Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
Mauritius	Tertiary Education Commission	University of Mauritius Open University of Mauritius
Mozambique	National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ)	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane Universidade Lurio Universidade São Tomás de Moçambique Universidade Wutivi Universidade Pedagógica
Namibia	Namibia Qualification Authority	University of Namibia Namibia University of Science and Technology
Seychelles	Seychelles Qualifications Authority	University of the Seychelles
South Africa	Council on Higher Education	University of Cape Town Durban University of Technology (DUT) Milpark Education Management College of South Africa University of Limpopo

Country	QAA	HEI
Swaziland	Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC)	University of Swaziland
Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)	University of Dar-es-Salaam Ardhi University St. Augustine University of Tanzania Hubert Kairuki Memorial University
Zambia	Higher Education Authority (HEA)	University of Zambia Copperbelt University Northrise University University of Africa
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education	Women's University in Africa

Questionnaires were received from the following:

Table 2 Questionnaires received

Country	QAA	HEI
Angola	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação, Acreditação e Reconhecimento de Estudos do Ensino Superior (Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education/INAAREES)	Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos
Botswana	Botswana Qualification Authority	Botswana International University of Science and Technology Botho University
Democratic Republic of Congo	Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualite (CONAQ)	Université de Goma
Lesotho	Council on Higher Education	
Madagascar		
Malawi	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE)	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources <sup>1</sup>
Mauritius	Tertiary Education Commission	University of Mauritius

<sup>1</sup> Presentation received - Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

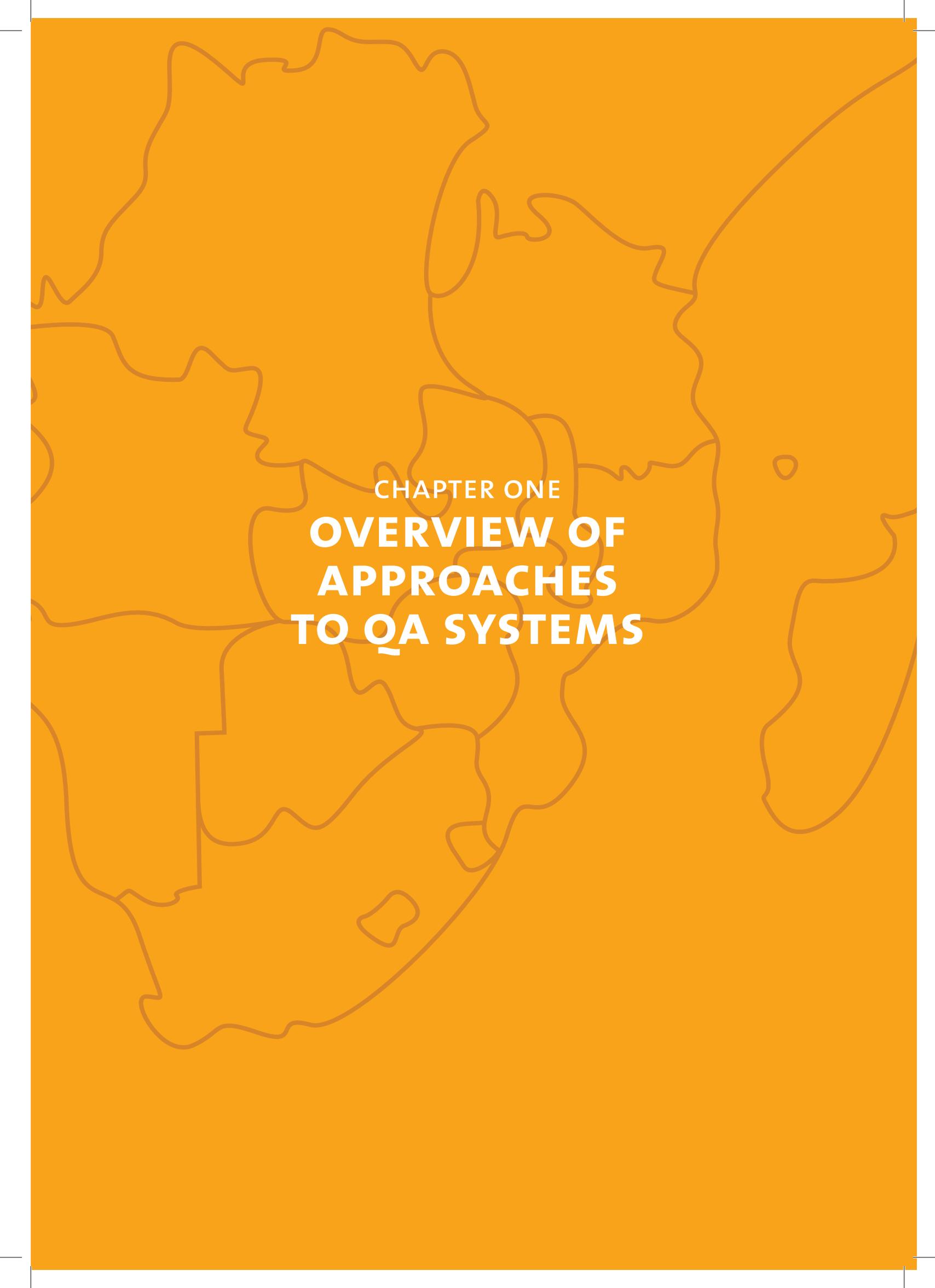
Country	QAA	HEI
Mozambique	National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ)	Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique Wutivi University
Namibia	Namibia Qualification Authority	Namibia University of Science and Technology University of Namibia
Seychelles	Seychelles Qualifications Authority	University of Seychelles
South Africa	Council on Higher Education (CHE)	University of Cape Town Milpark Education
Swaziland	Swaziland Qualification Authority	University of Swaziland
Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)	St Augustine University of Tanzania
Zambia	Higher Education Authority	
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education	Catholic University of Zimbabwe Lupane State University

Additionally, two responses were received from consultants.

At a regional workshop, in October 2017, on 'Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance in the SADC', held in Pretoria in South Africa and jointly hosted by DAAD, DIES and the CHE, preliminary findings from this study were presented. Additionally, some brief conversations were held, mainly to discuss feedback on the draft report. Furthermore, participants who were in the study's sample list were reminded to complete the questionnaires on behalf of their countries or institutions, and this resulted in some additional questionnaires being received both during and after the workshop.

Country reports were prepared, primarily based on the questionnaire responses received from QAAs and HEIs. These are presented in the appendices. Each of these country reports was shared with respondents to the survey for verification.





CHAPTER ONE  
**OVERVIEW OF  
APPROACHES  
TO QA SYSTEMS**

QA has always been important, originally in business but now also in education and other public services sectors. QA is used by governments and HEIs worldwide to manage and promote quality of higher education delivery.

The concept of 'quality' is elusive, because it expresses a relative, though noticeable, difference between one thing and another. Within a business setting, the philosophy in the last 60 years focused on training employees to prevent problems, strengthen organizational systems, and continually improving performance. In public service areas such as health and education,

*The philosophy was based on a 'watchdog' approach, relying on government controls, professional credentials, internal audits, and, more recently, external inspections to maintain standards, weed out poor performers, and solve problems.*<sup>2</sup>

While the concept of QA is not new, the range of terminology and methodologies now used to define, develop, and apply it are growing. There are many different perceptions of what is meant by quality in higher education. The term QA can also mean different things in different national and regional contexts.

QA has been introduced in many HE systems worldwide in the last two or three decades as an instrument to make universities' achievements in HE visible and comparable. QA frameworks set common standards and guidelines, which, in turn, create mutual trust for stakeholders (for example regional labour markets and employers) in the quality of the programmes provided and degrees awarded by HEIs in countries.<sup>3</sup>

QA can refer to all forms of internal and external quality monitoring, evaluation, or systematic review of educational programmes to ensure that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, and infrastructure are being maintained. The terms 'quality assurance' and 'quality control' are often used interchangeably to refer to ways of ensuring the quality of a product or a service. However, they do have different meanings.

- Quality assurance is usually process-oriented, with the focus being on preventing a defect<sup>4</sup> and thus on the process of managing for quality.<sup>5</sup>
- Quality control is usually product-oriented, with the focus on identifying defects<sup>6</sup> and thus on verifying the quality of the output.<sup>7</sup>

In industry and organizations, both quality assurance and quality control are usually essential in achieving success. If there is only quality assurance, then, while there is a set of processes that can be applied to ensure great quality in delivered solutions, the solution itself is never actually quality-checked. Similarly, if the focus is only on quality control, this may not drive improvement into the means used to deliver solutions.<sup>8</sup> The most commonly used criterion for quality in HE is 'fitness for purpose'. This refers to the relevance and responsiveness of HE to national and societal needs.

## ACCREDITATION, ASSESSMENT, AND AUDIT

Literature indicates that there are three main approaches to QA in higher education: accreditation, assessment, and audit.

*Accreditation and evaluation (which includes assessment and audit) differ in their perspectives. Both accreditation and assessment monitor the quality of teaching and learning, while audit focuses on internal procedures adopted by a HEI in order to achieve its objectives.*<sup>9</sup>

Accreditation focuses on whether a programme or institution meets a certain standard and qualifies for a certain status. There are usually implications for an HEI obtaining accreditation – for example, permission to operate or being eligible for funding. Accreditation is the main quality assurance method in the United States of America (USA) and is also frequently used in Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. Accreditation procedures can also focus on quality assurance agencies. For example, one of the tasks of the German *Akkreditierungsrat* is to accredit other agencies, while, in the USA, accrediting organizations undergo a periodic external review based on specific standards.<sup>10</sup>

2 ESIB - The National Unions of Students of Europe. (no date). European Student Handbook on Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://www.aic.lv/bologna/Bologna/contrib/ESIB/QAhandbook.pdf>

3 SHARE. (2016). State of Play and Development Needs: Higher Education Quality Assurance in the ASEAN Region. DAAD. Retrieved June 21, 2016 from <http://www.share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-21-QA-Study.pdf>

4 Diffen (no date). Quality Assurance vs Quality Control, Retrieved August 13, 2017 from [http://www.diffen.com/difference/Quality\\_Assurance\\_vs\\_Quality\\_Control](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Quality_Assurance_vs_Quality_Control)

5 Arthur, B. (2012). The Difference Between Quality Assurance and Quality Control. Open Dialog - Dialog Information Technology. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.dialog.com.au/open-dialog/the-difference-between-quality-assurance-and-quality-control>

6 Diffen (no date). Quality Assurance vs Quality Control, Retrieved August 13, 2017 from [http://www.diffen.com/difference/Quality\\_Assurance\\_vs\\_Quality\\_Control](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Quality_Assurance_vs_Quality_Control)

7 Arthur, B. (2012). The Difference Between Quality Assurance and Quality Control. Open Dialog - Dialog Information Technology. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.dialog.com.au/open-dialog/the-difference-between-quality-assurance-and-quality-control>

8 Arthur, B. (2012). The Difference Between Quality Assurance and Quality Control. Open Dialog - Dialog Information Technology. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.dialog.com.au/open-dialog/the-difference-between-quality-assurance-and-quality-control>

9 Kis, V. (2005). Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>

Assessment focuses on making graded judgements about quality (going beyond the binary judgements of accreditation), with the focus being on the quality of outputs. The output of an assessment is a quantitative evaluation, a grade (whether numeric, literal, or descriptive). Programme assessment is a frequently used method in Europe, mainly in Nordic, Dutch, and English-speaking countries.<sup>11</sup>

Audit, in general terms, is the evaluation of a project, a system, a process, a product, an institution, or organization in any context (audits are not necessarily related to higher education). They are most commonly linked with examinations to verify the compliance of the accounting methods used in financial statements.<sup>12</sup> In higher education, audit focuses on the extent to which an HEI achieves its own objectives and considers whether the HEI's processes are effective. The output of an audit is usually a description of the extent to which the claims of the HEI are correct.<sup>13</sup> In European discourse on quality assurance in higher education, an audit refers to 'a process for checking that procedures are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes'.<sup>14</sup> Academic audits are usually carried out at the institutional level and focus on processes implemented by HEIs to assure and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Unlike accreditation or assessment, audits do not aim at comprehensively reviewing an HEI or programme's resources and activities, nor do they directly evaluate the quality of teaching or learning. Programme audits are less common in Europe.<sup>15</sup> The term audit is only used in a few countries (such as Finland, Switzerland, and Austria), while, in the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the term 'audit' has been maligned and is no longer used by quality assurance agencies.

In a survey of twelve African countries, it was revealed that Mauritius, South Africa, and Tanzania undertake quality audits. The processes involved in institutional audits are similar to those applied in institutional accreditation and include self-assessments, peer reviews, site visits, and a written report. The assessments in both audits and accredi-

tation involve judgments about quality, capacity, outcomes, and the need for improvement. Both accreditation and audits require substantial time to carry out self-assessments (usually 12 to 18 months), the use of peer reviewers, site visits, reporting requirements, and follow-up. Both processes are also costly with regards to travel, accommodation for site visits, administrative and faculty time for self-studies and site visits, and administrative time for preparation of data and follow-up.<sup>16</sup>

The difficulty with the terms is that they are sometimes used interchangeably. Additionally, some countries may not use any of these terms. For example, in Romania, the term 'external evaluation' is used.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality assurance mechanisms have been introduced into many higher education systems since the early 1980s, beginning in industrialized countries and then moving into the developing world as higher education policy became increasingly globalized. A result of the rapid expansion and diversification of the higher education sector is that academic quality has come under greater scrutiny. One major consequence of the creation of EQA bodies has been the introduction of IQA processes at the institutional level.<sup>17</sup> The development of IQA systems by HEIs as a means of monitoring and managing quality, is regarded as one of the most important reform initiatives to address quality concerns.<sup>18</sup>

Essentially, IQA refers to the institution's mechanisms to ensure and improve its own quality, while EQA refers to the monitoring of the quality of HEIs by an external quality assurance agency, such as a national commission/council for higher education.<sup>19</sup>

10 Kis, V. (2005). Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>

11 Kastelliz, D., and Mitterauer, B. (2014). Quality Audit in the European Higher Education Area: A Comparison of Approaches. AQ Austria - Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.aq.ac.at/de/internationales/dokumente-internationales/Quality-Audit-in-Europe-2013.pdf>

12 Kastelliz, D., and Mitterauer, B. (2014). Quality Audit in the European Higher Education Area: A Comparison of Approaches. AQ Austria - Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.aq.ac.at/de/internationales/dokumente-internationales/Quality-Audit-in-Europe-2013.pdf>

13 Kis, V. (2005). Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>

14 Kastelliz, D., and Mitterauer, B. (2014). Quality Audit in the European Higher Education Area: A Comparison of Approaches. AQ Austria - Agency for

Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.aq.ac.at/de/internationales/dokumente-internationales/Quality-Audit-in-Europe-2013.pdf>

15 Kis, V. (2005). Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>

16 Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

17 Lange, L., and Kriel, L. (2017). Integrating Internal Quality Assurance at a Time of Transformation - University of the Free State, South Africa. IIEP. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/imag-es/0024/002495/249506E.pdf>

18 Martin, M., and Emeran, C. (2017). How do higher education institutions use internal quality assurance for quality improvement? Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://era.ideasonerurope.eu/2017/08/04/higher-education-institutions-use-internal-quality-assurance-quality-improvement/>

Martin and Stella (2007) define internal and external quality assurance as follows:

*Internal quality assurance refers to the policies and mechanisms implemented in an institution or programme to ensure that it is fulfilling its own purposes and meeting the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline in particular. External quality assurance refers to the actions of an external body, which may be a quality assurance agency or body other than the institution that assesses its operation or that of its programmes, in order to determine whether it is meeting the agreed or predetermined standards.*<sup>20</sup>

EQA thus refers to the complete range of quality monitoring and quality assurance procedures that are undertaken by bodies outside of academic institutions. Most often, this is a national quality assurance body, but they may also be regional or international bodies.

In Europe, EQA refers to assessment exercises, which are typically carried out by peer reviewers from universities other than the one under assessment and usually managed by an appointed QA agency. In many European cases, these agencies are eligible to award accreditation for individual study programmes (or quality management systems) based on the results of the peer reviews. The generic nature and non-binding character of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) seem to be important success factors in the European context.<sup>21</sup>

The International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP), in coordination with the International Association of Universities (IAU), conducted an international survey to understand the purpose, orientation, structures, tools and processes, drivers, and obstacles of IQA practices in HEIs worldwide. The research project revealed that, in the institutions examined, IQA has initiated several reforms, particularly in the domain of teaching and learning, that have generally improved the coherence of study programmes and their alignment with labour market needs. In addition, as an IQA effect, management processes were streamlined

and better integrated with data analysis and evaluation.<sup>22</sup> The research data also found several common factors for success, although they largely depend on the context of each individual institution and modes of implementation. Overall, participating universities agreed that leadership support, stakeholder involvement, IQA integrated with strategic planning, and an effective management information system were important. The effectiveness of IQA systems also depended heavily on the extent to which students and staff were aware of and involved in their processes and tools.<sup>23</sup>

Those arguing for increasing IQA processes (with some external auditing) focus on how quality assessment should become part of an institution's standard management cycle. In this way, quality can be continually improved through each cycle and a quality culture can be developed within the institution. It is argued that this approach is far more likely to lead to long term quality improvements than external assessments which can encourage 'window dressing' and 'game playing'.<sup>24</sup>

Both EQA and IQA can be regarded as steering instruments, with the optimum balance between necessary accountability and the autonomy of individual HEIs still to be found.<sup>25</sup>

Related to the tension between internal and external quality assurance (or a combination) are decisions about how quality assurance results should be reported, particularly whether reporting should be a public exercise or a confidential process of providing feedback to institutions. While possible concerns that might be raised with public reporting are noted, overall, there seems to be consensus among many authors that public reporting does carry benefits. Accountability and provision of information to prospective students are an important benefit of public reporting. For example, Stella (2004) reports that the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India made a conscious decision for public disclosure, with careful procedures to ensure that reporting is accurate, rather than confidential. It was noted that, increasingly, stakeholders were using these reports to inform their decisions.<sup>26</sup>

19 Nkunya, M.H.H. (2012). Higher Education Regulatory Systems: Role of Universities and External Agencies. Presented at PULSAR Programme for University Leadership in the SADC Region organized by SARUA, Johannesburg, South Africa, 9 – 13 July 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from [http://www.sarua.org/files/PULSAR/Presentations/120713\\_Prof%20Nkunya\\_SARUA%20PULSAR%20Workshop-July%202012.ppt](http://www.sarua.org/files/PULSAR/Presentations/120713_Prof%20Nkunya_SARUA%20PULSAR%20Workshop-July%202012.ppt)

20 Martin, M., and Stella, A. (2007). External quality assurance in higher education: making choices (85). Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001520/152045e.pdf>

21 SHARE. (2016). State of Play and Development Needs: Higher Education Quality Assurance in the ASEAN Region. DAAD. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.share-asean.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/2016-04-21-QA-Study.pdf>

22 Martin, M., and Emeran, C. (2017). How do higher education institutions use internal quality assurance for quality improvement? Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://era.ideasonerurope.eu/2017/08/04/higher-education->

[institutions-use-internal-quality-assurance-quality-improvement/](http://era.ideasonerurope.eu/2017/08/04/higher-education-institutions-use-internal-quality-assurance-quality-improvement/)

23 Martin, M., and Emeran, C. (2017). How do higher education institutions use internal quality assurance for quality improvement? Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://era.ideasonerurope.eu/2017/08/04/higher-education-institutions-use-internal-quality-assurance-quality-improvement/>

24 Harvey, L. (2002). The End of Quality? Quality in Higher Education, 8(1), 5-22; Stephenson, S. L. (2004). Saving quality from Quality Assurance. Perspectives, 8(3), 62-67; Brennan, J., and Shah, T. (2000). Managing Quality in Higher Education. An International Perspective on Institutional Assessment and Change. Buckingham: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

25 Lange, L., and Kriel, L. (2017). Integrating Internal Quality Assurance at a Time of Transformation - University of the Free State, South Africa. IIEP. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002495/249506E.pdf>

## INSTITUTIONAL AND PROGRAMME LEVEL QA

Quality is most commonly assessed at an institutional or programme level. At the institutional level, the focus tends to be on mission, governance, effective management, academic programmes, teaching staff, learning resources, students and related services, physical facilities, and financial resources:

*Institutional EQA investigates whether the mission and objectives of an HEI are appropriate, whether its resources and processes are appropriate to achieve them (under fitness for purpose approach), or whether certain standards are attained. Institutional EQA looks at the institution as a system of which academic programmes are a part. Therefore, it needs to be relatively generic and pay less attention to the differences in objectives and performance among the different institutional subunits. Institutional EQA may be the preferred option in a system where quality varies widely between institutions, and when institutional management is rather weak. It may thus be a good means to strengthen the management capacity of an HEI.<sup>27</sup>*

Programmatic level EQA takes individual programmes as the unit of analysis. Martin and Stella (2007) note that, since each programme has a specific curriculum, policy on student recruitment, standards and criteria, and requirements related to the national qualifications framework of the specific country, it makes sense to focus on assessing the quality of individual programmes rather than groups of programmes. Further, many institutions and/or faculties offer programmes of varying quality which cannot be assessed through an institutional level quality assessment:

*Programmatic EQA is thus a strong tool by which to address issues of deficient quality at the level where improvement decisions have to be made – i.e. the department.<sup>28</sup>*

The importance of assessing quality of programmes notwithstanding, several institutional-level factors are likely to influence quality at a programme level and should be considered during programmatic EQA. For this reason, Martin and Stella conclude that:

*Both types of EQA are thus interwoven. Institutional EQA cannot be conducted without looking at programmes, but programmatic EQA needs to look into the broader institutional environment (Martin and Stella, 2007, p. 58).*

In Africa, most countries focus on institutional QA.<sup>29</sup> In some contexts, professional associations play a role in QA at the programme level. Such associations may possess a tradition of programme accreditation for their professions, and these costs are usually borne by the associations. In some countries, their mandates overlap with those of existing national QA agencies. Their involvement comes in three forms:

- 1) Accreditation of professional study programmes in tertiary institutions (for example, Nigeria and South Africa);
- 2) Participation in accreditation panels set up by national QA agencies (for example, Nigeria, Ghana, and Tanzania); and
- 3) Participation in curriculum review exercises (for example, Nigeria and Tanzania).

A key strength of professional associations is that their legal mandates include licensing of graduates to practise after graduation.<sup>30</sup>

Generalizations are difficult to make regarding whether programme or institutional evaluation is more suitable, as this depends on the specific objective of the exercise, as well as available resources. The advantage of an institution-wide review is that it requires fewer experts, is less time consuming, and less expensive. The disadvantages of this approach are that it includes little involvement at grassroots level, insufficient feedback at discipline level, and lack of recommendations for further curriculum improvement. The advantages of a programme-wide approach are that it allows for more depth and detail, involves individual staff members, and results in feedback from the committee and recommendations for improvement. The disadvantage is that this approach is more time-consuming and expensive than institutional review.<sup>31</sup>

26 Stella, A. (2004). External Quality Assurance in Indian Higher Education: Developments of a decade. *Quality in Higher Education*, 10(2), 115-263.

27 Martin, M., and Stella, A. (2007). External quality assurance in higher education: making choices (85). Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001520/152045e.pdf>

28 Martin, M., and Stella, A. (2007). External quality assurance in higher education: making choices (85). Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning. Retrieved August 24, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001520/152045e.pdf>

29 Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan

Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

30 Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

31 Kis, V. (2005). Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education: Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <https://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>

## VOLUNTARY VERSUS COMPULSORY SYSTEMS

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An important consideration in a QA system is considering whether it should be compulsory or voluntary. To a large extent, whether QA is mandatory or voluntary depends on the objectives the QA agency wishes to achieve:

*In general, when quality assurance is meant as an accountability or quality control mechanism, and thus refers to minimum standards, it is made mandatory, at least for the set of institutions or programmes that need quality control (that need to demonstrate accountability). The quality assurance processes that go beyond regulatory purposes, and have self-improvement or quality enhancement of the HEIs as their primary objective tend to have a voluntary approach to quality assurance.<sup>32</sup>*

Compulsory systems periodically require all institutions or programmes to undergo accreditation at specified cycles, with the focus of verifying minimum standards. Such systems are often established for licensing purposes or for types of programmes where stakeholders (particularly government) have a special interest in quality assurance.

Some QA systems are voluntary, so institutions and programmes are not obliged to participate. The incentive for institutions to participate is to achieve a special status (be accredited, quality approved), which would give them an advantage in a context where there is competition for students or access to funding. The rationale is that such a system will create an impetus for all, or the majority of, institutions to participate. Voluntary systems are usually related to a policy agenda of quality improvement, as institutions can decide whether to join the process.<sup>33</sup>

There are several other issues that QA in HE raises, for example, accountability (most often served by accreditation), continuous improvement, a QA agency-driven top-down approach to QA versus institutional self-regulation, rankings, and developing quantifiable metrics to measure quality. However, other than identifying some of these issues, it is beyond the scope of this paper to outline and discuss all of them.

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<sup>32</sup> Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). (2006). Enhancement of Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education in APEC Member Economies. Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://hrd.apec.org/images/ff5/80.1.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Martin, M., and Stella, A. (2007). External Quality Assurance in higher education: making choices. UNESCO: Paris. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001520/152045e.pdf>







CHAPTER TWO  
**OVERVIEW OF  
APPROACHES  
TO QA IN SADC  
COUNTRIES**

The establishment of quality assurance mechanisms in Africa was precipitated by various factors. A rise in the number of private higher education institutions led to concerns about the declining quality of higher education, resulting in a need to regulate their activities. At first, most QA agencies were only responsible for private institutions, but several now take responsibility for the entire higher education system.<sup>34</sup>

## REGIONAL QA INITIATIVES

Globalization has promoted the creation of regional common market blocks (for example, the European Union or EU, AU, SADC, East African Community, and so on). In education, these regional bodies have focused on the need for appropriate frameworks for harmonization of education systems and mutual recognition of qualifications to facilitate free movement of, amongst others, human capital, students, study programmes, and education providers. They have also focused on enhancing regional collaboration in education delivery and cross-border education systems for promoting regional integration requiring harmonized regional systems of higher education, frameworks for quality assurance based on benchmarking, and accreditation systems.<sup>35</sup>

In QA, the SADC region has recently seen the development of the SADCQF, which was established in 2011 by Ministers of Education. Its purpose is to facilitate easier movement of learners and workers across SADC and internationally:

*The SADCQF is a reference framework consisting of 10 Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) Levels based on learning outcomes which will provide a regional benchmark for qualifications and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms in SADC. Member States are encouraged to align their qualifications and QA mechanisms with the SADCQF. Alignment will be enabled by mutual trust and recognition of achievement at a regional level. It is also envisaged that regional alignment would enable individuals to make comparisons of their learning and competence levels and would reduce unnecessary duplication of learning and effort when moving through SADC for study or work purposes.<sup>36</sup>*

The SADCQF is implemented by the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA). Currently, pilot countries are conducting self-assessment to position their countries to align with the Framework. The SADCQF encourages SADC countries to have good QA mechanisms and links up with regional QA bodies. The Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) has nominated two QA experts to assist the TCCA with SADCQF implementation. Plans include monitoring SADC countries' QA mechanisms and assisting them to align with the SADC QA guidelines.<sup>37</sup>

The Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) is a voluntary-membership organization open to all Southern African countries. Membership is open to national quality assurance agencies/bodies, ministries responsible for higher and tertiary education, higher education institutions, academic associations, universities student associations, employers' associations, and other interested stakeholders.<sup>38</sup> SAQAN was launched in Botswana in 2015 and key to its existence is to transform higher education quality and allow members access to global best practices through interaction. The secretariat of SAQAN is currently the Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA), with Zimbabwe Higher Education Council being the chairperson. The BQA has encouraged local educational and training providers and other stakeholders to affiliate with SAQAN. The third SAQAN regional conference held in South Africa highlighted the need for 'collaboration, networking and alignment to ensure regionally and internationally competitive qualifications/graduands.' The conference also encouraged quality assurance and qualifications authorities to collaborate with each other, including making available and sharing databases of good practices. SAQAN therefore has a key role to play in regional harmonization initiatives.<sup>39</sup>

The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) has been instrumental in driving research on quality assurance in SADC. Founded in 2005, SARUA is a membership-based organization that is open to all public universities of SADC countries. It was established to assist in the 'revitalisation and development of the leadership and institutions of higher education in the southern African region, thus enabling the regional higher education sector to meaningfully respond to the developmental challenges facing the region.'<sup>40</sup> SARUA currently has 57 members.

34 Langa, P. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Commissions in Africa: A Case Study of the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ). CHET, South Africa  
 35 Nkunya, M.H.H. (2012). Higher Education Regulatory Systems: Role of Universities and External Agencies. Presented at PULSAR Programme for University Leadership in the SADC Region organized by SARUA, Johannesburg, South Africa, 9 – 13 July 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from [http://www.sarua.org/files/PULSAR/Presentations/120713\\_Prof%20Nkunya\\_SARUA%20PULSAR%20Workshop-July%202012.ppt](http://www.sarua.org/files/PULSAR/Presentations/120713_Prof%20Nkunya_SARUA%20PULSAR%20Workshop-July%202012.ppt)  
 36 Jaftha, C., and Samuels, J. (2017). SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) - Building trust for better movement. Retrieved September 11, 2017 from <http://www.saqqa.org.za/docs/webcontent/2017/Article%20about%20the%20SADCQF.pdf>

37 Jaftha, C., and Samuels, J. (2017). SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) - Building trust for better movement. Retrieved September 11, 2017 from <http://www.saqqa.org.za/docs/webcontent/2017/Article%20about%20the%20SADCQF.pdf>  
 38 The Monitor. (2016). Stakeholders, Educationists Encouraged to Join SAQAN. Retrieved September 11, 2017 from <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=64408&dir=2016/november/07>  
 39 The Monitor News Article. Stakeholders, educationists encouraged to join SAQAN (2016). Retrieved October 23, 2017 from <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=64408&dir=2016/november/07>  
 40 The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) website. About us. Retrieved October 22, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/?q=content/about-us>

There are also several notable initiatives at other regional levels. One such initiative is a project focussing on enhancing quality assurance in West and Central Africa (EWAQAS). DAAD implemented a DIES project on quality assurance in West and Central Africa in collaboration with African partner organisations viz, the Association of African Universities (AAU), Conseil Africain et Malagache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education/CAMES), and Union Economique et Monétaire de l'ouest Africaine (West African Monetary Union/UEMOA) and UNESCO. The project involves training courses and dialogue events for different target groups in both English- and French-speaking countries in West and Central Africa. On behalf of the DAAD, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP UNESCO) offers a distance education course on external quality assurance.<sup>41</sup> The activities include training on external QA for 50 experts via blended learning; multi-module training course on internal QA for 50 participants in English and French speaking West African countries; networking and dissemination via participation in conferences and stakeholder meetings. UNESCO has also signed an agreement with CAMES focussing on developing joint efforts for advocacy and capacity-building in QA of HE with a focus on developing good practices and collaborating with similar bodies in other regions of Africa and around the world.<sup>42</sup> Several Francophone countries are also making strides in their QA efforts. For example, Senegal, with support from UNESCO and the World Bank, has recently created a QA agency, and other countries – including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Cabo Verde, and Niger – are in the process of creating and implementing policies. These activities are supported by IIEP and key partners to enhance the quality of higher education in the region.<sup>43</sup>

In East Africa, another DIES project is being implemented as a partnership between DAAD, the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA - a regional inter-government body for five East African countries; viz: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi) and national bodies to strengthen the quality of higher education and harmonization of the higher education system in East Africa. The activities include developing a QA handbook; training experts; building networks and disseminating results within the East African Quality Assurance Network, EAQAN (a network developed within the project, in cooperation with IUCEA); developing QA benchmarks in different subjects;

and developing a QA framework. Additionally, several collaborative workshops have been held by the IUCEA, with the support of DAAD. DAAD continues to support EAQAN by sending experts to their annual forum.

At the continental level, there have been various initiatives to improve quality in African HE. One such example is<sup>44</sup> the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN), which was established in 2009 to assist institutions concerned with QA in higher education in Africa. AfriQAN aims to serve as the coordinator of quality assurance in higher education for the continent, and has its Secretariat at the Association of African Universities (AAU) in Ghana. Membership comprises of National Regulatory Agencies (NRAs), HEIs, and relevant government ministries of higher education. The Network was set up by the AAU with financial support from Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) and UNESCO.<sup>45</sup>

Another example of an initiative at the continental level is the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative. This initiative, funded by the European Union in partnership with the African Union, was established to support the development of a harmonized quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level. The Initiative is currently being implemented by a consortium consisting of the University of Barcelona (coordinator), the Association of African Universities (AAU), the European University Association (EUA), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and DAAD.<sup>46</sup>

The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA) have been developed within the frame of the HAQAA project. A draft document has been prepared that is currently under consultation. The ASG-QA constitutes a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. According to the draft document, these standards are not prescriptive but are developed as a roadmap for quality attainment in African higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies. The ASG-QA aims to support higher education institutions and QA agencies in Africa to:

41 DAAD. (no date). DIES projects. Retrieved December 13, 2017 from <https://www.daad.de/der-daad/unsere-aufgaben/entwicklungszusammenarbeit/foerderprogramme/hochschulen/infos/en/44515-dies-projects/>

42 UNESCO. (no date). UNESCO-CAMES sign higher education partnership agreement. Retrieved December 13, 2017 from <https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-cames-sign-higher-education-partnership-agreement>

43 The International Institute for Educational Planning. Latest News: Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2014). Retrieved October 22, 2017 from <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/quality-assurance-higher-education-2659>

44 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

45 AfriQAN. (no date). Homepage. Retrieved September 11, 2017 from <https://afriqan.aau.org/>

46 HAQAA Initiative. (no date). About the HAQAA Initiative. Retrieved December 13, 2017 from <https://haqaa.aau.org/>

- 1) Have a common framework and understanding of quality assurance systems for teaching and learning among all stakeholders at continental, regional, and national levels;
- 2) Develop mutual trust, thus facilitate recognition and mobility of students and human resources within and across national borders of the continent;
- 3) Ensure quality improvement/ enhancement in higher education in the continent through self-assessment, external peer review, and continuous monitoring and evaluation;
- 4) Promote transparency and accountability by providing appropriate information on quality assurance to the public;
- 5) Support higher education institutions to develop a sustainable quality culture; and
- 6) Promote international competitiveness of Africa's higher education system.<sup>47</sup>

At the regional workshop on 'Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance in the SADC', held in Pretoria in South Africa, some aspects of the ASG-QA initiative were shared by the Chair of the Technical Working Group. Among them were challenges experienced in drafting the ASG-QA, which included the incorporation of ODL, deciding on the number of standards, trying to simplify the document to avoid too much detail, translation challenges, and challenges in incorporating all comments.<sup>48</sup>

Other initiatives worth mentioning is the International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (IC-QAHEA), now in its 9th year, which seeks to address QA concerns in African HE; and the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), implemented by the AAU, which encourages higher education institutions to assess their performance on a voluntary basis against a set of established criteria.<sup>49</sup>

## PRESENCE OF QA BODIES IN SADC COUNTRIES

Higher education systems in SADC countries recognize that their countries need some form of QA, as evidenced by the presence of structures and systems dedicated to QA. These may be in the form of dedicated QA bodies or sub-divisions within HE ministries focused on QA. Desktop search revealed that all 15 SADC countries have a body/unit that addresses QA. National QA agencies (national councils or commissions) display varying forms and status in different contexts, depending on the prevailing mechanisms of higher education governance and coordination. In most cases, they are incorporated into government structures (national QA agencies). In some, such as South Africa and Mauritius, they are constituted largely as professional agencies with relative autonomy from government. The level of autonomy of these bodies also differs. For example, the Commission for Universities (TCU) in Tanzania displays a much greater degree of institutional autonomy than the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance (CNAQ), which reflects a long legacy of centralized governance in Mozambique. The TCU could be described as a semiautonomous national QA agency.<sup>50</sup> In some countries, there is more than one body responsible for QA; one may focus, for example, on assessments and audit, while the other may focus on accreditation.

The table below outlines the QA bodies in the 15 SADC countries.

47 African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA). Draft document (March 2017). Retrieved September 29, 2017 from [http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/HAQAA\\_ASQQA\\_draft\\_310517\\_EN.pdf](http://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/HAQAA_ASQQA_draft_310517_EN.pdf)

48 Odongo, R. (2017). Presentation made at Regional Workshop. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (ASG-QA), 9-10 October 2017

49 Association of African Universities. (2017). The African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) Institutional Evaluations – Call for Higher Education

Institutions to Participate. Retrieved December 13, 2017 from <https://blog.aau.org/african-quality-rating-mechanism-aqrm-institutional-evaluations-call-higher-education-institutions-participate/>

50 Cross, M., Khossa, E., Persson, V., and Sesabo, J.K. (2015). Assessment of quality assurance systems for postgraduate programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique. Sida. Retrieved September 8, 2017 from <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf>

Table 3 Quality assurance bodies in SADC countries

Country	QA agency or similar body (with link to the website where existing)
Angola	Instituto Nacional de Avaliação, Acreditação e Reconhecimento de Estudos do Ensino Superior (INAAREES) Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education
Botswana	Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA)
Democratic Republic of Congo	Coordination Nationale d'Assurance Qualité (CONAQ) National Quality Assurance Agency
Lesotho	Council on Higher Education (CHE)
Madagascar	Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique (ME-SUPRES) Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Malawi	National Council for Higher Education
Mauritius	Tertiary Education Commission Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA)
Mozambique	Conselho Nacional de Avaliação da Qualidade do Ensino Superior (CNAQ) National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education
Namibia	National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) Namibia Qualification Authority (NQA)
Seychelles	Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA)
South Africa	Council on Higher Education (CHE)
Swaziland	Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC)
Tanzania	Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU)
Zambia	Higher Education Authority (HEA)
Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE)

The following countries have national standards and guidelines for QA:

Table 4 Standards and guidelines for QA per country

Country	National Standards/ Guidelines	Name of Guidelines and link
Angola		Formal QA system is still being developed
Botswana	✓	2009 QA manual of the Tertiary Education Council (TEC)
Democratic Republic of Congo	✓	Referentiel d'Evaluation Institutionnelle (Institutional Evaluation). Draft document produced by QAA but not yet signed off by government
Lesotho	✓	Institutional Audit Framework for Higher Education <a href="http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20(Final).pdf">http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20(Final).pdf</a>
Madagascar		
Malawi	✓	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Malawi's Higher Education Institutions <a href="http://www.nche.ac.mw/documents/standards_and_guidance_for_quality_assurance.pdf">http://www.nche.ac.mw/documents/standards_and_guidance_for_quality_assurance.pdf</a>
Mauritius	✓	Guidelines for the establishment of Quality Assurance Systems <a href="http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Guidelines%20Establishment%20of%20QA%20Systems.pdf">http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Guidelines%20Establishment%20of%20QA%20Systems.pdf</a> Guidelines for Self-Assessment of Academic Audit <a href="http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Guidelines%20for%20Self-Assessment%20of%20Academic%20Audit.pdf">http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Guidelines%20for%20Self-Assessment%20of%20Academic%20Audit.pdf</a> Criteria for Academic Audit <a href="http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Criteria%20for%20Academic%20Audit.pdf">http://www.tec.mu/pdf_downloads/reg&amp;guid/Criteria%20for%20Academic%20Audit.pdf</a>
Mozambique	✓	External Evaluation Manual <a href="http://cnaq.bd.co.mz/Repositorio/3_%20Manual_Avaliacao_Externa.pdf">http://cnaq.bd.co.mz/Repositorio/3_%20Manual_Avaliacao_Externa.pdf</a> Map of indicators, standards and verification criteria <a href="http://cnaq.bd.co.mz/Repositorio/Mapa_indicadores.docx">http://cnaq.bd.co.mz/Repositorio/Mapa_indicadores.docx</a>
Namibia	✓	Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia <a href="http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystem-forhighereducationinnamibia_000.pdf">http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystem-forhighereducationinnamibia_000.pdf</a>
Seychelles	✓	Quality Assurance Manual of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority, 30 May 2011 <a href="http://www.sqa.sc/resources/NQF%20Documents/QAManual.pdf">http://www.sqa.sc/resources/NQF%20Documents/QAManual.pdf</a>
South Africa	✓	A Framework for Qualification Standards in Higher Education <a href="http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Framework_November2011.pdf">http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Framework_November2011.pdf</a>

Country	National Standards/ Guidelines	Name of Guidelines and link
Swaziland	✓	Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Programmes <a href="http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/REGULATIONS-PART-III---ACCREDITATION.pdf">http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/REGULATIONS-PART-III---ACCREDITATION.pdf</a> Programme Evaluation Guidelines <a href="http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/Programme-evaluation-guidelines-5.pdf.pdf">http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/Programme-evaluation-guidelines-5.pdf.pdf</a> Institutional Assessment Guidelines <a href="http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/INSTITUTIONAL-ASSESSMENT-GUIDELINES2.pdf">http://www.shec.org.sz/images/docs/INSTITUTIONAL-ASSESSMENT-GUIDELINES2.pdf</a>
Tanzania	✓	Quality Assurance General Guidelines and Minimum Standards for Provision of University Education in Tanzania <a href="http://www.tcu.go.tz/images/documents/QA%20GUIDELINES%20AND%20STANDARDS.pdf">http://www.tcu.go.tz/images/documents/QA%20GUIDELINES%20AND%20STANDARDS.pdf</a>
Zambia	✓	The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Zambia <a href="http://hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads">http://hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads</a>
Zimbabwe	✓	Quality Assurance Standards for Higher Education <sup>51</sup>

## PURPOSE OF QA SYSTEMS IN THE SADC REGION

Table three above indicates that all SADC countries have a body/unit responsible for ensuring the quality of higher education in respective countries. This provides some evidence that all countries have established some EQA mechanisms at the national level.

The presence of institutional level QA is less clear, as this research was based on a small sample of universities (and thus may not adequately capture all IQA practices). However, there is evidence that some HEIs may have a dedicated office or unit to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

### EQA in HE systems in SADC countries

For EQA, different approaches are used by QAAs. In most instances, there is a combination of accreditation, audits, and other QA measures used to ensure quality. For example, in Botswana:

*The country's model of QA employs both institutional and programme accreditation at different levels. Institutional registration and accreditation is a prerequisite to programme accreditation.*<sup>52</sup>

Accreditation is the first stage in the QA process and involves a peer review mechanism using subject matter experts.<sup>53</sup> Audits are conducted at the half-life of the cycle of accreditation for Education and Training Providers (ETPs) and learning programmes. In addition to scheduled audit, the BQA undertakes investigatory audits for purposes of resolving complaints related to the delivery of learning programmes.<sup>54</sup>

In Namibia, accreditation is 'input focussed', considering what the institution has and its internal processes. Re-accreditation (audit) is evaluative. It starts with a self-evaluation report (SER) by the institution:<sup>55</sup>

*Programmes are accredited by professional bodies (where applicable) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). This is a cyclic process that happens after every six years or as may be determined by the relevant accreditation agency. Faculties may also have*

51 This document was received together with the questionnaire and is not available on the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) website.

52 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

53 Questionnaire response 2 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA).

Received October 30, 2017

54 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

55 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

*their programmes accredited by relevant reputable international accreditation agencies...NCHE is responsible for conducting institutional audits. The purpose of institutional audits is improvement. NCHE asks the University to review itself and produce a self-review report. This is followed by NCHE putting together a panel of external peers to conduct a site visit to the institution and validate claims made in the self-review report. The outcome of an institutional audit is a report with recommendations. Recommendations are converted to a self-improvement plan which identifies actions to be taken, by whom, by when, resources required, timelines, and evidence that will be in place to show that recommendations have been addressed...All our qualifications are registered on NQF housed by Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA). Before a programme is registered, UNAM must proof that the programme is relevant and that it was developed in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.<sup>56</sup>*

In Tanzania, and Malawi the focus is on institutional accreditation and audits:

*Institutional accreditation of all activities done at university, accreditation of new programmes and validation of reviewed programmes after one complete cycle of the programme...Internal and external audit of universities geared towards re-accreditation and improvement of core and supportive activities...Regional Audit guided by IUCEA.<sup>57</sup>*

*All higher education institutions (private and public) are subjected to an accreditation using accreditation framework. Institutions apply and submit self-assessment reports with applicable fees. A team of reviewers conduct the accreditation based on programmes offered... Annual audits are done where institutions submit annual reports and desk review is done. If any omissions are observed formal assessment is conducted.<sup>58</sup>*

The NCHE also does registration of institutions and programmes.

In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) conducts accreditation of institutions and programmes, as well as institutional audits:

*ZIMCHE has a set of 15 standards against which institutions intending to offer academic programmes are evaluated and accredited, if they meet these standards.*

*Similarly, institutions intending to introduce new academic programmes also submit their regulations for the proposed new programmes for review and accreditation prior to them running any such new programmes.<sup>59</sup>*

All institutions and their programmes are accredited once every five years. All institutions and their learning centres are audited in terms of their facilities, human resources, programmes, equipment, and so on to ascertain whether they meet the standards they met during accreditation. ZIMCHE also conducts assessments of foreign qualifications and compliance visits to check on institutions that operate without being registered or that may be registered but offer unaccredited programmes.<sup>60</sup>

Other countries' EQA may focus purely on accreditation. For example, the DRC Ministry of Higher Education (ESU), through its central administration, accredits institutions.<sup>61</sup> Lesotho's Council on Higher Education (CHE) reviews HEI's programmes to assess their accreditation status, registers private institutions, and conducts audits of both private and public institutions.<sup>62</sup> Mauritius has different QA processes for public and private HEIs: programme accreditation for private providers, quality audits for public universities, and monitoring visits to both public and private HEIs. In Zambia, whilst all learning programmes require accreditation; audits are limited to private HEIs to ensure that quality standards are maintained.<sup>63</sup>

Other countries have plans to implement various quality processes. For example, Angola reports that it is still in the process of developing its QA system and processes. Its plan is to focus on internal and external evaluation (audit) and accreditation. In the Seychelles, the QA approach recognizes the need for a developmental model of quality assurance, which balances the dual purposes of accountability and quality improvement. External accreditation is conducted by accreditation teams contracted by the Seychelles Qualification Authority (SQA) and acting on behalf of the Authority.

*Institutions submit an application for accreditation, following which there is a visit by SQA appointed accreditation teams to ascertain that the requirements for accreditation have been met. Following the visit, reports are written and then the final recommendation is sent to the institution. Monitoring visits are then carried out to ensure the institution maintains quality.<sup>64</sup>*

56 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

57 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

58 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

59 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

60 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher

Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

61 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

62 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

63 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

64 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

Programme validation is also done through validation sub-committees contracted by the SQA. It approves, for a specified period (three to five years), a specific education and training programme offered by an institution, leading to the award of a specific qualification to be registered on the Seychelles Qualification Framework. Whilst there is provision in the QA Manual for Institutional Audit by the SQA, this is yet to be implemented.<sup>65</sup>

In South Africa, accreditation is the basic requirement for quality. Audits serve to confirm that quality and quality mechanisms are in place:

*The philosophy and approach we are working on is far more high-level than simply accreditation and audits. It needs to trickle down from the highest institutional level. It is intended to promote good practice, share collaborative ideas, encourage reflection and self-improvement and also to look at the supporting framework that enables the entire institution to own quality and excellence.*<sup>66</sup>

Further, a developmental approach is adopted, focusing on quality enhancement and quality promotion. The CHE conducts programme accreditation, which is rigorous and peer-driven with an accountability focus. It also conducts national reviews of programmes as well as institutional audits.<sup>67</sup>

In Swaziland, external QA focuses on the establishment, registration, and accreditation of institutions, as well as programme accreditation. Before accrediting institutions/

programmes, they are subjected to an assessment using quality standards. Accreditation is the last stage that is undertaken after an HEI has been registered with SHEC. It is valid for a period of five years and upon lapse of that period, the HEI applies again for re-accreditation. An institutional audit is conducted after an institution submits a self-evaluation report. A validation meeting comprising subject matter experts is undertaken, which includes an inspection of facilities, review of HEI documentation, and interviews with key stakeholders such as management, academic staff, students and support staff. If the outcome of the assessment is positive, the HEI is granted a five-year licence to operate and upon lapse of the five years, the latter is eligible to apply for accreditation.<sup>68</sup>

In Mozambique, the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ) is responsible for accreditation. Universities request accreditation from CNAQ.<sup>69</sup>

In the DRC, the role of the QAA appears to be more supportive in nature:

*In the Democratic Republic of Congo, quality assurance is much more concentrated at the institutional level. Each Institution of higher and university education is recommended to set up an internal quality assurance unit.*<sup>70</sup>

The following table provides a summary of external QA systems:

Table 5 Type of external system in SADC member states

	Angola	Botswana	DRC	Lesotho	Madagascar	Malawi	Mauritius	Mozambique	Namibia	Seychelles	South Africa	Swaziland	Tanzania	Zambia	Zimbabwe
Accreditation		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audit		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Reviews/Evaluations				✓							✓				✓

65 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017<sup>65</sup>

66 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

67 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

68 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

69 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique. Received English version November 2, 2017

70 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

External accreditation also comes from professional bodies. For example, in Botswana, 'there is programme accreditation following the QA Agency's and Professional Bodies' requirements'.<sup>71</sup> Some institutions also seek accreditation from foreign institutions. For example, University of Seychelles reported needing to meet standards set by the University of London.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, the University of Mauritius noted that most of its Engineering Programmes are going towards accreditation with the Engineering Council of South Africa. It has also undergone institutional audits by international agencies such as the QAA UK and KPMG.<sup>73</sup>

There were also mixed responses around whether QA focuses on the institutional or programmatic level, or both. There are often different QA approaches to institutional and programmatic QA. For example, in Mauritius, registration of private education providers is done at the institutional level, and accreditation for private providers and quality audits for public universities is done at the programme level. However, in Lesotho, audits are conducted at the institutional level and accreditation is at the programme level. Similarly, in Zambia, registration and audits are done at institutional level, while accreditation is at the programme level. The following table provides an overview of the different approaches to EQA at the institutional and programmatic level:

*Table 6 Approaches to EQA at the institutional and programmatic level*

Country	Institutional level	Programmatic level	Other
Angola	In principle. Angola is still working on developing a QA policy. <sup>74</sup>	In principle. Angola is still working on developing a QA policy. <sup>75</sup>	
Botswana	Institutional registration and accreditation for all public and private providers. These are a prerequisite to programme accreditation.	Programme accreditation. Currently no National Qualifications Framework, but in process.	Assessors and moderators.
DRC	HEIs are recommended to establish an internal quality assurance unit.		
Lesotho	Institutional audits.	Programmes are reviewed for accreditation.	Private institutions are reviewed for registration
Malawi	Institutional assessment for registration and accreditation.	Programme assessment for registration and accreditation.	Ad-hoc visits are done.
Mozambique	Institutional accreditation.	Programme accreditation.	
Namibia	Accreditation	National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and evaluation of foreign qualifications and non-NQF Namibian qualifications.	

71 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

72 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

73 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

74 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

75 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

Country	Institutional level	Programmatic level	Other
Mauritius	Registration of private providers.	Programme accreditation for private providers and Quality Audit for public universities.	QA visits to private and public institutions to ensure that the institution has implemented all the recommendations made by the Regulator when the programme was first accredited (for private providers) or when the institution was first quality audit (for public universities).
Seychelles	Institutions are assisted and guided by the SQA to set up their (IQA) mechanisms and processes (work in progress). SQA conducts Institutional Accreditation of institutions.	Providers submit programmes to the SQA for programme validation.	Qualification level - Standards setting through development of unit standards for qualifications (Level 3-6) of the NQF. Evaluation/verification of qualifications.
South Africa	Audits	Programme accreditation and national reviews of programmes.	Quality promotion and enhancement.
Swaziland	Establishment of HEIs, registration of HEIs and accreditation of HEIs.	Programme accreditation.	
Tanzania	IQA, EQA.	IQA, EQA.	Regional Level guided by IUCEA.
Zambia	Registration and auditing of higher education institutions.	Accreditation.	
Zimbabwe	Institutional registration for all institutions. Academic and institutional audits.	Programme accreditation for all programmes offered or introduced by the existing institution, qualification assessment for foreign qualifications.	Student welfare and Academic Welfare.

Approaches to EQA thus focus primarily on accreditation and audits, although there are some reports of supportive visits to assist in improving HEIs. The focus appears to be primarily on ensuring compliance although there

are some reports of adopting a more developmental approach and trying to achieve a balance between accountability and quality improvement.

## IQA IN HE SYSTEMS IN SADC COUNTRIES

As indicated earlier, the presence of institutional level QA cannot be described comprehensively, as this research was based on a relatively small sample of universities in the SADC region and will therefore not reflect all IQA practices. Instead, it provides an indication of IQA practices at those universities which were respondents to the survey. From this, there is evidence that some HEIs have a dedicated office or unit to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

HEIs are also at different phases in developing their QA policies and practices. Some are still in the planning phase, for example:

*The plan is to involve representation of the entire education community and form a core working group that will take charge of the QA in their various directorates.<sup>76</sup>*

Others note that they have a detailed QA 'map' which stipulates QA procedures at every level. For example:

*As part of the QMS, the university has a global process map which indicates the entire University QA approach at a high level. Each operational step of the university is documented as a procedure or a process map which will in turn guide the operations.<sup>77</sup>*

*Our QA includes all areas of the University operation (academic and administrative). We believe that quality academic provision should be supported by quality administrative services. Our quality reviews/audits may take place at any level, i.e. whole institution, faculty, department (including administrative), programme levels.<sup>78</sup>*

St Augustine University in Tanzania notes that, for institutional re-accreditation, it prepares a self-assessment report every three years. It also conducts internal programme accreditation, using the TCU's requirements, at least once a year, to ensure that it aligns with the TCU's requirements. The university also conducts self-assessments at the departmental, faculty, and institutional levels. Faculty evaluations, performed by peers, are also conducted as a basis for improvement. Further, a graduate tracer study is used to assess the employability of graduates, relevance of the programme, and likes and dislikes of the graduates. A lecture evaluation is used to check the performance of each individual lecturer in respect of quality teaching and assessment.

Wutivi University in Mozambique and the University of Namibia referred to their institutions having university documents that describe their QA approach. A respondent from Zimbabwe also added the presence of QA committees to address QA at the institution:

*All quality assurance processes are managed by committees that have been set up in faculties, teaching departments and non-teaching departments. Composition, terms of reference and operating guidelines for each committee are clearly outlined in the Quality Assurance Policy.<sup>79</sup>*

Whilst the above-mentioned institutions highlighted formal documentation detailing QA processes, Catholic University of Zimbabwe noted that the process involved a 'workshop' at the start of the semester to gauge progress and to assess implementation over the course of the semester.

Botho University in Botswana notes that both internal and external audits of their Quality Management System (QMS) take place every semester. The QMS runs at an institutional level and covers all operations of the University. All non-academic departments/offices form part of the institutional level QMS. A programme-specific focus is part of the entire institutional QMS, but programme-level QMS is heavily benchmarked with national and international regulatory requirements. The findings of the audits are presented to the office of the Vice Chancellor and other senior members of the executive. In line with ISO 9001 requirements, other activities, such as Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reviews and management reviews, also take place. A dedicated Teaching Excellence Department exists to monitor and improve the quality of learning and teaching at the university level.<sup>80</sup>

Botswana International University of Science and Technology noted that it has set up an institution-wide policy of programme development and approval, though this is still a draft.<sup>81</sup> The respondent also noted that:

*Although the thrusts of the internal audit are on finance, it does in a great way contribute towards the QA processes of the University. Financial viability and management is a core standard in QA.<sup>82</sup>*

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) developed a QA policy that is supported by several operational guidelines. IQA covers the areas of teaching, examination, and student research.<sup>83</sup>

76 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

77 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

78 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

79 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

80 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

81 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of

Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

82 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

83 Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

The University of Namibia reported on its internal QA processes. It has an internal mechanism for cyclical reviews, which aims for continuous improvement. It follows similar procedures to NCHE external audits, the only difference being that this is internally coordinated by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM). Before a curriculum is being offered, it must go through several approval structures within the department, faculty, management committee, Faculty Board, Academic Planning Committee, and Senate. All curricula are subjected to cyclical reviews to make sure that they remain current and relevant:

*Our QA includes all areas of the University operation (academic and administrative). We believe that quality academic provision should be supported by quality administrative services. Our quality reviews/audits may take place at any level, i.e. whole institution, faculty, department (including administrative), programme levels.<sup>84</sup>*

Lupane State University in Zimbabwe has a QA Directorate in the Vice Chancellor's Office, which coordinates implementation of all QA initiatives across the University. It also has a University Quality Assurance Committee, which has representation from all units in the University and works with the Directorate in implementing the Quality Assurance Policy, as well as coordinating the activities of Faculty and Departmental Quality Assurance Committees. The University Quality Assurance Committee is a sub-committee of, and reports to, Senate. Each Department and Faculty has a Quality Assurance Committee that reviews new and existing programmes before submitting them to a Programmes Review Committee. The latter reviews all programmes before they are submitted to the Academic Board for consideration. After the Academic Board review, programmes are submitted to ZIMCHE for review and accreditation:

*For non-teaching departments, we have Quality Circles that lead the quality assurance process in respective units to ensure that support services are meeting the set standards as these units complement academic faculties in the provision of quality teaching, learning and research.<sup>85</sup>*

The University also seeks input from professional bodies:

*To ensure relevance of academic programmes to industry, we send our regulations for proposed new programmes to industry experts for their input, as they know exactly what graduates from our programmes ought to bring to industry upon graduation, in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies.<sup>86</sup>*

In the Seychelles, HEIs are assisted and guided by the SQA to set up IQA mechanisms and processes, though this is work in progress.<sup>87</sup> University of Mauritius (UoM) has a quality policy statement as well quality assurance framework (with detailed documentation available on its website outlining all the quality criteria at various levels).<sup>88</sup>

At Milpark Education in South Africa, QA is undertaken at various stages in the academic process. QA procedures provide for the involvement of external experts in the review of the quality assurance policy and procedures. The essential elements in selection of these experts are independence, transparency, and professionalism.<sup>89</sup>

At the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa, *The gap in the institution is in having a consolidated understanding of what and how consistently these are applied. The intention is to partner with academics (in particular) and to emphasize a culture of quality as a 'way we do things', as opposed to 'what we have to do' – a task that in all honesty is easier said than done.<sup>90</sup>*

From responses received and noting that this represents just a small sample of institutions in the region, it appears most institutions have IQA processes, with some respondents provided much detail about these processes. In many instances, the IQA processes mirror the requirements of EQA, though some have tried to shift towards a quality enhancement or quality improvement model rather than just meeting EQA reporting requirements.

## ROLES OF INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDERS

Within HE, there are many stakeholders, each of which may have different perceptions about quality. The questionnaire thus considered who the primary stakeholders are. Key stakeholders included the state/government, quality assurance agencies, students, parents, higher education institutions, staff, international bodies, professional bodies/councils, employers and industry. The perceived roles of these various stakeholders provide insights into their contribution to QA in higher education.

QA agencies in the DRC, Seychelles, Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe identified the state or government as a key stakeholder. One of the main roles of government is funding:

84 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

85 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

86 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

87 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority.

Received September 21, 2017

88 University of Mauritius. (no date). Quality Assurance. Retrieved November 1, 2017 from <http://www.uom.ac.mu/index.php/aboutus-quality-assurance>

89 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

90 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

*Assure sufficient annual budgets for the SQA and education and training providers for implementation of activities that would ultimately promote quality in education and training.*<sup>91</sup>

*Funding of the QA system.*<sup>92</sup>

*Distributive (determines budget allocation; distributes financial resources; and monitors expenditure).*<sup>93</sup>

*Sponsor Students.*<sup>94</sup>

Various respondents regarded quality assurance agencies as another key stakeholder in QA in higher education. Their role was mainly described in relation to development and implementation of quality assurance and their regulatory functions:

- *Develops QA system at national level;*
- *Capacity building of QA desk officers and assessors; and*
- *Conducts assessments for registration and accreditation.*<sup>95</sup>

*Regulates technical and vocational educational training and is responsible for the National Qualifications Framework.*<sup>96</sup>

*Maintain standards of education and training in the country and promote international recognition of local qualifications through a system of accreditation, validation and quality assurance and protect the interest of learners.*<sup>97</sup>

*Ensure quality in higher education.*<sup>98</sup>

*Evaluates programme review reports and makes recommendations to Council.*<sup>99</sup>

*Register, accredit and regulate.*<sup>100</sup>

Many countries identified students as another key stakeholder in QA in higher education, with some highlighting the active participation of students in QA as a key role:

*Participate in QA by evaluating the delivery of programmes, evaluating lecturer performance and in programme review.*<sup>101</sup>

*Provide input to curricula, evaluate core activities of university.*<sup>102</sup>

*Evaluating lessons.*<sup>103</sup>

*Contribute to the promotion of quality.*<sup>104</sup>

*Give feedback to the quality of our services.*<sup>105</sup>

*Eyes of the Authority at ETPs.*<sup>106</sup>

The active role of students in QA perceived by various respondents points to the notion of students as active agents or participants in their educational or learning experience. An institution in South Africa described students as ‘those who have first-hand experiences of the institution and how well its services are working.’<sup>107</sup> By comparison, some respondents described a more passive role for students:

*Receive quality learning and teaching learning resources.*<sup>108</sup>

*Recipients of education and training.*<sup>109</sup>

Parents of students were also identified as key stakeholders among various respondents. One of their main roles was being concerned about education quality and providing feedback on quality:

*Concern about the quality of HEI activities.*<sup>110</sup>

*To assist their children in identifying institutions that offer acceptable education.*<sup>111</sup>

*Providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and making suggestions about how they can be improved.*<sup>112</sup>

91 Questionnaire response from Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017  
 92 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority. Received October 15, 2017  
 93 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017  
 94 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017  
 95 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017  
 96 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017  
 97 Questionnaire response from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017  
 98 Questionnaire response from the University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017  
 99 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education (CHE) – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017  
 100 Questionnaire response 4 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 101 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

102 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017  
 103 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d'assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 104 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d'assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 105 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University, Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017  
 106 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority. Received October 15, 2017  
 107 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town, South Africa. Received September 18, 2017  
 108 Questionnaire response from Botho University, Botswana. Received September 18, 2017  
 109 Questionnaire response 1 from Namibia Qualification Authority. Received September 19, 2017  
 110 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d'assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 111 Questionnaire response 5 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 112 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

*Give feedback to the quality of our services.<sup>113</sup>*

Other parent roles identified were to provide financial support to students through fees<sup>114</sup> and to educate and ‘mentor’ students.<sup>115</sup>

Higher education institutions were identified as a key stakeholder. A primary role of HEIs was development and implementation of internal quality assurance policies and structures:

*Prepare submissions for review and develop improvement plans after reviews.<sup>116</sup>*

*Introduce internal quality assurance policies and structures.<sup>117</sup>*

*Apply institutional systems and mechanisms, lead internal reviews.<sup>118</sup>*

*Internal quality assurance.<sup>119</sup>*

For South Africa, a key role of HEIs was in relation to dealing with ‘QA pronouncements’ by the Council on Higher Education (CHE),<sup>120</sup> while Zimbabwe highlighted the role of HEIs as maintaining quality,<sup>121</sup> producing graduates,<sup>122</sup> offering programmes,<sup>123</sup> and providing facilities.<sup>124</sup> For Mauritius, a key role of public HEIs was to provide higher education in public universities.<sup>125</sup>

Staff at HEIs were also identified as key stakeholders, with roles varying from improving the quality of education<sup>126</sup> to providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and suggestions for improvement,<sup>127</sup> as well as providing feed-

back on university services.<sup>128</sup> Various respondents highlighted the role of staff in delivering programme offerings and developing curricula:

*Developing and adapting curricula.<sup>129</sup>*

*They deliver the programme.<sup>130</sup>*

*Develop and offer quality learning programmes.<sup>131</sup>*

*These are the facilitators of the processes of learning.<sup>132</sup>*

*Teaching and learning.<sup>133</sup>*

Some respondents identified a financial role for management staff, which involves controlling finances and generating income<sup>134</sup> and improving financial, administrative, and other governance.<sup>135</sup> Other roles, specifically for academic leadership, include establishing and maintaining good relationships with regulators,<sup>136</sup> having oversight on policy and quality implementation,<sup>137</sup> and measuring QA activities for compliance purposes,<sup>138</sup> with another general staff role involving implementing QA activities.<sup>139</sup>

Some respondents identified international bodies/ institutions as key stakeholders in QA. The role of international partners includes participating in activities involving inter-university collaboration and providing financing for some projects,<sup>140</sup> while the role of international institutions involves ‘external examination’ and ‘internal collaboration’.<sup>141</sup> Furthermore, the role of international communities is to verify qualifications:

*Verify with the SQA that programmes and qualifications are recognised by the Authority.<sup>142</sup>*

113 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University, Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017  
 114 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017  
 115 Questionnaire response 1 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 116 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017  
 117 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017  
 118 Questionnaire response from Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017  
 119 Questionnaire response from Higher Education Authority (HEA) – Zambia. Received September 20, 2017  
 120 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education (CHE) – South Africa. Received October 10, 2017  
 121 Questionnaire response 1 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 122 Questionnaire response 2 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 123 Questionnaire response 4 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 124 Questionnaire response 5 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 125 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017  
 126 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d’assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 127 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

128 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University, Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017  
 129 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d’assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 130 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). Received September 19, 2017  
 131 Questionnaire response from Botho University, Botswana. Received September 18, 2017  
 132 Questionnaire response from National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ), Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017  
 133 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education, South Africa. Received September 28, 2017  
 134 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education, South Africa. Received September 28, 2017  
 135 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d’assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 136 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education, South Africa. Received September 28, 2017  
 137 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education, South Africa. Received September 28, 2017  
 138 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education, South Africa. Received September 28, 2017  
 139 Questionnaire response 3 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017  
 140 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d’assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017  
 141 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017  
 142 Questionnaire response from Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

Related to this, the role of partner institutions is to establish 'qualification pathways and credit transfer mechanisms.'<sup>143</sup>

Some respondents identified professional bodies/councils as key stakeholders. The role of professional bodies is to participate in programme development,<sup>144</sup> participate in the accreditation of programmes and registration of qualified staff in their areas of speciality,<sup>145</sup> and help with verification of the quality of programmes.<sup>146</sup> Another role is to provide HEIs with information pertaining to their needs so that programmes can be aligned to these needs.<sup>147</sup> For Mauritius, the role of the professional councils for Medicine, Dentistry, and Engineering is to regulate the practice of these professions.<sup>148</sup>

Finally, some respondents described roles for employers/industry, among them inputs into programme/curriculum development and review:

*Inform programmes required by the economy and further participate in programme review.<sup>149</sup>*

*Provide inputs to curricula development, support research, and the evaluation of curricula.<sup>150</sup>*

Additional roles of employers include providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and suggesting improvements,<sup>151</sup> sharing their needs to facilitate the alignment of programmes to these needs,<sup>152</sup> and employing graduates.<sup>153, 154, 155, 156, 157</sup>

## QA NEEDS, DEMANDS, AND PRIORITIES

Given the diverse positions of countries in implementing QA in HE, corresponding needs, demands, and priorities are also diverse. This section highlights some needs and priorities thematically, drawing on responses to the questionnaires.

### Develop QA policies and strengthen QAAs

Some countries are in the early stages of developing QA bodies and policies. For example, in Angola, the Ministry of Higher Education is trying to develop QA policies in a process that will involve consultation with HEIs and academic staff. It has also recently developed a QA body:

*INAAREES as a new institution (created in 2013) is yet at initial stages in quality assurance. Pilot external evaluation has taken place in 2016 for 2 HEIs. Needs are related to support for capacity building and funding<sup>158</sup>*

A respondent from Mauritius highlighted the need for a legal framework that strengthens and empowers the TEC in fulfilling its duties.<sup>159</sup>

### Develop a culture of quality

Three respondents from Angola, Botswana, and Namibia highlighted the need to develop a culture of quality among all stakeholders.<sup>160, 161, 162</sup> One respondent noted that, to achieve this, there is a need for 'staff development to make sure that all members of staff understand the need for QA and its benefits'.<sup>163</sup> Several respondents highlighted a need for capacity building and the 'human resources and knowledge to perform quality assurance processes'.<sup>164</sup> This is discussed in more detail in the section below on capacity building needs.

143 Questionnaire response from Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

144 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale d'assurance Qualité, DRC. Received September 13, 2017

145 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

146 Questionnaire response from Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

147 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority. Received October 15, 2017

148 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

149 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

150 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

151 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

152 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority. Received October 15, 2017

153 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

154 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST). Received September 19, 2017

155 Questionnaire response from National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ), Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

156 Questionnaire response 1 from Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received September 11, 2017

157 Questionnaire response from the University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

158 Respondent from Angola QAA – Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES)

159 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

160 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

161 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

162 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

163 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

164 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

### Manage QA processes

Respondents from both QAAs and HEIs highlighted the significance of managing various QA processes. In Namibia, one of the concerns was to address the 'harmonization of QA in the country (who is responsible for what?)' in a context in which there are three agencies responsible for different aspects of QA.<sup>165</sup>

### Enhance existing EQA processes

The CHE in South Africa noted that it has several priorities that relate to enhancing its existing EQA processes. These are maintaining good levels and standards of programmes, instituting a second cycle of institutional reviews, developing standards for qualifications, and developing a new online system to support the functioning of an integrated system. However, additional financial and human resources are required to address these priorities.<sup>166</sup> Similarly, the BQA highlighted that its priority is to enhance specific EQA processes, in this instance by aligning learning programmes to the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF). This, too, requires building the capacity of BQA personnel and training subject matter experts.<sup>167</sup> The NCHE in Malawi highlighted a need for a review of its QA tools,<sup>168</sup> whilst a respondent from a South African HEI pointed out a need to streamline QA processes:

*We spend a lot of time repeating / duplicating work already done in some of the accreditation and registration processes. A more streamlined approach would mean that we could engage more fully with the qualitative depth of quality concerns rather than seeking always to provide the answer that will make the question go away.*<sup>169</sup>

### Achieve institutional accreditation

In the Seychelles, a key priority of the QAA is to accredit all institutions and validate all HEIs and their programmes.<sup>170</sup> Other QAAs identified similar priorities. For example, in Lesotho, the key priorities of the QAA are to ensure that all programmes are accredited and to improve the performance of HEIs.<sup>171</sup> Similarly, in Mozambique, a key priority is to accredit programmes and institutions,<sup>172</sup> while in Malawi the priorities are to accredit HEIs and establish QA units in HEIs.<sup>173</sup> In Zimbabwe, the key priorities are as follows:

- Institutional registration, programme accreditation and maintaining the university's mandate;
- Promote and co-ordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and
- Act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher education.<sup>174</sup>

HEIs expressed similar aspirations with regards to accreditation. For example, Botswana International University of Science and Technology identified its key priorities as institutional accreditation, programme accreditation, and ISO certification.<sup>175</sup>

### Develop IQA processes and systems

Another identified need is to develop IQA processes and systems. For some QAAs, this requires supporting the development of institutional QA processes and systems:

*HEIs to develop internal assessment systems (annual review, student's experiences surveys, teaching performance assessments) that create conditions for external reviews.*<sup>176</sup>

*All tertiary education and training institutions have robust IQA mechanisms and processes established and a QA Unit functional within each institution.*<sup>177</sup>

This required support was also noted by HEIs:

*Assistance in setting up QA structures appropriate to a small-sized private university.*<sup>178</sup>

*Ensure that mechanisms and systems are in place to manage quality.*<sup>179</sup>

*Policies and structures which foster quality checks/assessments and enhancement.*<sup>180</sup>

*The Quality Management System is still in its developmental stage and as an institution we would need help in developing procedure manuals and clear quality standards for each unit or section, which become yardsticks for measuring performance in academic provision and support service delivery.*<sup>181</sup>

165 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

166 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

167 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

168 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

169 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

170 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

171 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

172 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

173 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

174 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

175 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

176 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

177 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

178 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

179 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

180 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

181 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

The University of Namibia noted its needs with regards to improving IQA as follows:

- *To ensure that UNAM has in place an efficient institutional quality assurance management system which is continuously monitored and improved;*
- *UNAM should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards;*
- *Commitment to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work;*
- *Development and implementation of a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available.*<sup>182</sup>

At UCT, the key priorities are to assure the institution and others that the university's offerings are assured of quality, encourage reflection and continuous improvement, and promote good practices. This requires buy-in from the academic constituency.<sup>183</sup>

Other universities highlighted specific areas that they need to develop. For example, UniSey indicated that its priorities and needs are in monitoring, review, and evaluation of student experiences.<sup>184</sup> Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique noted that amongst its priorities, staff training for education quality, and revising its quality indicators,<sup>185</sup> whilst the University of Swaziland detailed its priorities:

- 1) Improvements in teaching and learning, research outputs, and community engagement through the development and deployment of QA Policies and Procedures.
- 2) Alignment of programmes with national and regional economic needs.
- 3) Benchmarking of programmes against other University offerings in the region.
- 4) Regular (external and internal) programme reviews; and review of the new programme approval procedure.

- 5) Introduction of Blended Learning and Outcome-based learning approaches.
- 6) Increased efficiency in administrative processes.
- 7) Specification and collection of key performance data (specially to inform the Self-assessment process).
- 8) More and better dialogue and engagement with stakeholders.
- 9) Improved learning resources and ICT infrastructure.
- 10) More staff training and awareness of QA systems, Management and Leadership, Pedagogy, and strategic planning.
- 11) And generally, the adoption of a self-regulated Quality culture throughout the whole university.<sup>186</sup>

One respondent highlighted the need to undertake projects and initiatives aimed at supporting institutions in implementing recommendations after their audits.<sup>187</sup>

#### **Foster the exchange of information and collaboration**

Respondents from the DRC, Zimbabwe, and Tanzania highlighted the need to share information and experiences at workshops and conferences, and the need to for increased collaboration between QAAs.<sup>188</sup><sup>189</sup><sup>190</sup> Several other respondents echoed this sentiment, for example:

*Sharing of good practices across the continent will be helpful.*<sup>191</sup>

*Collaboration among QA bodies within and outside the country.*<sup>192</sup>

*Strengthen its networking with regional and international QA Agencies.*<sup>193</sup>

*More QA workshops to develop the know-how/skills to set up a viable QA framework suitable for a private university with two thousand students.*<sup>194</sup>

*Strengthen cooperation with other networks to promote policy dialogue, information sharing, and dissemination*

182 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

183 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

184 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

185 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique. Received November 2, 2017

186 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

187 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

188 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité

(DRC). Received September 13, 2017

189 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

190 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

191 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

192 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017

193 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

194 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

*of good practice on the quality assurance...Involve the National higher education institutions in forums where more successful institutions are also participants which could assist in sharing experiences and knowledge.*<sup>195</sup>

It was highlighted that such collaboration would allow for 'exposure to similar systems'<sup>196</sup> and sharing of best practices.<sup>197</sup> Two respondents further highlighted that collaboration between QAAs could include collaborating in activities such as staff exchanges and peer audits.<sup>198,199</sup>

### Create an HE repository

One respondent from Tanzania highlighted the need to establish an 'HE repository' at the QAA.<sup>200</sup> Another respondent from Zambia highlighted the need for information systems for monitoring and evaluation.<sup>201</sup>

### Source Funding

Several respondents mentioned the need for funding or the need to mobilize funding to assist them to achieve their QA goals.<sup>202,203,204,205,206,207,208,209,210</sup> One respondent highlighted this challenge in the African context:

*Funding opportunities to pay for accreditation and audits, because the agencies are in business and yet the institutions don't get enough funding from the government. African governments are faced with funding challenges for HEIs.*<sup>211</sup>

A respondent from the Seychelles QAA was quite specific about the needs that funding will help to fulfil:

*Funding to recruit overseas consultants for specific projects (e.g. review of the SQA Act, review of the NQF and related documents, training for implementation of RPL). Funding for secondment to the SQA of experienced QA personnel from the region.*<sup>212</sup>

Other examples identified funding needs were for:

- Acquiring vehicles to conduct EQA institutional visits;<sup>213</sup> and

- Conducting accreditation and registrations assessments.<sup>214</sup>

### Other

Many responses to questions of priorities, demands, and needs focused on creating awareness, receiving training, increasing QA staff, and capacity building for QA Officers, and having the necessary qualified human resources to conduct QA. Whilst many respondents simply indicated that capacity building/training is required, others provided detail about the type of capacity required. This is explained in more detail in the section on capacity building in the section below.

## STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

### Strengths

Questionnaire respondents identified the following strengths of existing QA systems in their countries:

#### Political support and legislation to support QA

A respondent from Namibia highlighted that there is strong political will and support for QA, as there is legislature and relevant regulations in place.<sup>215</sup> Similarly a respondent from Tanzania HEI noted that there is a 'supportive legal environment and policies.'<sup>216</sup> Respondents from Zimbabwe and Lesotho also highlighted the legal framework as a strength:

*QA has been governed by the Act of parliament, which means institutions are forced to comply. The Act of parliament provides adequate muscle to the regulatory body.*<sup>217</sup>

*Have the legal framework (founding act, policy and regulations) and QA tools.*<sup>218</sup>

195 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

196 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

197 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

198 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

199 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

200 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

201 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

202 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

203 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

204 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

205 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

206 Based on a summary of five separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

207 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

208 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

209 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique. Received English version November 2, 2017

210 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

211 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

212 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

213 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

214 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education - Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

215 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

216 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

217 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

218 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education - Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

### Existence of a regulatory body

Respondents further highlighted the presence of a QA regulatory body as a strength. Examples of responses that support this are:

*There is a body responsible for QA and so employ a common QA platform to ensure that the concept of quality is practised from early childhood.*<sup>219</sup>

*The existence of a regulatory body established by law.*<sup>220</sup>

*A strength is having the national oversight body in the form of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). It has helped significantly for minimal standards to be put in place, so that all institutions work from the same base.*<sup>221</sup>

### Establishment of QA frameworks

Another reported strength is the presence of QA frameworks in most countries. A respondent from the QAA in the DRC pointed out that it has produced and disseminated an 'internal evaluation framework',<sup>222</sup> while the Swaziland Higher Education Council reported that its QA framework was established through a legislation which compels all HEIs to adhere to quality standards.<sup>223</sup> This positive sentiment was echoed by several respondents:

*A well-established Quality Assurance Framework with continuous improvement on the framework; There is a National Qualifications Framework which is used to pitch qualifications obtained locally or from overseas.*<sup>224</sup>

*The QA framework has been in place for some time, so we are now familiar with it. It is relatively stable... It is comprehensive, and addresses all the key aspects of delivery.*<sup>225</sup>

*There are established regulations, policies and guidelines to help institutions to move forward in their quest to ensure quality and credible education and training that meet the needs and expectations of learners and other stakeholders.*<sup>226</sup>

*Existence of general guidelines and minimum standards for provision of university education in Tanzania (2014) (and the) establishment of university qualifications framework.*<sup>227</sup>

*The national accreditation body, ZIMCHE has very clear standards for quality assurance, institutional and programme accreditation, and external quality audits for institutions.*<sup>228</sup>

### Increasing visibility and appreciation of awareness of QAAs and its work

The increasing visibility of QAAs was noted by Zimbabwe and the Seychelles:

*The SQA has established its presence as an Authority nationally (the populace has awareness of the Authority).*<sup>229</sup>

*The public and the institutions are now appreciating the existence of ZIMCHE and its roles.*<sup>230</sup>

*It is thought that institutions are responding to the call for building a QA culture even though they struggle due to underfunding.*<sup>231</sup>

### Successful EQA processes

In the Seychelles, it was reported that one notable success is that all HEIs have undergone an EQA process:

*To date, all tertiary education institutions have been through the process of quality assurance at least once and some institutions have managed to have all their programmes validated. There are institutions that have already been awarded full accreditation status while others have been awarded provisional accreditation, or are preparing their audit report for future accreditation visits.*<sup>232</sup>

Malawi has an established QA agency with 80% of its staff positions filled. It reported that HEIs are well conversant with QA requirements and it has great successes in its EQA processes:

- 1) Accreditation of 90% of institutions
- 2) Registration of new institutions
- 3) Improved collaboration with HEIs
- 4) Capacity building of institutions on QA systems
- 5) Institutional audits
- 6) Development of minimum standards for higher education
- 7) Development of QA frameworks and assessment tools<sup>233</sup>

219 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

220 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

221 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

222 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

223 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

224 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

225 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

226 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

227 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

228 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

229 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

230 Questionnaire response 2 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

231 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

232 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

233 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

The high impact of the EQA processes was also noted in South Africa:

*QA is embedded in (the) fabric of higher education. High level of acceptance and co-operation from the sector... (We have) well-established processes. (It is a) credible, robust, high intellectual capacity, peer driven system.*<sup>234</sup>

Mauritius detailed the impact of the QAA as follows:

*So far, the TEC has registered some 36 private institutions and accredit some 184 programmes. It has also conducted some 9 quality audits of public universities on a five year cycle. TEC has also conducted 2 International Conferences on Quality Assurance, inter alia, with resource persons from quality assurance bodies from overseas, 4 International workshops were conducted during this year for capacity building of personnel working in the quality assurance units of public and private institutions.*<sup>235</sup>

Similarly, Mozambique highlighted several impacts of QA activities:

- Half of institutions have established quality Assurance units
- Have established the standards and guidelines for quality assessment both for programmes and institutions
- Have accredited about 80 programmes between 2015 and 2017 according to published timetables and methods
- Have published reports and judgements
- Have provided advice to government on the status of quality within higher education institutions
- Have communicated information on the quality of programmes evaluated to inform student choice and employers understanding
- Institutions with no accredited judgements have taken the necessary steps to put things right within agreed timescale
- Have carried out capacity development activities within institutions
- Have carried monitoring activities to assess the implementation of the QA system.<sup>236</sup>

### **Increased knowledge and improved awareness of QA at the institutional level**

Respondents highlighted that there is increased awareness of QA by institutions:

*Each institution is aware of the importance of QA.*<sup>237</sup>

*(We) have got the buy in from institutions.*<sup>238</sup>

A respondent from the DRC highlighted the development of internal QA bodies at some HEIs, whilst it was reported that QA structures exist 'in most universities' in Tanzania.<sup>239</sup>

Mauritius reported the presence of QA units at all HEIs:

*All public and private institutions have already established quality assurance units in their respective institutions.*<sup>240</sup>

Botswana reported improved awareness of QA, even at the level of students:

*There has been an appreciation of role of quality assurance. Learners now demand accredited learning programmes. Whenever the quality drops, the learners inform the Authority without delay.*<sup>241</sup>

A respondent from an HEI in Namibia pointed to staff being 'well-versed' with QA systems,<sup>242</sup> whilst respondents from Tanzania and Zimbabwe highlighted that universities were supported by the QAA in developing their QA awareness and systems:

*All universities (were) sensitized and receive(d) some training on QA issues.*<sup>243</sup>

*Assisted institutions to start their own internal quality assurance units which became the first line of defence for quality in institutions.*<sup>244</sup>

The respondent from Tanzania highlighted positive impact at the institutional level:

- Introduction of QA mechanisms in universities
- Establishment of QA structures in a number of HEIs
- Establishment of University Qualification Framework
- Establishment of general guidelines and minimum standards for provision of university education in Tanzania (2014)
- Development of new university regulations (2013)
- Sensitization on conducting programme self-assessment in varsities

234 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

235 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

236 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

237 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

238 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

239 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

240 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

241 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

242 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

243 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

244 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

- Sensitization on conducting external programme self-assessment in varsities
- Introduction of Programme Management System and Foreign Award Assessment System.<sup>245</sup>

Further, a respondent from University of Namibia noted having ‘strong support from University management’ as a strength.<sup>246</sup> In Zimbabwe, the QAA indicated that there is stronger cooperation between the QAA and HEIs.<sup>247</sup> In Mauritius, the QAA highlighted the support it provides to a newly established HEI:

*(A) new public university recently set up in Mauritius requires some capacity building with regard to implement and support QA processes. The QA Agency in Mauritius (TEC) is assisting by providing capacity building workshops to all higher education institutions (public and private). Workshops that have been conducted so far this year by resource persons from Australia include student feedback on teaching and learning, and defining performance indicators in the context of quality models.*<sup>248</sup>

The University of Seychelles highlighted its willingness to engage with QA issues, reporting increased ‘staff empowerment’ and ‘ownership of QA responsibilities’:

*Staff members are willing and ready to embrace the change; new therefore daunting yet promising.*<sup>249</sup>

The University of Mauritius noted that its Quality Management Practices and external examination processes are in line with international practices.<sup>250</sup>

#### Increased institutional compliance

In Swaziland, EQA processes have resulted in improved institutional compliance:

*Institutions have been forced to cease operations following failure to comply to quality standards and the same applies to programmes. Other institutions have since put in place internal quality assurance units within their organograms as means of strengthening the delivery of quality programmes.*<sup>251</sup>

Increased institutional compliance was also reported in the Seychelles:

*The implementation and compliance to QA policies and procedures by the SQA and tertiary institutions.*<sup>252</sup>

Zimbabwe reported increased institutional compliance as a result of the ‘Act of parliament’ which ‘provides adequate muscle to the regulatory body’,<sup>253</sup> which ‘means institutions are forced to comply’.<sup>254</sup>

#### Collaboration and networking

Respondents highlighted benefits of collaboration and networking in developing their QA systems. Examples of responses were:

*Participation in workshops organized by international organization.*<sup>255</sup>

*Strong national, regional and international linkages, networking, and information dissemination to stakeholders.*<sup>256</sup>

*Our strengths come from the close networking with other regional HEI’s (e.g. through South Africa Regional Universities Association - SARUA) so we can build on their best practices; a national recognition for the need for QA; and a willingness to change.*<sup>257</sup>

#### Good capacity and transparency

One respondent highlighted that ‘highly competent staff’ was a strength.<sup>258</sup> Another indicated that ‘regular capacity building initiatives’ were conducted.<sup>259</sup>

One respondent highlighted the appointment of evaluators as a strength:

*The appointment and recruitment of experts ensure there is no conflict of interest, and experts may not, for example, review their own institutions.*<sup>260</sup>

#### Increased QA activity

Other strengths, which denote increased QA activity in countries, were:

245 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

246 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

246 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

247 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

248 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

249 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

250 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

251 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

252 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

253 Questionnaire response 4 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

254 Questionnaire response 2 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

255 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d’assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

256 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

257 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

258 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

259 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

260 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

- The external evaluation of the two universities;<sup>261</sup>
- Establishment of a national credit accumulation and transfer system;<sup>262</sup>
- Continuous benchmarking of programmes guided by IUCEA;<sup>263</sup>
- Supportive structure of governance;<sup>264</sup>
- Stakeholders demand high standards;<sup>265</sup>
- Internationally benchmarked QA system;<sup>266</sup>
- Publishing of an annual report with details of QA activities;<sup>267</sup>
- Increasing employer confidence;<sup>268</sup>
- Highly competent staff;<sup>269</sup> and
- Support from all stakeholders.<sup>270</sup>

### Weaknesses

Questionnaire respondents identified the following weaknesses of existing QA systems in their countries:

#### Legislation and political buy-in

Several respondents highlighted a lack of legislative and political support as a weakness. For example, the Namibia QAA noted that review of legislation is taking too long.<sup>271</sup> Others pointed to political interference and lack of political support for QA as hampering progress:

*Political interference on some of the qualifications.*<sup>272</sup>

*Political interference in the regulation of the higher education sector.*<sup>273</sup>

*(The Ministry and government) have not really grasped the crucial importance of quality assurance in education despite advocating for quality in education. Ministry does not take action on recommendations advanced by the SQA (e.g. programme validation and institutional accreditation). Heads of institutions are not taken to task and are not made accountable for outputs.*<sup>274</sup>

One respondent argued for more autonomy of the QAA:

*The body overseeing QA should be made independent of politics. It depends so much on the minister supervising Higher Education.*<sup>275</sup>

#### QA Framework

Another significant weakness is the absence of qualifications frameworks as highlighted by respondents:

*Absence of National Qualifications Framework.*<sup>276</sup>

*The lack of a National Qualification(s) framework and minimum bodies of knowledge.*<sup>277</sup>

*Lack of policies and frameworks of performing quality assurance.*<sup>278</sup>

Respondents further mentioned challenges regarding application of frameworks and putting regulations into practice. In Lesotho, the QA framework is reportedly not yet operational,<sup>279</sup> while, in the DRC, 'application of the internal evaluation framework'<sup>280</sup> remains a challenge. In Botswana, one respondent highlighted the challenge of 'transitional ambiguities between old and new regulations.'<sup>281</sup> In Mauritius, it was noted that 'programme accreditation of private institutions applies to the processes only and does not look at the outcome or output of the programmes', and 'the programmes offered in public universities are not accredited by TEC as the TEC Act does not allow this'. It was thus suggested that the TEC Act be amended so that the TEC can accredit programmes offered by public universities.<sup>282</sup>

#### Lack of sufficient information

Whilst improved awareness and increasing information was noted as a strength of QA in most countries, some still felt that this was a weakness, as is revealed in the following statements:

*Dissemination of information on quality assurance.*<sup>283</sup>

*Awareness of the entire university community regarding QA.*<sup>284</sup>

261 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

262 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

263 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

264 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

265 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

266 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

267 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

268 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017

269 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

270 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

271 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

272 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

273 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

274 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

275 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

276 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

277 Questionnaire response 4 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

278 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

279 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education - Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

280 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

281 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

282 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

283 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

284 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

### Resistance to change

Another identified weakness relates to perceived resistance and 'lack of acceptance by the HEIs'.<sup>285</sup> One respondent explained that this could be linked to the recent establishment of QA bodies (in comparison with the more established HEIs):

*The infancy of QA at higher education level. The regulatory bodies were formed much later than the establishment of the higher education institutions.*<sup>285</sup>

As a result, 'HEIs (are) not really appreciating the role and mandate of the QA agency.'<sup>287</sup>

### Lack of relevant expertise and experience

Several respondents highlighted a lack of relevant experience and expertise as a weakness. This was noted by both QAAs and HEIs, for example:

*Lack of experience in QA by all actors...lack of qualified staff.*<sup>288</sup>

*Relevant staff to execute the mandate of the agency, especially as there is need for capacity building.*<sup>289</sup>

*Lack of expertise in the field of QA.*<sup>290</sup>

*The national QA agency is understaffed and underfunded.*<sup>291</sup>

*Lack of subject specialists or resource persons locally.*<sup>292</sup>

*Little knowledge and skills in QA matters.*<sup>293</sup>

*Staffing and the lack of experience in QA at HEI level.*<sup>294</sup>

*Training needs of quality assurance officers.*<sup>295</sup>

*Lack of awareness and training (not just in QA but also on Pedagogy, Managerial and Educational Leadership training).*<sup>296</sup>

### Multiple regulatory bodies and requirements

One challenge, highlighted by respondents from three countries, relates to having multiple regulatory bodies. In the case of Namibia, this relates to 'overlapping of mandate between three QA Agencies in the country',<sup>297</sup> while in Malawi there is reported overlap between requirements of professional bodies and the QAA.<sup>298</sup> This was also reported by an HEI in South Africa:

*There are gaps in what the three key bodies undertake, and providers get caught in those gaps: SAQA, CHE, DHET...There is significant and unnecessary overlap in what it reported on.*<sup>299</sup>

It was argued that this creates systemic delays and that the 'mechanisms for getting rid of poor providers are weak', which has resulted in an over-regulated system that is applied to all HEIs.

### Executing QAA tasks

Some respondents highlighted that they face the challenge of executing their QA tasks, for varying reasons. For example, in Namibia, this relates to the above-mentioned challenge of an overlapping mandate of different QAAs.<sup>300</sup> Others pointed to more practical challenges, such as disseminating 'regulatory requirements to all Education and Training providers',<sup>301</sup> accrediting some HEIs,<sup>302</sup> and the lack of benchmarks for many programmes.<sup>303</sup>

### QAA management and logistical challenges

Some respondents identified management and logistical challenges facing QAAs. These range from adhering to timelines for service level agreements,<sup>304</sup> transport arrangements to conduct QA activities at universities, and lack of working tools, such as ICT hardware for QA practitioners.<sup>305</sup>

### QAA challenges of staffing and funding

QAAs also reportedly face various staffing and budgetary challenges:

*Acute shortage of personnel with knowledge of QA and who would be willing to take up a QA officer position (SQA level). Hence staff shortage.*<sup>306</sup>

284 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

285 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

287 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

288 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

289 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

290 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

291 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

292 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

293 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

294 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

295 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

296 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

297 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

298 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

299 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

300 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

301 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

302 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

303 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

304 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

305 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

306 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

*Budget constraints and therefore limitations on QA related activities and projects that can be implemented annually (SQA is a budget dependent entity and does not retain the revenue that it generates).<sup>307</sup>*

*Inadequate human and physical resources to implement the QA policies. Inadequate human and physical resources on the part of institutions to follow through with the requirements of QA.<sup>308</sup>*

*Inadequate personnel in the QAA, shortage of subject matter experts.<sup>309</sup>*

Lack of funding was highlighted as an issue by at least eight respondents, from both QAAs and HEIs:

*Lack of financial resources to carry out QA activities and the implementation of improvement plans.<sup>310</sup>*

*Funding – declining state subsidies essentially impacts on the ability to attract and retain excellent staff.<sup>311</sup>*

*Funding to explore international accreditation opportunities.<sup>312</sup>*

*Adequate funds for QA capacity building to TCU staff, university staff and stakeholders.<sup>313</sup>*

*Financial resources to expand the scope and benchmarking.<sup>314</sup>*

### Ineffective IQA

Respondents raised concerns about the effectiveness of IQA processes, which are aggravated by budgetary constraints, under-funding of HEIs,<sup>315,316</sup> and the high teaching load of academic staff which leaves little time to carry out QA activities.<sup>317</sup> A response from a South African HEI suggests a need to consider the context in which institutions operate:

*The unevenness of academic provision – not all public institutions are equally equipped or funded; largely as*

*a result of our country's history...Maintenance of high standards in the face of increasing student numbers and ill-motivated staff.<sup>318</sup>*

A respondent from Swaziland (SHEC) noted that there is a lack of understanding of the importance of IQA among HEIs.<sup>319</sup> A questionnaire response from the DRC noted a challenge regarding the 'effectiveness of Internal QA cells in more or less 700 universities and colleges',<sup>320</sup> whilst a respondent from a Zimbabwean HEI indicated that there is 'slow adoption of QA as a concept in HEIs'.<sup>321</sup> This was also noted as a challenge by the respondent from Université de Goma and further highlighted as a challenge in Botswana:

*Quality Assurance is new in the ETPs and it is not prioritized by management of the ETPs and it is usually under resourced which results in low levels of compliance of frequent lapses in the IQA systems.<sup>322</sup>*

A respondent from the Seychelles QAA highlighted the following challenges at the institutional level:

- The majority do not have a quality assurance unit/ person.
- Staff are resistant to change / lack of ownership and involvement by the staff and heads of institutions.
- Institutions are not made accountable by the responsible ministry.
- Unwillingness to take up challenges or extra responsibilities.
- Staff shortage and budget constraint.
- Staff transition (especially heads of institutions).<sup>323</sup>

### Lack of QA capacity

Respondents from Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and the Seychelles highlighted lack of QA capacity at the institutional and national level. For example:

*There is a lack of capacity on QA issues in the institutions.<sup>324</sup>*

*Lack of capacity at both the QA Agency and Institutional level.<sup>325</sup>*

307 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

308 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

309 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

310 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

311 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

312 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

313 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

314 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

315 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

316 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

317 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

318 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

319 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

320 Questionnaire response from Coordination nationale d'assurance qualité (DRC). Received September 13, 2017

321 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

322 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

323 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

324 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

325 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

*Monitoring and evaluation skills and competences...programme development and evaluation skills... Information dissemination on QA issues.*<sup>326</sup>

*A lack of sufficient manpower to deal with pressing matters in QA.*<sup>327</sup>

In Zimbabwe, it was highlighted that this is also exacerbated by 'brain drain' from the country.<sup>328</sup>

#### Buy-in from stakeholders

Another identified weakness relates to stakeholder engagement. A respondent from a Tanzanian HEI pointed out that there are 'inadequate informed collaboration strategies with higher education stakeholders', and a general lack of cooperation from key stakeholders at HEIs. For example:

*Students don't see why they need to respond to interviews or questionnaires.*<sup>329</sup>

Interestingly, another respondent highlighted that there was little impact of QA on students:

*QA has improved organizational management processes but has little impact on the student learning experience.*<sup>330</sup>

#### Poor technological infrastructure

One respondent highlighted that lack of adequate technology infrastructure impacts on QA practices:

*Poor technological infrastructures to reach some key stakeholders who are diversely located, making for example online surveys to be a challenge.*<sup>331</sup>

## POTENTIAL AREAS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Respondents from both QAAs and HEIs called for capacity building and enhancing QA skills in their institutions and agencies. For example:

*Capacity building initiatives need to be strengthened for QA practitioners at a national level, and for members of various QA committees at an institutional level.*<sup>332</sup>

*Developing capacity both at agency and institutional levels.*<sup>333</sup>

*Enhancing QA skills through various training/courses.*<sup>334</sup>

Respondents highlighted a need to develop skills in QA, with responses indicating that there is a lack of training in QA<sup>335</sup> and that 'most QA personnel are not trained in this area.'<sup>336</sup> Respondents from the Zimbabwe QAA noted that capacity building was required by all personnel at their agency, including peer reviewers.<sup>337</sup> Respondents from HEIs in Botswana and Namibia noted that all QA practitioners should undergo training and receive certification.<sup>338,339</sup> Additionally, three respondents noted that there are several gaps, as there is a general lack of training in QA:

*There are gaps in practically all areas as people involved in QA have not been formally trained and experience is lacking.*<sup>340</sup>

*Most QA personnel are not trained in this area.*<sup>341</sup>

*Lack of qualified staff trained in quality assurance in our Institute, and at HEIs and...at programme levels.*<sup>342</sup>

*Capacity building in quality assurance as most of the QA practitioners do not have formal training on QA.*<sup>343</sup>

Respondents were asked to identify skills gaps and areas that need to be strengthened in QA in their countries. The following list indicates some potential areas identified to focus capacity building efforts.

#### Creating awareness and understanding of QA

Several respondents highlighted a need for increased awareness and improved understanding of QA. Examples of responses are:

- Developing a QA culture.<sup>344</sup> One example of doing this was highlighted by a respondent:  
*Continuous sharing of information on the value of QA in HEIs at an institutional and national level will go a long way in inculcating a quality culture across all institutions.*<sup>345</sup>

326 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

327 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

328 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

329 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

330 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

331 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

332 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

333 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

334 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

335 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

336 Questionnaire response 4 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

337 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

338 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

339 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

340 Questionnaire response 1 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received September 21, 2017

341 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

342 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

343 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

344 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education - Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

- Understanding standards and their relevance to continuous improvement of the education system.<sup>345</sup>
- Understanding how quality is approached among different institutions.<sup>347</sup>
- Understanding QA concepts, approaches, and processes.<sup>348,349</sup>

*Understanding the concept that this is not extra work, but instead making preparations to ensure that processes are followed and there is quality education. Applicability of the principles is still a challenge.<sup>350</sup>*

- Fostering understandings/unpacking complex regulatory and procedural documentation and communicate these issues clearly, to enable HEIs to identify priority areas.<sup>351</sup>

#### Developing and revising policies and frameworks

Several responses revealed a need for skills pertaining to policy development,<sup>352-353</sup> with one respondent noting a need to develop a standard approach to preparing policies.<sup>354</sup> Respondents further highlighted a need for capacity to develop QA frameworks.<sup>355,356</sup>

*The ability of developing Quality Assurance Manuals that best fit needs of our institutions.<sup>357</sup>*

*Capacity building on the revision and benchmarking of the QA tools we have already developed.<sup>358</sup>*

*Capacitate staff on qualifications framework development.<sup>359</sup>*

Additionally, a need for easy access to these policies was highlighted:

*Communication within the University can be poor, so staff are not always aware that policies exist or where to find them.<sup>360</sup>*

*The Agency should have clear and easily accessible policies for the quality assurance and such policies should be communicated.<sup>361</sup>*

#### Understanding how QA systems work

Respondents highlighted a need to understand QA processes and systems. Examples of the type of training mentioned are:

- Workshops on QA systems.<sup>362</sup>
- Training on specific systems and mechanisms and practices that can allow measurement of quality of all dimensions of HE.<sup>363</sup>
- Training on self-assessment and development of Self Evaluation Report (SER).<sup>364</sup>
- Training of stakeholders on EQA to support institutional audit.<sup>365</sup>
- Training on:
  - Curriculum development and evaluation;
  - IQA system;
  - Development of QA structures;
  - Conducting tracer studies;
  - QA improvement plans; and
  - Linkage with the labour market/industry.<sup>366</sup>

#### Specific QA skill areas

Respondents also mentioned requiring skills in specific areas related to QA processes. These include:

- Conducting institutional audits and site visits.<sup>367,368,369,370</sup>
- Conducting programme reviews.<sup>371</sup>
- Setting standards, and conducting accreditation and audits.<sup>372</sup>
- Monitoring and evaluation skills and competences.<sup>373, 374, 375,376</sup>
- Developing QAA staff to interact with HEIs.<sup>377</sup>
- Capacity building of QA units at institutional level to carry out self-evaluations.<sup>378</sup>

345 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

346 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

347 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

348 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

349 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

350 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

351 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

352 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

353 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

354 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

355 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

356 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

357 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

358 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

359 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

360 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

361 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

362 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

363 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

364 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

365 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

366 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

367 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

368 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

369 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

370 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

371 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

372 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

- Benchmarking skills.<sup>379, 380, 381, 382</sup>
- Accreditation of foreign awards.<sup>383</sup>

One respondent highlighted a need for capacity to develop plans and make changes based on the results of QA evaluations to develop HEIs.<sup>384</sup> Another provided a detailed list of topic areas that could be covered:

- Cohorts / cohort analysis / throughput and success.
- Institutional research for private providers – themes / data and ideas.
- What is quality? How do we measure it? How is this aligned to the Accreditation / Audit criteria? Does it?
- How to integrate your QA activities so that they do not run parallel to what you do (i.e. actual quality v compliance quality).
- Quality and the place of evidence. What is evidence? What gives evidence weight?<sup>385</sup>

It was also highlighted that a good understanding of QA is developed through practice and experience of working in the field:

*There are very few people who understand the entire QA framework in all its complexities in SA. It is not easy to train people in this. It is the kind of thing you learn from having worked in the area for ages.<sup>386</sup>*

#### Design and development of QA tools

A need for skills in the following areas were identified:

- Developing tools for assessing quality.<sup>387</sup>
- Designing instruments for self-assessment.<sup>388</sup>
- Developing assessment tools such as questionnaires and skills to analyse quantitative and qualitative data.<sup>389</sup>

- Analysing qualitative and quantitative data.<sup>390</sup>
- Developing improvement plans.<sup>391</sup>

#### Incorporating quality issues in curriculum development and evaluation

Some respondents noted a need to develop capacity in incorporating QA issues in curriculum development and evaluation.<sup>392</sup> Responses highlighted a need to focus on QA in developing and designing curricula, programmes, and qualifications,<sup>393, 394, 395, 396</sup> including ‘writing appropriate intended learning outcomes’.<sup>397</sup> Others noted a need for capacity around teaching, assessment, and research skills,<sup>398, 399, 400</sup> with one respondent identifying a need for general pedagogical training (in a context where most lecturers have no teacher training).<sup>401</sup> Another highlighted a need to link universities with industry/business.<sup>402</sup>

#### Research and writing skills

At least six respondents identified research skills as being important to develop. This includes ‘collection and analysis of data (including “learning analytics”);<sup>403</sup> and skills in accessing information and writing assessment reports.<sup>404, 405</sup> Other examples of responses are:

*Self-assessment and report writing of both self-assessment and external evaluation.<sup>406</sup>*

*Preparation of self-evaluation reports by academics.<sup>407</sup>*

#### ICT Skills

Three respondents highlighted the importance of developing ICT skills relevant to their QA work:

*The ability of using online systems which could be used to collect and analyse students, employer or other stakeholders’ information.<sup>408</sup>*

373 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

374 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

375 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

376 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

377 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

378 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

379 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

380 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

381 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

382 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

383 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

384 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica de Moçambique. Received English version November 2, 2017

385 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

386 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

387 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

388 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

389 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

390 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

391 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

392 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

393 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

394 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

395 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

396 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

397 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

398 Based on a summary of 5 separate responses from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

399 Questionnaire response 1 from the Zimbabwe Council on Higher Education (ZIMCHE). Received October 15, 2017

400 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

401 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

402 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

403 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

404 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

405 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

406 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

407 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

*Training on ICT and ICT gadgets for QA data entry and analysis.*<sup>409</sup>

*Implementing appropriate ICT to enhance teaching and learning (particularly Blended Learning).*<sup>410</sup>

### **Establishing and Managing QA units**

Respondents highlighted a need for capacity building in managing QAAs,<sup>411</sup> managing HEIs, establishing QA units,<sup>412</sup> developing and implementing internal QA systems<sup>413,414</sup> and internal quality management.<sup>415</sup>

*Capacity building for higher education institutions to establish and operate internal QA units.*<sup>416</sup>

*Training on HE management.*<sup>417</sup>

*Setting up an IQA function.*<sup>418</sup>

*Conducting of annual audits.*<sup>419</sup>

*Institutions need further capacity building in the area of setting up internal quality assurance structures, writing procedures.*<sup>420</sup>

## **POSSIBILITIES FOR INTRA-REGIONAL HARMONIZATION OF QA SYSTEMS**

The research data suggests that there are synergies between countries regarding their QA approaches, as they all focus mainly on registration, accreditation, and audits (the latter currently to a lesser extent). It has also been noted that there is a strong tradition of peer review on most of the countries that have accreditation and they have developed good mechanisms to ensure the independence of the process, with one or two exceptions.<sup>421</sup> Additionally, there is some evidence of institutions working with other professional bodies in other countries (for example, the UoM seeking accreditation for engineering from the Engineering Council of South Africa).

Furthermore, there have been several efforts to create synergies and regional harmonization of QA systems, notably via the SADCQF, which is currently conducting a pilot project to align QA mechanisms with the SADC Qualification Framework. The SADCQF also encourages SADC countries to have good QA mechanisms and links up with regional QA bodies. Thus, to understand possibilities for intra-regional harmonization, respondents from the QAAs were asked to reflect on the value such a Framework would add to their country.

All respondents from QAAs reported that they are aware of the SADCQF, with six countries participating in a pilot project that seeks to ensure that national and the regional frameworks are aligned. Responses about the value of the SADCQF in the HE sector were in almost all cases positive, with benefits such as increased mobility being highlighted. The Namibia Qualification Authority felt that it would enhance student mobility, ensure quality qualifications and trust between member states, enhance qualification verification and referencing, and address the issue of fraudulent qualifications.<sup>422</sup> The DRC QAA felt that it will allow for recognition of diplomas awarded, as well as facilitating mobility of teachers, researchers, students, and even administrative staff, while preventing 'scientific isolation'.<sup>423</sup> Like the DRC QAA, the Tanzania Commission for Universities also pointed out the benefit of mobility and indicated that that the SADCQF would 'enhance credit transfer, student and staff mobility in the region',<sup>424</sup> while the Lesotho CHE indicated that it would allow for the benchmarking of QA processes.<sup>425</sup> The Seychelles Qualifications Authority saw it as an opportunity for encouraging accreditation among institutions:

*It will serve a motivation for institutions to seek accreditation and have all their programmes validated as the SADCQF will facilitate recognition of qualifications in the region.*<sup>426</sup>

*It will facilitate recognition of qualifications, mobility of qualifications and qualification holders, increase access to international qualification, trade in services, harmonization of education, training and qualification procedures.*<sup>427</sup>

408 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

409 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

410 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

411 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

412 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

413 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

414 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

415 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

416 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

417 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

418 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

419 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

420 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

421 Questionnaire response from Fred Hayward (Consultant). Received September 9, 2017

422 Questionnaire response from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

423 Questionnaire response from the DRC QAA. Received September 13, 2017

424 Questionnaire response from Tanzania Commission for Universities. Received September 14, 2017

425 Questionnaire response from Council on Higher Education – Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

426 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

Respondents emphasized that they are keen to work closely with other countries in developing QA:

*QA is key to improving quality of higher education within the region hence important to work together within the SADC region...to conduct regional workshops and share experiences and strengths.*<sup>428</sup>

*Quality assurance exchange programmes can be appreciated as a capacity building exercise.*<sup>429</sup>

Responses thus reflect interest in, as well as specific suggested measures to facilitate harmonization. However, this is not without its challenges. For example, the TEC in Mauritius identified the absence of qualification frameworks in some SADC countries as a limitation:

*The major drawback is that some of the SADC countries do not have a Qualification Framework and this is impeding the implementation process.*<sup>430</sup>

Additionally, the SADCQF has not influenced Angola's approaches and views about QA due to language limitations:

*Documents on the framework are in English. Access to those documents is limited due to language barriers.*<sup>431</sup>

Interestingly, the only country not represented in this study is also not English speaking, which also raises the issue of language barriers relating to non-participation.

This suggests that possible future areas of work might focus on addressing language barriers (for example, by facilitating the creation of frameworks in multiple languages) and working with countries that do not have a NQF to support their development.

427 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

428 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

429 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

430 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

431 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017







CHAPTER THREE  
**CONCLUSION AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS**

All higher education systems in SADC countries have created QA systems, as evidenced by the presence of structures and systems dedicated to QA. Countries are at different stages in implementing QA systems, with some having established systems, plans, and policies in place and implementation plans being rolled out. Others are still in early stages of developing their QA systems and may have policies in place but little implementation; while others may be implementing EQA but still need to develop policies and regulation to enforce the work they are doing. Some countries may have more than one body responsible for QA; one may focus on assessments and audit, while the other may focus on accreditation. Most QA systems appear to be compulsory (i.e. institutions are obliged to participate or run the risk of non-accreditation or being closed), although the extent of the 'power' of the EQA to do this depends to a large extent on the availability of laws/statutes granting them that power. In most instances, EQA agencies adopt a combination of accreditation and audits in their approach to QA, and these are usually conducted on a cyclical basis.

The research findings indicate that there is growing awareness and recognition of QA issues by both QAAs and HEIs. At the institutional level, institutions are also at various stages in implementing QA procedures. The level of activity appears to be related to EQA activity in the country. Given the small sample size, it is not possible to generalize, but evidence is that universities are engaging with IQA issues, creating institutional QA plans, and implementing QA processes across institution.

There have been several significant impacts in implementation of QA systems. These include increased political support and legislation to support national QA processes, the presence of a national QA regulatory body and a national QA framework in most countries, increasing visibility and awareness of QAAs and their work, increased knowledge and improved awareness of QA at the institutional level, and high successes with EQA processes in achieving accreditation and/or audits of institutions, combined with increased institutional compliance to EQA processes. Another notable impact is enhanced collaboration and networking efforts in the region and participation in international workshops.

Respondents were keen to participate in regional capacity-building and collaboration, so there may be potential to conduct regional capacity-building workshops or run specific projects fostering the sharing of ideas and plans. Given this, the following recommendations are made to further develop national systems and develop capacity in QA:

- Alignment of national QA frameworks to the SADCQF necessitates that countries have their own QA framework. Thus, efforts can focus on fostering development and/or improvement in national frameworks to

facilitate the alignment process.

- QAAs would benefit from capacity building focused on managing their inputs (strategic management and planning processes, aligning budgets with activities, and so on). To improve their effectiveness, it may also be useful for these agencies to undergo evaluation of their operations and management, with a view to streamline their processes.
- All countries have some sort of national QA system, but some are more developed than others. It may be useful to create a mechanism that would allow countries to share information, and look at how others have tackled certain issues. There may be merit in creating data 'dashboards' that can be used to enable rapid comparison of QA practices across the region. Examples of data benchmarks might include, amongst others:
  - Summary analysis of policy/legislative instruments in place across countries and institutions to enable rapid identification of trends and gaps.
  - Comparisons of the costs/fees associated with key, standard QA activities implemented by EQAs across the region.
  - Summary analysis of QA frameworks used by countries and institutions to compare QA standards and criteria used.

If these data 'dashboards' were established as editable online files, they could then form the base for simple online systems that could be kept up to date by all countries at very low cost.

- Given that an area of capacity identified relates to understanding QA concepts, it may be worthwhile developing simple practical guides to assist those new to QA to understand key processes. If released under a Creative Commons licence, these could then be tailored by country QAAs to suit their needs and contexts.

Future research might focus on the following:

- 1) Increasing the sample of HEIs to obtain a more representative sample of IQA practices in SADC. The sample targeted for this research used convenience sampling, and was based on contacts received from the CHE South Africa and DAAD, and was limited to one private and one public university per country. Extended research would enable construction of a bigger and more representative sample, while covering a full spectrum of diversity of institutional types. Given the high priority in the region, the progress made in establishing EQAs in every country, and the identified importance of developing a culture of quality at institutional level, widening the base of the IQA research would provide valuable guidance to SAQAN and all EQAs in the region, as well as to universities themselves.

- 2) The current survey instruments focus on a first, high-level and descriptive assessment of IQA and EQA activities in the region. Building on this initial dataset, there may be value in a second round of questions, focused on a deeper level of analysis of QA practices. Examples of questions might include:
  - a) Is IQA only aligned in relation to the standards set for IQA structures by the EQA agency, or is there capacity for HEIs to develop their own standards as part of self-regulation?
  - b) Do EQA agencies include a specific focus on online learning in their approach to QA? If so, how do they handle this?
  - c) Who controls the process of QA at national and institutional level? What are the implications of this for effective QA?
  - d) What challenges/barriers might be encountered in implementing intra-regional harmonization? What would be possible solutions to these challenges?
  
- 3) While QAAs and HEIs may engage in various activities or interventions to improve quality, it is unclear how effective these have been in leading to improvements in quality. This is a major gap because many QA practices are being replicated across countries and institutions without a strong evidence base to justify their implementation. Equally, it is essential for both QAAs and HEIs to be able to make informed decisions regarding what QA practices are most likely to have a positive effect on the student's educational experience. It may thus be useful to conduct longitudinal studies researching the effectiveness of QA activities and interventions
  
- 4) The current study was not able to place much focus on regional harmonization. To probe the possibilities for intra-regional harmonization in the SADC, future research could focus on identifying criteria for harmonization and consider the economic, political, and socio-political landscape that may shape or influence implementation of harmonization initiatives. Other specific areas that the research could focus on are:
  - a) What are current discourses around harmonizing QA in HE?
  - b) What are perceived benefits and challenges of harmonization?
  - c) What are preconditions necessary for harmonization?
  - d) What are current efforts to harmonize QA processes in the SADC region?
  - e) Would a SADC-based initiative enhance or hinder continental efforts towards harmoniza-

tion of QA in HE? (or perhaps a more general question around regional efforts of harmonization as opposed to continental – what is more likely to work/be effective, to reduce fragmentation of efforts)



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APPENDIX  
**COUNTRY REPORTS**

## ANGOLA

In Angola, the period 2002 to 2010 was mainly marked by the following legal and political changes which changed the governance structures and mechanisms in higher education. In 2003, the national directorate of higher education was established within the structure of the ministry of education, and the deputy minister of education was appointed in higher education. Guidelines for the reform and improvement of higher education was established in 2007 while a state secretariat for higher education was created in 2007. The ministry of higher education and science and technology was thereafter created in 2010.<sup>432</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

Drawing from a study, it was found that since the mid-1980s, quality assurance in Angolan higher education was a concerning matter. This has been particularly so since the liberalisation of the sub-sector. The study reports that two foundations commissioned studies by Gomes Teixeira (1996) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1986) to assess the state of quality in Angola's higher education system. It further reports that in 2005 another assessment was carried out by the secretary of state for higher education (SEES), the outcome of which served as the 'basis for the development of guidelines for improving the management of HEIs in Angola'.<sup>433</sup> The assessment by the SEES also led to the restructuring of University of Angola (UAN), resulting in six separate public universities. Regulation of the system was made possible through legislation to ensure that minimum quality standards are met. The study reports that quality assurance 'gained more relevance and specificity with the establishment of the National Board for Higher Education', whose responsibility includes, among others, to 'ensure the quality and efficiency of the subsystem' (Article 18, Decree-Law 7/03, 17 June).<sup>434</sup> The study went on to report that despite these developments, an integrated quality assurance system which 'oversees the entire subsystem of higher education', did not exist in Angola. The Angolan government has been increasingly concerned about this and has acknowledged the need to develop a quality assurance system. It was reported that a 'more structured framework for institutional assessment was designed and is regulated by Decree-Law 2/2009, 29 April'.<sup>435</sup> This framework is encompassed under the structure of the SEES which is responsible

for assessment and quality control, evaluation and accreditation. In particular, this unit is 'charged with monitoring and promoting the quality of services provided by HEIs, and with coordinating institutional evaluations and accreditation (DecreeLaw 2/09, 29 April)'.<sup>436</sup> The study found that this unit was the first organisational structure formed to oversee quality in Angolan higher education. The unit was moved to the newly established Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MESCT) following the approval of the new constitution in 2010. Subsequently, the Institute for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education was then established under the tutelage of MESCT (Art. 24, Presidential Decree 70/10, 19 May).

The study also noted that the implementation of quality assurance continues to be delayed, which is mostly attributable to the governance of Angolan higher education. The latter was found to be 'characterised by uneven changes in terms of the structures and institutions mandates, from MESCT to SEES'.<sup>437</sup> It was found that the implementation of the quality assurance mechanisms set out by some of the legislation also continues to be delayed. At the time of the study, no proper quality assurance activities were found to have taken place since the establishment of the Institute for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in 2010. However, it was reported that is a Draft-Law on an Assessment and Accreditation System, but this is yet to be finalized.<sup>438</sup>

The response from the quality assurance agency in Angola confirmed the absence of a quality assurance framework for higher education detailing how quality assurance is organised. It was stated that there is, however, a Law on Education and a Decree establishing only the compulsory requirement for internal and external evaluation of higher education institutions. Furthermore, it highlighted that a team is working in developing a new policy on evaluation and accreditation (Proposta de Sistema de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (SAAES)).<sup>439</sup> The findings concur with those of the Langa study.

The quality assurance agency reported that the QA approach is related to the promotion of excellence, and that institutional participation in quality assurance is compulsory. The focus of QA is planned to be on internal and external evaluation (audit) as well as accreditation. Furthermore, it was reported that indicators, principles and structures for internal and external evaluation and accreditation are under development.

432 Langa, P. (2013). Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking Africa Countries. Chapter 2: Angola. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AM-HE-in-Lusophone-Africa-Text-and-Cover-web.pdf>

433 *ibid.*, p12-13

434 *ibid.*, p12-13

435 *ibid.*, p12-13

436 Langa, P. (2013). Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking Africa Countries. Chapter 2: Angola. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from [http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AM-HE-in-Lusophone-](http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AM-HE-in-Lusophone-Africa-Text-and-Cover-web.pdf)

[Africa-Text-and-Cover-web.pdf](http://www.africanminds.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/AM-HE-in-Lusophone-Africa-Text-and-Cover-web.pdf)

437 *ibid.*, p12-13

438 Angola Press. (2017). Importance of assessment and accreditation system in education highlighted. Retrieved September 12, 2017 from [http://www.angop.ao/angola/en\\_us/noticias/sociedade/2017/7/31/Importance-assessment-and-accreditation-system-education-highlighted\\_48deb206-8649-4dac-918d-f5e0b9d06560.html](http://www.angop.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/sociedade/2017/7/31/Importance-assessment-and-accreditation-system-education-highlighted_48deb206-8649-4dac-918d-f5e0b9d06560.html)

439 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

It is evident that the absence of a framework is delaying proper implementation:

*due to lack of a specific QA Framework institutions mostly do not have established QA structures and practices.*<sup>440</sup>

The quality assurance agency reported on the roles of QA stakeholders as well as their needs/demands/priorities. This is reflected in the table which follows:

Table 7 Key stakeholders and their needs (Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES))

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
HEIs Leadership	Apply institutional systems and mechanisms, lead internal reviews	Training
Departments and Program management	Apply systems and mechanisms at program level; ensure quality of programs and courses; ensure quality of teaching and learning	Training
Professional bodies	Assist in verification of quality of programs	Need funding and training

Despite the absence of a framework, the agency provided an indication of what QA processes should entail going forward. It was reported that QA involves the creation of a consistent National Qualifications Framework, the development of a coherent normative and regulatory system and the creation of control systems and assessment at all levels (institutional and programmatic). It would involve the alignment of accreditation mechanisms with agreed quality standards, and the implementation and constant follow up and supervision of quality assurance and quality enhancement practices by different actors in HEIs (academic staff, leadership).<sup>441</sup>

It was reported that the Ministry of Higher Education is trying to develop quality assurance policies in a process that will involve consultation with HEIs and academic staff. Priority is being placed on developing a culture of quality within all stakeholders. Another priority has been for HEIs to develop internal assessment systems (annual review, student's experiences surveys, teaching performance assessments) that create conditions for external reviews.<sup>442</sup>

It was reported that the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education in the Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) as a new institution (created in 2013) is still in the initial stages of quality assurance, however, pilot external evaluations have taken place in 2016 for 2 HEIs. Needs, it was reported, are related to support for capacity building and funding.<sup>443</sup>

Given that QA is in the early stages of development and implementation, it is currently premature to report on the impact of the work of quality assurance agency.

#### **Internal Quality Assurance**

The overarching response from Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos was that the QA system in the country was under construction. It was reported that in Angola, a quality assurance framework does not yet exist, although some efforts are being made:

*HE in Angola is now characterized by the massification of students and expansion of higher education institutions all over the country, some public and many privates. Auto evaluation, external evaluation and accreditation of HE institutions and courses are not common. Meanwhile, some efforts are being made, in terms of law, to establish and put into action an institutional mechanism for evaluation and accreditation of HE institutions and courses.*<sup>444</sup>

It was reported that in 2013, the Government of Angola created the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education (INAAREES) as a national institute for evaluation and accreditation of higher education studies. However, it was stated that the impact of this development has not yet been felt. It was reported that the Ministry in Angola has made some recent strides in this area:

440 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

441 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

442 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation

and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

443 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

444 Questionnaire response from the Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos. Received September 11, 2017

*More recently, two-three-months ago, the HE Ministry proposed a paper on the foundation of a larger system for evaluation and accreditation of HE institutions and courses, to be discussed by all HE actors and institutions.*<sup>445</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The QA challenges facing the country were identified as: resistance by the HEIs; the marketization of HEIs with its focus on profit rather than on quality of services; lack of experience in QA of all stakeholders and a lack of qualified staff.<sup>446</sup> The skills gaps related to QA in the country were identified mainly as a lack of qualified staff trained in quality assurance at INAAREES, HEIs and also at program levels. Capacity building requirements included training on all steps and approaches in QA, as well as training on specific systems, mechanisms and practices that can allow measurement of quality of all dimensions of higher education.<sup>447</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

It was felt that training on all steps and approaches in QA and the recruitment of qualified staff would strengthen the QA agency in Angola.<sup>448</sup> The quality assurance agency reported being aware of the SADCQF. It was felt that it is currently not yet influencing the country's approaches and views. Language was identified as a barrier to access:

*Documents on the framework are in English. Access to those documents is limited due to language barriers.*<sup>449</sup>

## **BOTSWANA**

### **External Quality Assurance**

Botswana, in its attempt to improve higher education, moved quickly to set up QA mechanisms by firstly establishing the Tertiary Education Council (TEC) through an Act of Parliament in 1999.<sup>450</sup> The Tertiary Education Act of 1999 made provision for the establishment of the Botswana TEC which was responsible for 'the promotion and coordination of tertiary education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in tertiary institutions.'<sup>451</sup> The TEC's responsibility for maintaining standards indicates that a key function of the TEC was the prioritisation of quality, in addition to many other functions. As set out in the Act, the responsibilities of the TEC in respect of quality assurance can be flagged as follows: receive and approve applications from persons seeking to establish tertiary education institutions; review and approve programmes of study in respect of private tertiary institutions; accredit programmes from private tertiary institutions; conduct institutional audits with respect to public institutions and ensure that quality assurance procedures are in place in all tertiary institutions.<sup>452</sup>

It is reported by some authors that the Council in its Quality Assurance Manual of 2009 clearly defined the QA approach and implementation. It was found that in its Quality Assurance Manual (2009), the Council indicates that quality has neither a common definition nor a common measure. A move was then taken to define QA as 'a process of establishing stakeholder confidence (inputs, process and outcomes) that fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.'<sup>453</sup> Furthermore, it was found that QA Standards and Criteria to be followed by both public and private providers were clearly laid out and that significant advances have been made in accrediting institutions and even controlling the proliferation of 'Degree/Diploma Mills.' While the TEC supported access to education as a Council, it was found to be more concerned about the quality of education provision. In terms of EQA, it was found to have taken as one of its primary roles of quality assurance, the responsibility to assist higher education institutions rethink their teaching/learning

445 Questionnaire response from the Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos. Received September 11, 2017

446 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

447 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

448 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

449 Questionnaire response from the Institute for Evaluation, Accreditation and Recognition of Studies in Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education (INAAREES) - Angola. Received September 22, 2017

450 Bogopa., G and Ncube., P. (no date.). The Case for Botswana Cross Border Tertiary Education. Conference Presentation. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from <http://inqahe.heeact.edu.tw/index.php?r=site/filepath&url=czo0TOiLighc3NldHMvdXBsb2FkL2Rvd25sb2FkLzlw-MTMwMzI5MjIhNDQ3XoF3TkluLnBkZil7>

451 Botswana Tertiary Education Act (Act 4 of 1999). Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.gov.bw/globalassets/moe/acts/chapter-5704-tertiary-education.pdf>

452 *ibid.*, 5 (h-k)

453 Bogopa., G., and Ncube., P. (no date.). The Case for Botswana Cross Border Tertiary Education. Conference Presentation. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from <http://inqahe.heeact.edu.tw/index.php?r=site/filepath&url=czo0TOiLighc3NldHMvdXBsb2FkL2Rvd25sb2FkLzlw-MTMwMzI5MjIhNDQ3XoF3TkluLnBkZil7>

strategies to achieve quality outputs.<sup>454</sup> It is reported that there is now minimal room for traditional type teaching and learning in HEIs. Furthermore, it was reported (at the time) that all public HE institutions, such as Colleges of Education, Health Training Institutions and the University of Botswana were registered with TEC following quality assessments based on set standards and criteria. It was found that one helpful aspect of the establishment of the TEC was providing room for student and industry complaints and other stakeholders' alertness and interest in quality of HE for their children. These, it is argued, enable HE institutions to regularly revisit their programmes and methodologies with the aim of continuous improvement. The authors compare this finding to the status in other countries and have noted that students are involved in Academic Boards in some countries like New Zealand, while students' involvement is compulsory in Iceland. Australia and China engage students through course evaluation questionnaires. For Botswana, the authors find, this still requires strengthening.<sup>455</sup>

Recent developments have seen the TEC being replaced by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), through the HRDC Act, 2013,<sup>456</sup> to 'remove fragmentation in managing human resources.'<sup>457</sup> The Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA) thereafter replaced the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA) and is currently the external agency responsible for the development and implementation of national credit and qualification frameworks. The Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MESD)<sup>458</sup>(changed to Ministry of Tertiary Education, Research, Science and Technology) describes the BQA as a parastatal organisation under the Ministry. The BQA commenced operations in November 2013 and draws its mandate from the BQA Act No.24 of 2013. Its main objectives are to provide for and maintain a National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) and to co-ordinate the education, training and skills development quality assurance system.<sup>459</sup> More specifically, the functions of the BQA are as follows:

- Developing, implementing and maintaining an overarching National Credit and Qualifications Framework for all qualifications, from early childhood to tertiary level;
- Maintaining of a national database of qualifications;

- Setting of learning and teaching standards for education and training providers;
- Designing qualifications and curricula for general education and tertiary education, including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and higher education;
- Setting criteria for the development of national education and training quality and inspection standards;
- Developing standards for the recognition of external qualifications;
- Developing and reviewing quality standards, and ensuring compliance through a monitoring and evaluation system;
- Registering and validating qualifications and part qualifications, and ensuring their relevance to social and economic needs;
- Accrediting learning programmes;
- Registration and accreditation of education and training providers, assessors, awarding bodies and moderators;
- Designing methods of validating the achievements of learners;
- Recognising and validating competencies for purposes of certification;
- Designing procedures and rules for the protection of enrolled learners; and
- Designing methods of validating achievements of learners.<sup>460</sup>

A respondent from the BQA reported that a key purpose of the QA approach was the improvement of quality, particularly within the context of the growth in private providers:

*Over the years, there has been a significant growth of the system with the number of private players increasing. This has necessitated the setting of standards to ensure that learners receive value for their money.<sup>461</sup>*

It was reported that quality assurance is also used to ensure that the programmes are 'relevant' to the industry. Furthermore, the QA system was used to inform the sponsorship of students by government, with only quality assured programmes being prioritised. It was therefore specifically used to provide policy advice to government on the education and training providers who provide quality education and training:

454 Bogopa, G., and Ncube, P (no date). The Case for Botswana Cross Border Tertiary Education. Conference Presentation. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from <http://inqahe.heeact.edu.tw/index.php?r=site/filepath&url=c200OToiLighc3NldHMvdXBsb2FkL2Rvd255b2FkLzlwMTMwMzlsMjhlNDQ3XoF3TkluLnBkZil7>

455 Bogopa, G., and Ncube, P (no date). The Case for Botswana Cross Border Tertiary Education. Conference Presentation. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from <http://inqahe.heeact.edu.tw/index.php?r=site/filepath&url=c200OToiLighc3NldHMvdXBsb2FkL2Rvd255b2FkLzlwMTMwMzlsMjhlNDQ3XoF3TkluLnBkZil7>

456 Human Resource Development Council Act, 2013. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.hrdc.org.bw/sites/default/files/HRDC%20Act%20No.%2017%20of%202013.pdf>

457 The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP 2015-2020).

Retrieved August 10, 2017, from <http://www.gov.bw/globalassets/moe/acts/moesd-etssp-education-strategy-approved-version-ii.pdf>

458 Republic of Botswana, Ministry of Education and Skills Development. (no date). No title. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.gov.bw/en/Ministries--Authorities/Ministries/Ministry-of-Education-and-Skills-Development/Tools-and-Services/Vacancies/Botswana-Qualifications-Authority-BQA/>

459 *ibid.*

460 Tswana Times. (Feb 2014). Botswana Qualifications Authority Enters Bold New Era. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.thetswanatimes.co.bw/news/education/1008-botswana-qualifications-authority-enters-bold-new-era.html>

461 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

*This is very critical as in Botswana over 50% of the HE learners are sponsored by the government. The learners are sponsored into programmes whose quality has been assured by BQA.*<sup>462</sup>

Quality assurance in Botswana higher education is furthermore statutory for all education and training providers (ETPs), with a penalty for non-compliance:

*The BQA Act and the Regulations require that all ETPs, whether public or private be subjected to the same requirements. Non-compliance constitutes an offence and attracts a penalty.*<sup>463</sup>

QA is focussed at both the institutional and programmatic level. Furthermore, assessors and moderators are registered and accredited.

At the institutional level, it was reported that both public and private education and training providers are required to be registered and accredited, while at the programmatic level all programmes need to conform to the regulations.

The country has recently established a NQF:

*It should be noted that the country is in the process of transiting from a non NQF system as such programmes currently running are not based on any qualifications registered on the framework.*<sup>464</sup>

Accreditation, scheduled audits and 'investigatory audits' are undertaken, with different functions conducting accreditation and scheduled audits. More detail is provided in the table below:

Table 8 QA Approaches (Botswana Qualification Authority - BQA)<sup>465</sup>

Approach	Explanation
Accreditation	This is the first stage in the QA process. ETPs are issued with a license which is valid for ten years, with a five-year licence for programmes, assessors and moderators.
Audit	Audits are conducted at half-life of the cycle of accreditation for ETPs and learning programmes. Separate functions conduct audits and accreditation.
Other	In addition to scheduled audits, the Authority undertakes investigatory audits for purposes of resolving complaints related to the delivery of learning programmes.

The BQA has very recently developed criteria and guidelines for the registration and accreditation of education and training providers. The 21 criteria are as follows: Legal Status and Name; Ownership; Vision, Mission and Strategic Planning; Governance of the ETP; Management of the ETP; Scope of Accreditation; Quality Management; Records Management System; Financial Viability and Management; Human Resources; Physical Resources; Safety, Health and the Environment; Protection of Enrolled Learners; Learning Programme Development and Delivery; Work Placement/Internship; Assessment and Moderation; Learner Support Services; Research; Internationalisation; and Corporate Social Responsibility.<sup>466</sup>

The BQA has also recently developed 15 criteria and guidelines for the accreditation of learning programmes for

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) providers and higher education providers. These criteria are as follows: Registration and Accreditation Status of the ETP/Awarding Body; Needs Assessment and Rationale; Learning Programme Based on the Qualification on the NCQF; Learning Programme General Information; Learning Programme Content and Delivery; Learning Support System; Assessment and Moderation Systems; Modes of Delivery; Learning Programme Evaluation and Review; Human Resources, Financial Resources, Physical Resources; and Benchmarking, Comparability and Articulation.<sup>467</sup>

The key stakeholders were identified as learners, ETPs, professional bodies/industry, the Human Resource Development Council and government. Their roles and needs/demands/priorities are described in the table which follows:

462 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

463 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

464 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

465 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

466 Botswana Qualification Authority document. Quality Assurance Standard 1: Criteria and guidelines for registration and accreditation of education and training providers (2017). Provided as supporting document. Received October 10, 2017

467 Botswana Qualification Authority document. Quality Assurance Standard 1: Criteria and guidelines for registration and accreditation of education and training providers (2017). Provided as supporting document. Received October 10, 2017

Table 9 Stakeholders and their needs (Botswana Qualification Authority - BQA)<sup>468</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Learners	Learners are the 'eyes of the Authority at ETPs' <sup>468</sup>	Quality learning programmes and conducive learning environment
ETPs	Provision of quality learning programmes	Need accreditation processes which are less cumbersome
Industry/ Professional Bodies	Information of needs to ensure alignment of the programmes to the needs.	Work ready graduates
Human Resource Development Council	Provide a link with industry	Provision of quality skills to the labour market
Government	Funding of the QA system	Assurance of quality of the education and training system

The key priority with regard to QA in the country was the alignment of learning programmes to the NCQF.<sup>470</sup> The main needs of the organisation to help fulfil these priorities included building the capacity of BQA personnel and training subject matter experts.<sup>471</sup>

Some recent developments point to efforts to prioritise QA in the country. As recently as January 2017, the International Network for Higher Education in Africa<sup>472</sup> described how the BQA was tightening up on quality assurance across all levels of education, and not just for the tertiary sector. The current CEO of the BQA, Abel Modungwa, explained that the Authority would register and accredit both private and public education and training providers from early childhood to higher education, and emphasised that this 'will improve coordination of the system and address issues of the National Credit and Qualifications Framework (NCQF) and quality assurance.'<sup>473</sup> It was explained that the NCQF would introduce an outcome-based learning system, ensure clear definition of levels and qualifications and would entail skills, knowledge and competencies expected at each level. With specific reference to tertiary education, the provisional accreditation and programme approval for programmes previously granted by the BQA would no longer occur. Furthermore, a greater responsibility was being placed on tertiary institutions to ensure that the cre-

dentials of lecturers were credible prior to recruiting them, following an increase in the number of academics with fraudulent credentials. In this regard, the BQA would also play a role in undertaking cross-checks. The consequences were serious as institutions who did not comply would have their licences revoked. The BQA would be working with the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) of institutions to ensure complete compliance. The CEO reiterated that the overall emphasis of this approach is on 'improving quality, relevance, access and equity to address challenges of skills mismatch.'<sup>474</sup>

These developments in ensuring quality assurance appear to be evidence of the BQA acting in line with the quality priorities of the Botswana Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP 2015-2020).<sup>475</sup> The ETSSP is a more recent key milestone directing a refocus of education and training in Botswana to arrive at a more diversified and knowledge-based economy which is closely aligned to the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE 1994), the National Development Plan, Vision 2016 and as well as the Millennium Development Goals.<sup>476</sup> In addition to closing the gap between qualification and labour market requirement, it seeks to 'facilitate improved outcomes for all learners by addressing issues of quality, relevance, access, equity and accountability across the entire sector, from

467 Botswana Qualification Authority document. Quality Assurance Standard 1: Criteria and guidelines for registration and accreditation of education and training providers (2017). Provided as supporting document. Received October 10, 2017

468 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

469 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

470 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

471 Questionnaire response 1 from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA).

Received October 15, 2017

472 International Network for Higher Education in Africa (INHEA) website. Accessed August 10, from <http://www.inhea.org/ahen/botswana/>

473 Kayawe, B. (2017). BQA Tightens up Quality Assurance. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=66098&dir=2017/january/25>

474 *ibid.*

475 The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP 2015-2020). Retrieved August 10, 2017, from <http://www.gov.bw/globalassets/moe/acts/moesd-etssp-education-strategy-approved-version-ii.pdf>

476 *ibid.*, p6

Pre-Primary school to Tertiary level.<sup>477</sup> Improving the quality and relevance of Education is one among other Critical Sector Strategic Priorities.<sup>478</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

#### **University of Botswana**

The University of Botswana, popularly known as UB was established in 1982 as the first institution of higher education in Botswana. The University has three campuses: one in the capital city Gaborone, one in Francistown, and another in Maun.<sup>479</sup>

A 2012 SARUA study found that internal quality assurance processes are in place at the University of Botswana (UB) and that these processes are enabled by a dedicated budget. The quality assurance framework covers teaching, research and community service activities, as well as student performance, administrative processes, entrepreneurial activities and external relations.<sup>480</sup> It was found that UB takes part in mandatory peer review quality assessments. In addition to having mechanisms in place to provide ongoing staff development, training and orientation to newly-appointed staff members, UB also had mandatory processes in place for evaluating the performance of individual teaching staff.<sup>481</sup> Furthermore, UB conducts regular internal evaluations of its academic programmes. It was found that student learning services including libraries, advice centres, and student orientation and others, as well as all research activities, are evaluated. UB has also adopted a rigorous process to moderate exams and marking for each course, which while costly, have contributed to quality.<sup>482</sup>

Students are provided with an opportunity to voice their views on a range of issues and services. In order to obtain student feedback on academic issues, governance and student services, formal student satisfaction surveys are conducted across these three areas in order to improve quality, signalling that student feedback is actively encouraged and sought. Students are enabled on their academic journey through student support services which include accommodation, sports facilities, information on study opportunities in other institutions, social and cultural activities, support for international student health and well-

ness, disability and catering services. Services have been rated as 'reasonable in quality and capacity, except sports facilities, which are rated as of good quality.'<sup>483</sup> The study found that other services including academic orientation, academic support, career guidance, psychological counselling, protection and domestic services, health facilities, and residence programmes (living, learning community programmes) 'are available and sufficient to accommodate student numbers'<sup>484</sup> with services being rated at either a reasonable or good level. In terms of additional developments, the study found that UB (at the time of the study) was building a recreational centre to be used by students and staff. UB has a campus-wide wireless network for to support students at no charge and digital library materials.

#### **Biotekanelo College**

The College opened its doors for the first batch of students in May 2007, at the time operating as Boitekanelo Training Institute (BTI), which later changed to Boitekanelo College in 2011 offering Certificate, Diploma and Degree programmes accredited and approved by BQA. The institution sees quality assurance and management as a critical aspect of teaching and learning.<sup>485</sup> As part of its objectives, it seeks to 'provide adequate resources for quality education, training, research and consultancy based on national principles and values, thus serving and meeting the changing needs of society by providing quality higher education in Botswana and beyond.'<sup>486</sup> The institution has a number of quality assurance mechanisms which include but are not limited to the following; internal and external moderation of examinations to ensure that students are given examinations which are of set standards. Internal quality assurance mechanisms utilized by the College take the form of departmental moderation of examination papers by peers, vetting by the Academic Board, and then the Academic Council. Also, student-lecture evaluations/surveys are used to assess the quality of lecturers' teaching. These are done to gather information on the experiences and perceptions of students. The survey is carried out by the office of the Academic Registrar.<sup>487</sup>

#### **The Botswana International University of Science and Technology**

The Botswana International University of Science and Technology, (BIUST), is an international university located

477 *ibid.*, p6

478 *ibid.*, p9

479 Wikipedia. University of Botswana. Accessed September 24, 2017 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_Botswana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Botswana)

480 Malete, L., and Kobedi, K. (2012). Chapter 2: Botswana. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>, p19

481 Malete, L., and Kobedi, K. (2012). Chapter 2: Botswana. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in

Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>, p19

482 *ibid.*, p19

483 *ibid.*, p19

484 *ibid.*, p19

485 Boitekanelo College. (no date) Quality Assurance Mechanisms. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from <http://www.boitekanelo.ac.bw/qualityassurance.aspx>

486 *ibid.*

487 *ibid.*

in the town of Palapye, Botswana. It is Botswana's second university, after the University of Botswana.<sup>488</sup> BIUST is still in the early phases of QA development:

*The Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) is a relatively young institution, and is still in the process of putting structures in place.*<sup>489</sup>

BIUST's approach to QA is university wide. The purpose of the University's QA approach is to have continuous improvement by identifying gaps and finding the best way of addressing them.<sup>490</sup> A number of policies have been developed to address QA requirements, for example, a policy exists for programme development and approval. Institutional and programme accreditation are undertaken at different levels as per the BQA's regulations. Institutional registration and accreditation are prerequisites to programme accreditation. Currently, BIUST is operating under the registration licence that was granted by the TEC. The

application for registration and accreditation as an Education and Training Provider will be submitted once completed. The university plans to have internal auditors to monitor adherence to set processes and this will occur at least twice a year. These will include announced and unannounced audits. The key focus of internal audits is financial matters, but this is seen to contribute to QA processes at the University.<sup>491</sup> Programme accreditation is conducted in line with the QA Agency's requirements.<sup>492</sup>

Regarding the steps involved in QA, it was reported that the plan is to involve representation of the entire education community and form a core working group that will take charge of QA in their various Directorates.<sup>493</sup> BIUST also identified the roles of the various stakeholders in QA as well as their needs, demands or priorities. This is reflected in the table which follows:

Table 10 Stakeholders and their needs (Botswana International University of Science and Technology)<sup>494</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Students/learners	Without them there will be no education system, and no need for QA. Students are the reason for institutional existence.	They need internationally competitive programmes hence the environment/University should be structured in such a way that the graduates are employable and internationally competitive.
Programme Developers	Develop relevant programmes that fit in the local market as well as international market. These can be institutions or individuals outside the institutions.	They must be trained to ensure that they develop programmes that meet the requirements of the Qualification Frameworks (both local, SADC and international). Thus, they should be able to map the qualifications to be able to state the level in all three frameworks; National, SADC and international.
Lectures/instructors	They deliver the programme.	They must be trained to be able to employ the latest technology and 'move with the times'. Their lecture method should be relevant to the current environment.

488 Wikipedia. Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Accessed September 24, 2017 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botswana\\_International\\_University\\_of\\_Science\\_and\\_Technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Botswana_International_University_of_Science_and_Technology)

489 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

490 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

491 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of

Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

492 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

493 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

494 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Industry	They employ the graduates	Relevance of the curriculum to the current work environment is necessary in order to produce work ready graduates.
Government	They pay for most of the learners	The money spent should be well accounted for. There should be evidence of the institution's contribution to industry, including innovation.
Taxpayer	Their taxes are partly used for education purposes.	The money spent should be well accounted for. There should be evidence of the institution's contribution to industry, including innovation.

The quality criteria used by BIUST were identified as follows: governance; management; scope of accreditation; quality management; records management; financial management; human resources; physical resources; admissions, access and equity; assessment and criteria; learner support services; research; and internationalisation.<sup>495</sup> The key QA priorities of the institution were identified as institutional accreditation, programme accreditation and ISO certification, while the needs to achieve this were staff development to make sure that all members of staff understand the need for QA and its benefits, as well as building a culture of QA within the university.<sup>496</sup>

#### Botho University

In terms of a quality assurance framework, Botho University uses the ISO 9001:2008 QMS framework along with other best practices. The purpose of its QA approach is to a) demonstrate its ability to consistently provide services that meet customers' and applicable regulatory requirements and b) enhance customer satisfaction through the effective application of the QMS processes for continual improvement of the system and the assurance of conformity to customer and applicable regulatory requirements.<sup>497</sup>

QA is focused at both the institutional and programme levels. At an institutional level it covers all the operations of the university, while benchmarking characterises QA at the programme level.<sup>498</sup> With regard to its approaches to QA, the institutional and programme level accreditations are significantly benchmarked with national and international regulatory bodies. The University subscribes to the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) as a way of fostering continuous improvement of quality. Accreditation

visits are conducted in line with the BQA's requirements. Furthermore, KPI reviews and management reviews are undertaken, as per ISO 9001:2008 requirements. The University also has a dedicated department, namely, the Teaching Excellence Department, to monitor and improve the quality of learning.<sup>499</sup>

Botho University identified the roles of the various stakeholders in QA as well as their needs, demands or priorities. This is reflected in the table which follows:

495 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017  
496 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

497 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017  
498 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017  
499 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

Table 11 Stakeholders and their needs<sup>500</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Students	Actively participate in the learning and teaching process	Receive quality learning and teaching, learning resources and processes
Staff	Develop and offer quality learning programmes	Develop and offer quality learning programmes Staff development in quality teaching and learning
Regulatory Bodies/ Government	Set regulatory requirements and standards and Monitor regulatory compliance	Institutional compliance to regulatory requirements Staff development of regulatory reviewers on regulatory requirements
Community	Set expectations on quality of offerings by the institutions	Tangible benefits in society through institutional initiatives/ work

In terms of the QA steps it follows, it was reported that process maps were used to document QA steps:

*As part of our QMS, we have global process map which indicates the entire University QA approach at high level. Each operational step of the University is documented as a procedure or a process map which will in turn guide the operations<sup>501</sup>*

Specific quality criteria were identified as: enhancing customer satisfaction; increasing employee satisfaction; increasing student enrolment; increasing employable graduate output; improving delivery performance; enhancing community support; and financial sustainability.<sup>502</sup>

With regard to the QA priorities and needs of the institution, it was reported that the university's key QA priorities are mentioned in its Quality Policy as follows:

*Botho University aspires to be a centre of excellence in higher learning and a driver for positive social change operating on a strong financial and viable business model. We will provide a quality educational experience continually benchmarked on national and international academic standards to produce well-rounded employable graduates for the global market.<sup>503</sup>*

The needs to help fulfil these priorities were reported as follows: enhance QA skills through various trainings/courses; enhanced monitoring of the QMS; alignment of best

QA frameworks together; and customise institutional QA framework.<sup>504</sup>

In relation to the impact of the work of the institution, it was reported that other universities in the region benchmark themselves against Botho University:

*We have become a benchmarking institution to other institutions in the region.<sup>505</sup>*

The impact has also included the increased reputation of the institution, increased confidence among stakeholders and a systems driven approach to operations.<sup>506</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

It appears that there is an appreciation for the role of QA and students now report quality concerns to the BQA:

*There has been an appreciation of role of quality assurance. Learners now demand accredited learning programmes. Whenever the quality drops, the learners inform the Authority without delay.<sup>507</sup>*

A key strength of QA in the country relates to confidence in the education and training system:

*It is understood as the only measure of source of confidence in the education and training system.<sup>508</sup>*

500 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

501 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

502 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

503 Excerpt from QA Policy cited in Questionnaire response from Botho

University. Received September 18, 2017

504 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

505 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

506 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

507 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA).

Received October 15, 2017

508 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA).

Received October 15, 2017

Another further strength relates to the existence of a QA body:

*There is a body responsible for QA and so employ a common QA platform to ensure that the concept of quality is practiced from early childhood.*<sup>509</sup>

Botho University also saw the existence of a regulatory body established by law was regarded as a key strength.<sup>510</sup>

On the other hand, QA has only recently been given visibility. It was reported that quality assurance is 'new in the ETPs' and that management of the ETPs does not prioritise QA. Furthermore, QA does not receive the resources required:

*It is typically under resourced which results in low levels of compliance and frequent lapses in the IQA systems.*<sup>511</sup>

A key challenge facing QA in Botswana pertained to not having relevant staff at institutions to execute the mandate of the agency, particularly as there is already a need for capacity building. In addition, it was reported that institutions feel the agency uses competitor institutions to evaluate their work.<sup>512</sup> It was furthermore felt that understanding the concept of QA was not extra work, but that preparations to ensure that processes are followed and that there was quality education did involve extra work. Furthermore, it was felt that applicability of the principles is still a challenge.<sup>513</sup> The challenges facing QA in the country were further identified by one of the Universities as follows: dissemination of the regulatory requirements to all education and training providers; transitional ambiguities between old and new regulations; adhering to timelines for service level agreements; and lack of expertise in the field of QA.<sup>514</sup>

It is reported that a key challenge facing the education sector in Botswana is to improve the quality of education at all levels. Declining performance in national examinations and also in periodic international assessments that are set, as well as emerging evidence from studies, provides evidence to this effect.<sup>515</sup> These challenges are evident in early childhood care and education, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. The ETSSP frames the challenges and issues both in relation to the quality and relevance of education. In respect of tertiary education, it draws attention to the fact that quality assurance arrangements are weak at both system and institutional levels.<sup>516</sup> The development of the tertiary sub-sector has been im-

pacted on by the absence of a robust quality assurance system and the implementation thereof. While this is the case across all institutions, it is more pronounced in the private tertiary institutions. This has resulted in a dire need to intervene in order to develop quality assurance systems to guarantee the provision of high quality education in the tertiary sector.<sup>517</sup> The BQA, discussed earlier, appears to be placing a significant focus on quality assurance as part of its mandate. The results of these efforts might only be seen in a few years to come.

The ETSSP also highlights staff-student ratios as an impediment to quality educational offerings, the appropriate utilisation of resources and an excellent student experience. Most staff in public Colleges of Education and Institutes of Health Sciences carry a very low workload and 'staff-student ratios are not compatible with set standards and norms.'<sup>518</sup> The under-utilisation of academic staff is problematic and institutions where this is the case need to be rationalized to improve the situation. Furthermore, through collaborative efforts among universities, programmes at higher education institutions need to be revised to cater for providing graduates with skills to increase employability as well as transferrable skills for a dynamic labour market.<sup>519</sup> In respect of research offerings, the quality of publications is not ideal (and the quantity).

A study on quality assurance focusing on the University of Botswana, Limkokwing University and the Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST)<sup>520</sup> found that there was need for the adequate implementation of the quality assurance policy at each of these institutions. Furthermore, most academic staff members were of the view that the institutions' policy assurance policy was ineffective and required improvement. Chief among the concerns of academic staff at these three universities was understaffing and high teaching loads which they felt had a negative impact on the quality of academic programmes. The study reported that participants would like more research to be done on a quality assurance model that could be relevant to the institution.

Skills gaps are a further challenge facing QA in higher education. Specific gaps in skills with regard to QA, including:

- Policy making;
- Accreditation processes implementation;
- Auditing processes; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation.<sup>521</sup>

509 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

510 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

511 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

512 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

513 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

514 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

515 The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP 2015-2020). Retrieved August 10, 2017, from <http://www.gov.bw/globalassets/moe/acts/moesd-etssp-education-strategy-approved-version-ii.pdf>, p27

516 *ibid.*, p31

517 *ibid.*, p31

518 ETSSP (2015-2020), p31

519 *ibid.*, p31

520 Pule, G.J (2014). Perceptions about Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Botswana. Retrieved September 14, 2017 from [https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/46167/Pule\\_Perceptions\\_2015.pdf;sequence=1](https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/46167/Pule_Perceptions_2015.pdf;sequence=1)

Skills gaps were further reported by one institution as follows: lack of participation in regional and international QA workshops and initiatives; lack of understanding of quality differentiation among institutions; and shying away from benchmarking exercises.<sup>522</sup>

With regard to capacity building requirements, a key need for HEIs was setting up an IQA function.<sup>523</sup> At an institutional level, capacity building requirements to implement and support QA processes were identified as follows: understanding the standards and their relevance to continuous improvement of the education system; the audit process; and the importance of adherence to QA principles.<sup>524</sup> It was further reported that there was a need for an understanding of quality differentiation among institutions as well as a need for a 'quality consciousness' among higher education institutions.<sup>525</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

It was reported that partnership between BQA and professional bodies was key to strengthening QA in the country.<sup>526</sup> Furthermore, the separation of the education systems (HE, TVET and General Education) was highlighted:

*Separation of the education systems by the agency for purposes of concentration will go a long way in increasing specialization and hence productivity.<sup>527</sup>*

Additionally, it was reported that the cycle of audits should be intensified, and recommendations acted upon.<sup>528</sup>

Other aspects deemed to be important for strengthening QA in the country were the sharing of good practices across the continent, country arrangements for peer audits, training and certification of QA staff, an international body responsible for the registration and conduct of QA practitioners and regular monitoring.<sup>529</sup> It was also reported that QA in the country could be strengthened through the dissemination of information on quality assurance and encouraging participation in QA forums at a regional and international level.<sup>530</sup>

With regard to strengthening the QA agency in the country, developing databases and training of staff in QA matters were highlighted.<sup>531</sup>

It was also reported that the strengthening of the quality assurance agency in the country would need to include the separation of the three subsystems (HE, TVET and General Education), as this was 'burdensome'. Additionally, larger numbers of staff were required to undertake the work, and these staff needed to be capacitated for this purpose.<sup>532</sup>

It was also reported that there should be clarity on regulatory requirements and the importance of the regulatory body in a controlled environment<sup>533</sup>, and furthermore that quality differentiation among HEIs should be supported:

*Motivate and support quality differentiation among higher education institutions.<sup>534</sup>*

In relation to awareness of the SADC Qualification Framework and its value, the BQA is not only aware of the SADC-QF but actively participates in alignment efforts:

*BQA is fully aware of the SADCQF and participates in the alignment project of the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) which seeks to ensure that the national and the regional frameworks are aligned.<sup>535</sup>*

It was reported that the BQA has been given the responsibility of driving the QA project of the SADC Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) which aims to ensure that the national and regional QA systems are harmonised. Furthermore, capacity building of the QA agencies was among its planned activities.<sup>536</sup>

521 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

522 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

523 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

524 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

525 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

526 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

527 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

528 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

529 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of

Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

530 Questionnaire response from Botho University. Received September 18, 2017

531 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

532 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

533 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

534 Questionnaire response from Botswana International University of Science and Technology. Received September 19, 2017

535 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

536 Questionnaire response from Botswana Qualification Authority (BQA). Received October 15, 2017

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a post-conflict country on its way to recovery. For over three decades, the higher education system in the DRC faced increasing growth, but this was accompanied by a deterioration in quality. The number of higher education institutions increased from three during the period 1954-1960 to 37 institutions in the period 1981-1990 and more than 1,300 public and private HEIs in the country in 2012.<sup>537</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

The DRC has a national coordination of quality assurance (CONAQ) which acts as an agency and supervises the activities of the internal quality assurance units. Their approach aims to promote the culture of quality in higher education.<sup>538</sup> Universities are required to report on QA at the national level. The DRC reportedly has quality assurance framework as well as a document outlining national specifications of quality assurance processes.<sup>539</sup>

The approach to quality currently focuses on accreditation:

*Our approach focuses much more on accreditation. At present, the Ministry of Higher Education (ESU), through its central administration, accredits the Institutions. In this respect, the control is not well done since there are institutions despite approved but do not fulfil the conditions of operation. We want everyone to have internal quality assurance units..., self-evaluate and improve the quality of their work. Second, it must be recognized that, on the other hand, some higher education establishments... have already come to the fore. They are making efforts to build quality culture.<sup>540</sup>*

Evidence from an International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) workshop indicate that in 2009 surveys and audits of public and private HEIs was initiated. These audits were conducted by a multi-sectorial and multi-disciplinary investigation team according to set criteria including infrastructure, educational materials and human resources. The purpose of these audits was to:

- a) Create an updated database of each HEI
- b) Set standards for adequate quality training in educational structures at all levels;
- c) Identify and close non-viable institutions; and
- d) Establish structures to contribute to the implementation of the new vision of the overhauled higher education and university system.<sup>541</sup>

QA has been made compulsory at both private and public HEIs. *An internal evaluation framework has already been developed and even validated by partners in the higher education sector, but it is not yet operational. We hope that it will be in the academic year 2017-2018<sup>542</sup>*

There is an internal evaluation framework that is adopted and validated by the HE sub-sector partners. The DRC QAA reports that it was inspired by the CAMES, North Africa and SARUA model. Its key priorities are to create the National Quality Assurance Agency (ANAQ/ESU); and establish institutional QA units.<sup>543</sup> The following table outlines the key stakeholders in QA in the DRC:

537 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

538 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

539 Gadinger, B. (2012). Chapter 4: Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/DRC%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>

540 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

541 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

542 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

543 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

Table 12 Key stakeholders and their needs (Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité)

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving the working conditions of staff</li> <li>to intervene in the budget of HEIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>applications of instructions to managers</li> <li>respect for good governance</li> </ul>
Teaching and administrative staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improving the quality of education</li> <li>developing and adapting curricula</li> <li>improving financial, administrative and other governance.</li> <li>Awareness of the socio-economic conditions of the staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>their capacity in university governance</li> <li>obtaining work equipment</li> <li>rehabilitate or build infrastructure</li> <li>ICT</li> </ul>
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evaluating lessons</li> <li>have the right working conditions,</li> <li>contribute to the promotion of quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>update the documentary background</li> <li>improving the internet</li> <li>rehabilitate or build infrastructure</li> </ul>
Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern about the quality of HEI activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to improve the good conditions of practice</li> </ul>
Professional bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to participate in the development of programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to contribute to the financing of HEIs in research - training of qualified and competent staff</li> </ul>
Local and international Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to participate in inter-university collaboration activities</li> <li>to finance certain projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to improve the quality of the activities developed in the HEI</li> </ul>

The respondent from CONAQ reported that the main needs were to

- Establish a National Quality Assurance Agency (ANAQ)/ ESU facilitators;
- Strengthen facilitators' capacities in quality management;
- Participate in the financing of this ANAQ / ESU;
- Follow-up of self-assessments in the HEIs;
- Participate in workshops, QA conferences; and
- Develop exchanges with the other external QA agencies.<sup>544</sup>

### Internal Quality Assurance

*In the Democratic Republic of Congo, quality assurance is much more concentrated at the institutional level. Each institution of higher and university education is recommended to set up an internal quality assurance unit.<sup>545</sup>*

Reports indicate that three quarters of the universities and colleges of higher education in DRC have set up a quality assurance unit in charge of designing the institution's strategic plan, assessing the institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, and suggesting appropriate remedial action where necessary.<sup>546</sup> The 2012 SARUA study indicates that four of the six participating universities reported that peer-review quality assessments are in place. Five of the universities do internal quality assurance as well, but only one university had a quality assurance budget at that time. To further enhance quality, five universities reported that they provide training opportunities for newly appointed staff members and four of them offer ongoing training and development opportunities to staff.<sup>547</sup>

### Université de Goma

Université de Goma was the only university from the DRC to participate in this research study. The university reported using the national QA framework to inform its IQA processes,

544 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

545 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

546 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary

Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

547 Gadinger, B. (2012). Chapter 4: Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/DRC%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>

with the purpose of the approach being to improve quality in teaching and in research. QA is reportedly focussed at the institutional, programmatic, and research level.

Feedback from the university indicates that the university is involved in accreditation and audit, and there is 'teacher

evaluation by students, internal and external evaluation' (although no additional information was provided). The key priority with regards to QA is to improve quality of teaching and evaluation. The main reported needs in this regard are training, capacity building in QA, computers, and international collaboration on QA matters. The following key stakeholders were identified:

Table 13 Key QA stakeholders and their needs (Université de Goma)<sup>548</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Rector	Head of QA	Training and capacity building in QA
Deputy Rector (academic affairs)	QA focus point	Training and capacity building in QA
Two QA administrators		Training and capacity building in QA

The university respondent highlighted that based on the work they have done so far, there has been some improvement of quality in teaching and evaluation. He also pointed to the need for greater engagement with QA issues and emphasised developing connections with other QA bodies in other countries.<sup>549</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

The CONAQ respondent highlighted that all HEIs have been informed about QA issues, and they are required to comply to QA processes. Documents have been produced and disseminated for this purpose. He further highlighted the following strengths of QA in the DRC:

- Each institution is aware of the importance of QA;
- There are internal QA units in some HEIs;
- An internal evaluation framework has been produced and disseminated
- There has been participation in workshops organized by international organizations;
- The Head of State has promulgated the 'Framework Law on National Education'; and
- External evaluation of the two universities has been conducted.<sup>550</sup>

However, problems in higher education include corruption, the low quality of education, the proliferation of educational institutions that lack the appropriate resources or profes-

sors, and the commercialisation of reference books.<sup>551</sup> The respondent from CONAQ reported the following challenges:

- Ensuring the effectiveness of IQA in approximately 700 universities and colleges;
- Applying the internal evaluation framework;
- Ensuring the accreditation of all HEIs; and
- Lack of training of QA trainers.<sup>552</sup>

The challenge of internal QA was also highlighted by the respondent from Université de Goma, who noted the challenge of 'implementation of QA' in HEIs.

The following skills gaps were highlighted by the QAA:

- Insufficient qualified QA managers;
- 'Timid' involvement of EUSU officials;
- The lack of awareness of the importance of QA by certain academic authorities; and
- Lack of funding for QA activities.<sup>553</sup>

Capacity building required is reportedly required around the following:

- Training of QA managers;
- Capacity building of IQA units;
- Awareness of the university community in QA; and
- Dissemination of QA guidelines in all HEIs.<sup>554</sup>

548 Questionnaire response from Université de Goma. Received October 3, 2017

549 Questionnaire response from Université de Goma. Received October 3, 2017

550 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

551 VLIRUOS. (2016). Strengthening higher education in DR Congo. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.vliruos.be/en/ongoing-projects/testimonials/testimonialdetail/strengthening-higher-education-in-dr-con->

[go\\_7810/](#)

552 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

553 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

554 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

### Improving QA in the Country

The QAA respondent noted that in order to improve QA in the DRC, there is a need for improved awareness of the entire university community regarding QA, and there is a need for increased involvement of academic authorities in QA. The respondent further highlighted the requirements to improve the QAA:

- Set up the QA structure;
- Provide good working conditions for the ANAQ/ESU facilitators;
- Finance the activities of the ANAQ to cover all HEIs; and
- Foster international exchanges with other QA structures.<sup>555</sup>

Flemish and Congolese partners are working together to boost the standard of Congo's universities in the VLIR-UOS Quality Assurance programme.<sup>556</sup> The QAA is also aware of the SADCQF indicating that it will allow the recognition of our qualifications and will facilitate the mobility of teachers, researchers, students and administrative staff.<sup>557</sup>

## LESOTHO

### External Quality Assurance

The Council on Higher Education in Lesotho (CHE)<sup>558</sup> was founded by the Higher Education Act of 2004. The Act provides for the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HEQAC) responsible mainly for quality promotion and quality assurance. The specific functions of the committee as per Section 5 (3) of the Act are to: promote quality assurance in higher education; audit quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions; accredit programmes and issue certificate of accreditation of higher education and monitor; and evaluate performance of academic programmes and higher education institutions.<sup>559</sup> Various internal and external factors have provided the impetus for quality assurance in higher education including 'the shift from universities as institutions of the elite to institutions of a mass of students, diminishing funding levels, increasing calls for accountability of those running the universities, and globalization'.<sup>560</sup>

The three key quality assurance processes in Lesotho are therefore programme accreditation of programmes offered by public and private institutions, registration of private institutions and institutional audits. Whereas public institutions are founded by an Act of Parliament, all private institutions have to be registered by the Registrar of Private institutions based in the Ministry of Education and Training. One of the preconditions for registration is the review of programmes to assess whether they can be accredited. It is reported that public and private institutions are audited.<sup>561</sup>

The CHE has focused on building and enhancing the quality of programmes offered in Lesotho institutions of higher learning. Towards this end it has developed standards and criteria to guide and inform a range of quality assurance processes such as programme accreditation, institutional audits, monitoring and evaluation. Part of the Minimum Programme Accreditation Standards of the CHE which describe expectations about the internal quality assurance mechanisms of institutions are as follows:

- 1) The programme (s) has/have been accredited by relevant authority in their country of origin, the Council

555 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

556 VLIRUOS. (2016). Strengthening higher education in DR Congo. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from [http://www.vliruos.be/en/ongoing-projects/testimonials/testimonialdetail/strengthening-higher-education-in-dr-congo\\_7810/](http://www.vliruos.be/en/ongoing-projects/testimonials/testimonialdetail/strengthening-higher-education-in-dr-congo_7810/)

557 Questionnaire response from Coordination Nationale Assurance Qualité (CONAQ). Received September 13, 2017

558 Council on Higher Education website. Homepage. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.ls/functions/default.php>

559 *ibid.*

560 CHE. Minimum Programme Accreditation Standards for HEIs in Lesotho (2014, p1). Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Minimum%20Accreditation%20Standards%20for%20Tuition%20Providers.pdf>

561 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

- on Higher Education (CHE) and/or a relevant local professional body, where appropriate and relevant;
- 2) The programme(s) has/have been registered in the Qualifications Framework for Lesotho (QFL);
  - 3) The programme delivery is guided by a comprehensive Institutional quality assurance policy that clearly defines the main goals, procedures and tools to be used to monitor the quality of programme offering;
  - 4) Internal quality assurance mechanisms are benchmarked against best practices and internal quality assurance processes are supported by external processes as per the requirements of national quality assurance agency;
  - 5) The quality assurance policy is consistent with the general institutional policies, values, ethos and practices;
  - 6) A quality management mechanism is in place to ensure that the provider delivers the programmes according to specifications of the owner of the programme, and that there is compliance with the national quality requirements;
  - 7) Formal internal quality assurance mechanisms are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the day-to-day activities of the tuition provider, including those pertaining to governance, finances, teaching and assessment;
  - 8) A formal self-appraisal system exists for monitoring the performance of administrative, teaching and support staff, including line manager evaluation, peer-classroom observations and student feedback;
  - 9) Internal quality assurance tools enable use of multiple sources of information to monitor the quality of teaching, including classroom observations, and prompt and meaningful student feedback;
  - 10) A process is in place to ensure that appropriate corrective measures are taken on the basis of information gathered on the monitoring of the quality of teaching;
  - 11) Data gathered from the monitoring of teaching and learning meaningfully feeds back into programme planning and development processes to ensure constant improvement;
  - 12) Where programmes are offered across borders, there is adherence to meeting quality assurance requirements of Lesotho in line with internationally accepted guidelines and best practices;
  - 13) Quality management mechanisms are in place to ensure that if the programmes are exported, they are of equivalent quality (or better) to the programmes offered in Lesotho, and that there is compliance with the national quality criteria and other requirements of the importing country;
  - 14) If the programmes are offered online, mechanisms for monitoring student participation and performance are integrated in the design into the learning and management system of the programmes - for example, a system is designed to track: - time spent by different students on components of the materials; - student participation in online discussions; - nature of tutor feedback given online; - ensuring that submitted assignments are not plagiarized;
  - 15) Technical platforms are efficiently managed by qualified staff to ensure their smooth running so students do not get disadvantaged;
  - 16) Support mechanisms for both students and staff are in place to ensure that any technical problems encountered are speedily resolved;
  - 17) Staff and students at all sites of delivery are fully aware of the quality assurance requirements of the provider, owner of the programme and the national quality assurance agency; and
  - 18) Staff and students at all sites of delivery take part in the review and revision of quality assurance tools.<sup>562</sup>

With regard to the second key process of institutional audits, the Institutional Audit Framework for Higher Education, hereafter referred to as the Framework, states that the standards stipulated therein should support and promote the achievement of the standards required for programme accreditation. The two processes (institutional audit and programme accreditation) should therefore be aligned. The Framework distinguishes between the mainly externally driven process of programme accreditation aimed at ensuring the quality of programmes to be offered by HEIs in Lesotho, and the 'internally steered' institutional audits, which have quality assurance (i.e. the enhancement and promotion of self-regulated quality) as the aim.

<sup>562</sup> CHE website. Minimum Programme Accreditation Standards for HEIs in Lesotho (2014). Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Minimum%20Accreditation%20Standards%20for%20Tuition%20Providers.pdf>

<sup>563</sup> CHE website. Institutional Audit Framework for Higher Education (no date, p3). Retrieved August 13, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20(Final).pdf)

Table 14 Stakeholders and their needs (Council on Higher Education Lesotho)<sup>565</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Council	Approves accreditation recommendations	Provides oversight on the operations of management
Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee [HEQAC]	Evaluates programme review reports and makes recommendations to Council	Makes accreditation recommendations to Council
Review Panels	Review of programmes and development of review reports	Makes accreditation recommendations to HEQAC
Higher Education Institution	Prepare submissions for review and develop improvement plans after reviews	Capacity-building on QA issues and consultations on the development of key QA tools

'An institutional audit could therefore be described as a process of critical self-reflection and self-evaluation aimed at the continuous improvement of the quality of higher education systems, processes and policies that support and enhance the quality of the academic offerings at higher education institutions'.<sup>563</sup> The Framework explains that the role of the external peer review panel, which is a part of the institutional audit, is to provide the institution and the CHE with an independent assessment of the institution's self-evaluation report. As explained in the Framework, the main functions of an external peer review panel are as follows: a) assess and verify inputs, outputs and outcomes against standardised benchmarks of quality; b) ensure greater accountability; c) facilitate the harmonisation of standards across academic institutions, and d) provide guidance to the institution regarding the further development and enhancement of the quality of its functions<sup>564</sup>.

The HEA identified the roles of the various stakeholders in QA as well as their needs, demands or priorities. This is reflected in table 14.

Based on their quality assurance approaches discussed earlier, the CHE reported being involved in the following QA steps: review of programmes to evaluate their accreditation status; registering higher education institutions if programmes are accredited; and auditing higher education institutions.

CHE's quality criteria consist of thirteen categories of standards:

- Goals and Objectives of the Programme;
- Financing of the Programme;
- Programme Design and Development;
- Teaching and Learning Strategy;
- Internal Quality Assurance Mechanisms;
- Physical Resources and Infrastructure;
- Staffing;
- Admissions;
- Assessment of Learner Attainment;
- Student Support Services;
- Research and Innovation;
- Community/Industry Engagement; and
- Internationalisation.<sup>566</sup>

The QA priorities were to ensure that all programmes are accredited and to improve the performance of higher education institutions, while the needs of the organization to fulfil these priorities included capacity building on the revision and benchmarking of the QA tools already developed, capacity building for higher education institutions to establish and operate internal QA units, and capacity building for higher education institutions on programme design and development.<sup>567</sup>

#### **Internal Quality Assurance**

At the time of a SARUA study (2012), the National University of Lesotho (NUL) reported that the university had no internal quality assurance processes, did not track student performance, and did not have a teaching and learning

564 Council on Higher Education. (no date). Institutional Audit Framework for Higher Education (p3). Retrieved August 13, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.che.ac.ls/documents/Institutional%20Audit%20Framework%20(Final).pdf)

565 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho.

Received September 15, 2017

566 *ibid.*

567 *ibid.*

strategy. The study found that the university did make use of peer review quality assessments, external moderators for examinations and sometimes conducts internal evaluations of its academic programmes. In addition, the university indicated that there was training for newly appointed staff members as well as mechanisms for ongoing staff development. It was found that while a performance evaluation process did exist for individual staff, it was voluntary rather than mandatory and therefore relied on the willingness of the academics to participate. Furthermore, NUL had gathered student feedback on academic matters. At the time of the SARUA study, it was found that 'there was no evaluation of student support services or research activities at the university'.<sup>568</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

In terms of the strengths of QA in the country, it was reported that the country has the legal framework (founding act, policy and regulations) and the QA tools. Furthermore, in terms of the impact of the work of the QA agency, the responsiveness of institutions to the call for QA was highlighted:

*We have not conducted a systematic study. But we think the institutions are responding to our call for building a QA Culture even though they struggle due to underfunding.*<sup>569</sup>

On the other hand, the challenges facing QA in the country included underfunding, inadequate capacity and a NQF that was not yet implemented:

- The national QA agency is understaffed and underfunded
- The institutions (public) are also underfunded
- There is lack of capacity on QA issues in the institutions
- The qualifications framework is not yet operational<sup>570</sup>

The specific skills gaps with regard to QA in the country were in the following areas: building a QA culture, programme design and development, programme reviews and institutional audits.<sup>571</sup> The capacity building that higher education institutions require in order to implement and support QA processes were reported to be in the following areas: programme design and development, development of the institutional QA infrastructure and QA concepts and processes.<sup>572</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

In reporting on what could be done to strengthen QA in the country, the provision of adequate funding for the national quality assurance agency was identified.<sup>573</sup> It was reported that increasing funding for the higher education sector would strengthen the quality assurance agency.<sup>574</sup> Furthermore, there was awareness of the SADFQF:

*It will ensure that my country is not left behind, and its QA processes are adequately bench-marked.*<sup>575</sup>

568 Ts'ephe, L (2012). Chapter 5: Lesotho. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

569 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

570 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

571 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho.

Received September 15, 2017

572 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

573 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

574 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

575 Questionnaire response from the Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in Lesotho. Received September 15, 2017

## MADAGASCAR

### External Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is a relatively new development in higher education in Madagascar. There is thus no statutory body tasked with the responsibility of ensuring quality and standards in the provision of higher education.<sup>576</sup> However, there is evidence that Madagascar is in the process of establishing a quality assurance agency. The former quality assurance agency—Agence Nationale d’Evaluation (AGEN-ATE) in Madagascar reportedly failed because it lacked legitimacy. The issue continues to be debated in Madagascar where the public institutions assert that because they are statutory bodies created by Parliament, they should not be subject to accreditation.<sup>577</sup>

However, it has also been reported that there is a process of institutional accreditation - programme accreditation is done as part of institutional accreditation, looking at a representative sample of programmes during each accreditation cycle and establishing a schedule to ensure that all are eventually reviewed.<sup>578</sup>

### Internal Quality Assurance

According to the SARUA 2012 study, one of the participating universities noted that that external evaluation by students of the educational system in Madagascar is not yet a normal practice amongst the Madagascan universities.<sup>579</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

There have been some successes with regards to QA in Madagascar. For example, the minister of education established a task team of ministry staff to begin work on an overall strategy for the transformation of postsecondary education. In early 2006 he began work with the newly elected presidents on an outline for change; in August he appointed a *groupe de réflexion* made up primarily of university presidents and a working group of vice-presidents, leaders in education, and senior ministry personnel. By October, significant progress had resulted in an out-

line for higher education changes, including accreditation, faculty development, a credit system, articulation between universities, upgrading and expansion of distance education, centres of excellence for regional universities, prioritization of recruitment priorities, improved governance, and enhancement of university finances.<sup>580</sup>

However, a more recent report indicates that universities face challenges of limited financial support, which is regarded as the primary challenge to assuring quality in higher education.<sup>581</sup> Further, several challenges have been identified as impacting on QA in higher education. These include:

- Much of the university curriculum is out of date. Only 64 percent (2006) of the faculty have PhDs or their equivalent. Few do any research or publish. A recent study shows only 87 publications in major refereed journals in 2004 and 121 in 2005. Research experience is limited, which undermines the ability of faculty to train and to stimulate students.
- University faculty are aging. The system suffers from a hiring freeze of more than a decade. As a result, the average age of faculty members is 56 years, with only 15 faculty members in all six universities under the age of 40.
- The system suffers from inertia. Senior university administrators resisted suggestions for reform until 2006 when new elections of presidents brought in leaders who are aware that Madagascar is far behind most of the rest of Africa and committed to improving quality. The new administrators, too, face the challenge of mobilizing support for reform.<sup>582</sup>

576 Gadinger, B. (2012). Madagascar. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/Madagascar%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>

577 Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

578 Materu, P. (2007). Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: status, challenges, opportunities and promising practices. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

579 Gadinger, B. (2012). Chapter 6: Madagascar. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S. (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from

<http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

580 Hayward, F.M. and Rasoanampoizina, H. (no date). Planning for Higher Education Change in Madagascar. International Higher Education- African Focus. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/viewFile/7934/7085>

581 Gadinger, B. (2012). Madagascar. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/Madagascar%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>

582 Hayward, F.M. and Rasoanampoizina, H. (no date). Planning for Higher Education Change in Madagascar. International Higher Education- African Focus. Retrieved August 2, 2017 from <https://ejournals.bc.edu/ojs/index.php/ihe/article/viewFile/7934/7085>

## MALAWI

### External Quality Assurance

The quality assurance system in Malawi is still nascent.<sup>583</sup> According to the NCHE respondent, Malawi currently does not have a QA framework.<sup>584</sup> However, whilst there is no QA framework in place yet, the desktop search revealed that there are 'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Malawi's Higher Education Institutions'. The QA system is compulsory (statutory), and its purpose is to improve the provision of quality higher education in Malawi.<sup>585</sup> Parliament passed into law Bill 31 of 2010, authorising the creation of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). (NCHE) is a QA agency established by an Act of Parliament No.15 in 2011 to register and accredit institutions of HE with the responsibility to guarantee and maintain quality in HE by creating stable and reliable reference standards for registering and accrediting HE providers, their programmes and courses.<sup>586</sup> Specifically, the NCHE aims to promote and coordinate education provided by higher education institutions, design quality assurance systems and determine, maintain and regulate standards for teaching, examinations, qualifications and facilities; register, de-register and accredit higher education institutions; determine framework for funding higher education and provide guidance on terms and conditions for awarding students' grants, loans and scholarships; and harmonize student selection into public higher education institutions.<sup>587</sup>

QA is focussed at the institutional and programmatic level – focussing on assessment for registration and accreditation purposes. Ad hoc visits to institutions are also conducted. All public and private HEIs are subjected to accreditation using the accreditation framework. Institutions apply and submit self-assessment reports with applicable fees. A team of reviewers conduct the accreditation based on programmes offered. Annual audits are also conducted and involve institutions submitting annual reports and desk review. If omissions are observed, a formal assessment is conducted. The QA process can be summarised as follows:

- 1) Application process;
- 2) Registration process;
- 3) Accreditation;
- 4) Audits; and
- 5) Monitoring and evaluation.<sup>588</sup>

For any institution to be accredited, the NCHE must be satisfied, after a series of inspections and visitation, that the institution concerned has:

- Adequate physical and financial resources;
- Viable programmes; and
- Adequate qualified staff and structures of governance to deliver quality HE.<sup>589</sup>

The following table summarises the stakeholders for EQA in Malawi:

The NCHE respondent reported that the NCHE's key priorities are the accrediting HEIs, and establishing QA units in HEIs. In order to fulfil these priorities, it requires financial and human resources to conduct accreditation and registrations assessments, as well as a review of QA tools.

### Internal Quality Assurance

The QA system at the institutional level is quite young and in the process of being institutionalized in a four-year cycle of reviewing the curriculum and a total quality system. There is little capacity and resources which slow down the implementation of this central reform initiative. However, some mechanisms are already in place. QA is mainly done by external examiners, and HEIs in Malawi are trying to learn from what is happening in the region, by networking with others in SADC region.<sup>591</sup>

### University of Malawi

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) uses the National Qualifications Framework as an instrument for designing programmes, revising curricula and measuring learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and naming qualifications across UNIMA. UNIMA QF has three levels reflecting the current system of education and training. At each level three headings of descriptors explain the content of learning outcome. Learning outcomes outlines what a successful student will know, understand and be able to do.<sup>592</sup>

583 World Bank. (2014). What Will it Take to Turn Around Higher Education in Malawi? Retrieved March 14, 2017 from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/884611468048863484/pdf/85050BRIOWBoHooBox382147B-00PUBLICo.pdf>

584 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

585 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

586 Chirwa, P. (2016). Quality Assurance in Higher Education Sector in Malawi. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <https://www.slideshare.net/pamelachirwas/higher-education-in-malawi>

587 National Council for Higher Education. (2014). Home Page. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <http://www.nche.ac.mw/>

588 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education –

Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

589 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

590 Hahn, K., and van Bruggen, H. (2010). Tuning – Country report Malawi. Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Malawi\\_REVISED.doc](http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Malawi_REVISED.doc)

591 Chirwa, P. (2016). Quality Assurance in Higher Education Sector in Malawi. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <https://www.slideshare.net/pamelachirwas/higher-education-in-malawi>

592 Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

Table 15 Key stakeholders and their needs (National Council for Higher Education)<sup>590</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
QA agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops QA system at national level</li> <li>• Capacity building of QA desk officers and assessors</li> <li>• Conducts assessments for registration and accreditation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources to monitor institutions</li> </ul>
Higher Education Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of higher education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assurance units</li> <li>• QA tools</li> </ul>
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer employment</li> </ul>	
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipients of quality education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality education</li> </ul>
Other regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Augments provision of professional and acceptable services</li> </ul>	

### Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) developed its QA policy (which is aligned to the LUANAR Act) in 2014. The LUANAR Act defines the vision, mission, core values, goals, and objectives of QA at the university. The implementation of the QA policy is supported by several operational guidelines such as the Performance Management System (PMS), research, consultancy and outreach policy, examination guidelines, and curriculum review policy. IQA covers the areas of teaching, examination, and student research.<sup>593</sup>

With regards to teaching, the Head of Department and Deans are meant to monitor course delivery. However, most often the HOD gets feedback on the course delivery through the class representative. At the end of the course, students fill evaluation forms that discuss how the course was delivered. The feedback from these course evaluations is communicated to the lecturer concerned. 'Ideally', the curriculum for the various programs are reviewed every five years. For examinations, the lecturer concerned sets the examination and marking scheme which is vetted by peers and is reviewed by external examiners.<sup>594</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

The NCHE reports having made significant impacts thus far. This includes:

- 1) Accreditation of 90% of institutions;
- 2) Registration of new institutions;
- 3) Improved collaboration with HEIs;
- 4) Capacity building of institution on QA systems;
- 5) Institutional audits;
- 6) Development of minimum standards for higher education; and
- 7) Development of QA frameworks and assessment tools.

The NCHE respondent further highlighted that the QA is now well established, with 80% of positions filled, HEIs are familiar with QA requirements, and the quality of services has improved.<sup>595</sup>

However, it has been noted that the lack of action on the council has been stalling the accreditation and regulation of universities.<sup>596</sup> Further, despite increase in public and private universities in Malawi, access to higher education remains a challenge. It is believed that the solution to these challenges rests on educational systems, QA, and development of qual-

593 Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

594 *ibid.*

595 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

596 University World News. (2013). Higher education council finally gets going. Retrieved August 14, 2017 from <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20130329105258983>

ification frameworks to position the country on the global knowledge landscape. HE today faces significant challenges that threaten to undermine its quality.<sup>597</sup> Higher education institutions have struggled to maintain quality as they have tried to accommodate the rapid increase in enrolment over the past few years. A shortage of qualified academic staff has left students without quality teaching and also resulted in a rise in the student/lecturer ratio. Inadequate infrastructure and equipment has constrained access and compromised quality. Lack of funding has meant that most institutions can no longer afford objective external examiners.<sup>598</sup>

Other reported challenges are:

- Problems of underfunding have impacted on current resource and infrastructure constraints at the universities, and this has had a major negative impact on the University's ability to achieve its goals and objectives.
- Problems of quality and relevance of teaching and research has raised concern in the relevance of curricula, as expressed by the overall mismatch between programmes of study and labour market requirements. Institutions are generally ineffective at preparing students with applicable skills and reflecting the needs of the employment market
- Weak research and innovation capacities particularly in high priority areas, such as agriculture and natural resources limiting their capacity to meaningfully contribute to Malawi's development.<sup>599</sup>

The NCHE respondent further highlighted the challenges the NCHE faces:

- HEIs may not 'appreciate' the role and mandate of the QA agency;
- There is an overlap with some professional bodies on regulatory obligations;
- There is a lack of financial resources to expand the scope of its work and benchmarking activities;
- There are multiple legal instruments (HEIs have their own statutes and Acts of Parliament, and NCHE has its own and this makes it difficult to regulate HEIs); and
- There is a lack of legal documents and frameworks such as a National Qualifications Frameworks and a 'Malawi Qualification Authorization Act' (NCHE is currently developing an overarching Higher Education Act).

At the institutional level, information from LUANAR indicates that staff members may 'react aggressively' to a negative evaluation of their course. Further, there is insufficient financial resources to regularly conduct curriculum reviews. There is no internal budgetary allocation for QA – it receives ad-hoc funding, and the university faces a high incidence of examination malpractices and plagiarism.<sup>600</sup> The NCHE reported that HEIs require capacity in institutional and programme assessments, curriculum development, self-assessments, establishment of QA units, and in conducting annual audits<sup>601</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

In order to improve QA in Malawi, the NCHE thus indicated that QA units be established at all HEIs, and that reviewers should receive training.<sup>602</sup> Input from LUANAR indicates that there is a need for increased budget allocation towards QA improvement, compliance and enforcement. Further, there is a need to mainstream QA in all its faculties and departments through the establishment QA units. Staff at all levels need to develop capacity in QA to develop the quality culture at the university, and systems need to be developed to promote ownership of quality standards. Furthermore, the university would benefit from establishing a forum where universities can discuss issues pertaining to QA and best practices shared.<sup>603</sup>

The respondent from the NCHE was aware of the SADCQF, and highlighted the importance of working together to improve QA in the region. It is believed that the framework would be useful when addressing cross border qualifications, and for benchmarking with other institutions in the SADC region. Specifically, regional workshops focusing on sharing experiences was regarded as useful in improving QA.<sup>604</sup>

597 Ibid.

598 World Bank. (2014). What Will it Take to Turn Around Higher Education in Malawi? Retrieved March 14, 2017 from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/884611468048863484/pdf/858050BRIoWB0HooBox382147B-00PUBLICo.pdf>

599 Chirwa, P. (2016). Quality Assurance in Higher Education Sector in Malawi. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <https://www.slideshare.net/pamelachirwa5/higher-education-in-malawi>

600 Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher

Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

601 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

602 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

603 Jumbe, C. (2017). Internal Quality Assurance at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Malawi: A Case Study. Paper presented at Regional Workshop on Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa, 9 -10 October 2017. Pretoria, South Africa

604 Questionnaire response from National Council for Higher Education – Malawi. Received October 31, 2017

## MAURITIUS

The Mauritius Tertiary Education Commission (MTEC) is the primary body responsible for the governance of tertiary education in Mauritius. MTEC was established as an independent statutory body by the Tertiary Education Commission Act No. 9 of 1988, as amended by Act No. 18 of 2005. The main responsibilities of the MTEC include developing and coordinating tertiary education in Mauritius; allocating funds to public HEIs; implementing the regulatory framework for tertiary education; and assuring quality in the system. MTEC is also mandated to accredit the programmes of public institutions. One of the five divisions in MTEC is The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Division (QAAD), which was set up in 1995 with the mandate of ensuring the quality of provision in publicly-funded HEIs. This mandate was extended in 2005 to include the implementation of a regulatory framework for quality post-secondary education, and the recognition and equivalence of post-secondary qualifications.<sup>605</sup>

The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) was established in 2001, 'to evaluate and recognise qualifications awarded by training institutions running technical schools and vocational courses'.<sup>606</sup> Both MTEC and MQA fall under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources.

The purpose of QA in Mauritius is 'registration of private institutions and accreditation of their programmes; (and) quality audits of public universities'.<sup>607</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

The Consolidated Tertiary Education Commission Act lists outlines the following 'duties' of MTEC:

- 1) Foster the development of post-secondary education and training facilities;
- 2) Provide guidelines to the TEIs for preparing annual and long-term plans for the operation and development of post-secondary education and training;
- 3) Make recommendations to the Minister on the development of post-secondary education in Mauritius;

- 4) Advise the Minister on policy matters relating to the award of scholarships;
- 5) Promote coordination among TEIs in respect of the:
  - use of physical infrastructure and other material resources
  - optimum use of manpower
  - organisation of teaching programmes, and
  - planning and implementation of research;
- 6) Register and accredit private universities and other institutions offering post-secondary education in Mauritius;
- 7) Promote and maintain high quality standards in post-secondary education through appropriate quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms; and
- 8) Determine the recognition and equivalence of academic or professional qualifications in the post-secondary education sector obtained in or outside Mauritius.

All training institutions need to be registered by the Mauritius Qualification Authority. This process includes the submission of a project proposal, accreditation, and then grant of awarding powers. The authority registers both private and public institutions intending to offer higher education in Mauritius. The authority also registers foreign universities wishing to set up campuses in the country. Registration involves both programme and institutional accreditation as well as post accreditation quality audits. However, the process faces challenges due to the increased number of institutions seeking registration.<sup>608</sup>

QA in Mauritius is compulsory. Private education providers are required to undergo programme accreditation; whilst public universities undergo quality audits every five years:

*As per the TEC Act, all private institutions offering post-secondary programmes in Mauritius should register with TEC and have their programmes accredited before they can operate. Public universities should undergo quality audit on a five-year cycle.*<sup>609</sup>

Private providers undergo registration and programme accreditation, while public universities undergo quality audits. Additionally, QA visits are undertaken to private providers and public universities.<sup>610</sup>

605 Bailey, T. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Councils and Commissions in Africa: A case study of the Mauritius Tertiary Education Commission. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <https://www.chet.org.za/files/Mauritius%20ROLE%20AND%20FUNCTIONS%20OF%20HE%20COMMISSIONS%20AND%20COUNCILS.pdf>

606 *ibid.*

607 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

608 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

609 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

610 *ibid.*

The following table outlines the key stakeholders in Mauritius QA system:

Table 16 Key stakeholders and their needs (Tertiary Education Commission)<sup>611</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Private providers	Major stakeholders for providing higher education in the private sector	Work together with TEC to have their programmes accredited and hence recognized in the country.
Public universities	Main stakeholders for providing higher education in public universities	Quality audit of the public universities on a five-year cycle ensures that quality is maintained in the public universities.
Medical Council of Mauritius	Regulates the practice of medicine in Mauritius	Forms part of the accreditation/quality audit panel for quality assurance of medical programmes.
Dental Council of Mauritius	Regulates the dental profession in Mauritius.	Forms part of the accreditation/quality audit panel for quality assurance of dental programmes.
Council of Registered Professional Engineers	Regulates the engineering profession in Mauritius	Forms part of the accreditation/quality audit panel for quality assurance of engineering programmes.
Mauritius Qualifications Authority	Regulates technical and vocational educational training and is responsible for the National Qualifications Framework.	Work together with TEC with regard to pitching of qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework.

The main needs of the TEC are reportedly qualified personnel and a legal framework that strengthens and empowers TEC in fulfilling its duties.<sup>612</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

According to the SARUA 2012 study, the University of Mauritius (UoM) has a quality assurance office which is committed to continuous improvement and quality management to ensure relevance, quality of teaching and learning, quality of research and good practice at institutional level. UoM regularly conducts internal evaluation of academic programmes which are approved by statutory boards. At the University of Technology internal quality assurance is conducted where needed. Where and when a need is identified, an in-depth quality audit is carried out to identify and correct any shortcomings. Quality assurance is con-

ducted across all areas of the university, including teaching activities, research activities and student performance.<sup>613</sup>

Mauritius has a well-established QA framework and a National Qualifications Framework. The TEC Act will be amended soon with the coming of the Higher Education Bill to empower TEC for maintaining quality in public and private institutions.<sup>614</sup>

The UoM has a well-established quality assurance framework (with detailed documentation available on its website outlining all the quality criteria at various levels).<sup>615</sup> At the institutional level, all QA activities are reported to the Teaching and Research Committee which eventually reports to the UoM Senate for approval. The UoM QA office provides oversight over the standards of submission of all UoM programmes, and has oversight over all UoM

611 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

612 *ibid.*

613 Mahlaha, N (2012). Chapter 8: Mauritius. In Kotecha, P, Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from

<http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

614 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

615 University of Mauritius. (no date). Quality Assurance. Retrieved November 1, 2017 from <http://www.uom.ac.mu/index.php/aboutus-quality-assurance>

regulations pertaining to teaching and learning and research. The university undergoes an academic audit by the Tertiary Education Commission every five years. It has also undergone audits by International agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA UK), Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) and KPMG with a view for improvement.

Since 2016, the University's Bachelor in Engineering Programmes (B.Eng) have embarked on accreditation with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA). Further in line with its strategic Plan 2015-2020 the UoM intends to embrace the Outcome based Learning concept for all of its programmes.

Table 17 Key stakeholders and their needs (University of Mauritius)<sup>616</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Industry	Consultative Committee and Advisory Committee	To address the needs of industry and external stakeholders
International Institutions	External Examiners	Evaluate performance of our Programmes and Benchmarking with International practices
International Institutions	Internal Collaboration	Student and Staff Exchanges, Research and Publications

UoM's key priorities with regards to QA is to ensure that its programmes are delivered with up to date delivery modes, and innovative practices which meet the needs of its external stakeholders. In order to fulfil these priorities, the university requires innovation, infrastructure, a centre for teaching and learning, and opportunities to share best practices. The university respondent also noted that whilst the UoM Quality Management Practices are in line with international practices, it still needs to enhance implementation and improve further.<sup>617</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

The main strengths of QA in Mauritius are that there is a well-established QA framework with continuous improvement on the framework; all public and private institutions have already established quality assurance units in their respective institutions, and there is a National Qualifications Framework which is used to pitch qualifications obtained locally or from overseas. Additionally, to date, the TEC has registered approximately 36 private institutions and have accredit approximately 184 programmes. It has also conducted nine quality audits of public universities on a five-year cycle. TEC has also hosted two international QA conferences with participants from international QA bodies. Further, four international workshops were conducted

during 2017, focusing on building capacity of personnel in QA units of public and private institutions.<sup>618</sup> According to the UoM respondent, the external examination process for benchmarking with international universities was regarded as the main strength of QA in Mauritius.<sup>619</sup>

However, there are several challenges facing QA in Mauritius such as lack of subject specialists or resource persons locally; the programmes offered in public universities are not accredited by TEC as the TEC Act does not allow this; and the programme accreditation of private institutions applies to the processes only and does not look at the outcome or output of the programmes.<sup>620</sup>

### Improving QA in the country

In order to improve QA in Mauritius, the TEC respondent suggested that regular QA workshops should be held with all HEIs, which will also create a platform for networking and brain storming. Further, the TEC ACT should be amended so that the TEC can accredit programmes offered by public universities (as mentioned above, programmes offered by public universities are not accredited by TEC, but these institutions do undergo quality audit). It was also noted that the TEC Act will be amended in the near future.<sup>621</sup>

616 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

617 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

618 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

619 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

620 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

621 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

The UoM respondent noted that a specific skills gap was to 'address the changing needs of an evolving market'. It reportedly requires 'international exchanges to improve processes and human resources'. The respondent further highlighted that change need to come from all 'perspectives' including the institutions and external stakeholders, and that there is a need for international collaboration and agreements to improve recognition and mobility.<sup>622</sup> The TEC respondent highlighted that under the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative, the SADC countries are working together to implement the SADC-QF. However, a major reported drawback is that some of the SADC countries do not have a Qualification Framework and this is impeding the implementation process.<sup>623</sup>

## MOZAMBIQUE

### External Quality Assurance

In Mozambique, the National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ) was established in 2007 to implement the National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education (SINAQES). This was conceptualised as a system for 'integrating clear and consistent standards, procedures and mechanisms with the objective of ensuring the delivery of quality services from all actors and stakeholders.'<sup>624</sup>

The mandate of SINAQES describes its quality assurance thrust as follows:

- 1) To develop and promote the principles and culture of the consistent quality of services provided by institutions of higher education;
- 2) To identify, develop and implement standards and quality indicators;
- 3) To inform society about the quality of teaching in HEIs;
- 4) To assist in identifying problems in higher education and to outline mechanisms and policy proposals for their resolution; and
- 5) To contribute to the integration of Mozambican higher education with the region and the world.<sup>625</sup>

Mozambique reported having a quality assurance framework.<sup>626</sup> Additionally, it was reported that the QA system on higher education makes programme and institutional evaluation a legal requirement. It is compulsory for all higher education institutions in Mozambique, both public and private, to participate in quality assurance activities.<sup>627</sup> Mozambique introduced institutional accreditation of HEIs 'mainly as an instrument to assure that new suppliers of higher education, especially private institutions, met minimum standards.'<sup>628</sup>

In respect of the quality assurance structure, SINAQES includes self-assessment, external evaluation and accreditation. The main objectives of the self-assessment are:

622 Questionnaire response from University of Mauritius. Received September 29, 2017

623 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), Mauritius. Received September 15, 2017

624 Langa, P. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Commissions in Africa: A Case Study of the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ). CHET, South Africa, p18

625 *ibid.*, p19

626 Anexo 3: Mapa de indicadores, padrões e critérios de verificação: Pós-graduação (no date). This was attached to the completed question-

naire from National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CNAQ)-Mozambique. It is written in Portuguese. Received September 18, 2017

627 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

628 Langa, P. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Commissions in Africa: A Case Study of the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ). CHET, South Africa

- 1) to assess the quality of the institution, courses or programmes with reference to the mission and quality standards established by law;
- 2) to create and develop a culture of quality and self-assessment within institutions of higher education;
- 3) to contribute to the identification of specific problems at HEIs as a first step to solving them and improving quality; and
- 4) to provide the information and data required for the external evaluation process.<sup>629</sup>

The main objectives of external evaluation are:

- 1) To contribute to the identification of specific problems within target institutions in particular, and within higher education nation-wide so as to contribute to their resolution and to improve the quality of higher education;
- 2) To assess the quality of HEIs, their courses and programmes with reference to their missions and the pre-established standards and strategic objectives of higher education in Mozambique;
- 3) To assess the quality of all HEIs' self-assessment processes; and

- 4) To provide HEIs, implementing agencies and the SINAQES with criteria for the accreditation process.<sup>630</sup>

The objectives of accreditation are:

- 1) To formalise and make public both the quality status of an institution itself as well as of its courses and programmes as determined by external evaluation;
- 2) To provide independent and objective bases for establishing fair competition between HEIs and their courses and programmes;
- 3) To contribute to the identification of state or private institutions of higher learning and their courses and programmes; and
- 4) To provide information to the public on the relevant criteria for choosing a tertiary institution, course or programme.<sup>631</sup>

It was reported that the QA framework is based on nine key quality areas: mission; governance; curriculum; academic staff; students; non-academic staff; research and extension; infrastructure; and internationalization.<sup>632</sup> The specific roles of stakeholders in the QA system as well as their needs, demands and priorities, are described in the table<sup>633</sup> which follows:

Table 18 Stakeholders and their needs (National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education)

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Students	They have a role as learners	They need quality and relevant education Student involvement in the process of quality assurance is important
Lecturers	They are the facilitators of the processes of learning	They need training and capacity development to enhance the process of teaching and learning
Employers	Society absorbs graduates into the community or society	The society demands socially and ethically responsible people who have the knowledge to cope with present and future challenges

629 Langa, P. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Commissions in Africa: A Case Study of the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ). CHET, South Africa, p19  
630 *ibid.*, p20  
631 *ibid.*, p20

632 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

633 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

Apart from CNAQ and SINAQES, various other stakeholders are involved in assuring the delivery of quality services. These include:

- 1) The HEIs and all their actors (managers, students, teachers, researchers, the technical and administrative staff) through appropriate internal evaluation mechanisms as well as through external evaluation teams;
- 2) Employers working within the sector, who provide and receive the relevant data on the impact of higher education graduates in the company's service;
- 3) Civil society organisations by means of dialogue and the sharing of relevant data on the operation of higher education; and
- 4) Professional boards and socio-professional organisations (e.g. medical associations, lawyers' bars), who collaborate with the SINAQES' implementing agency and participate in external evaluation and accreditation review teams.<sup>634</sup>

Based on the quality assurance approaches discussed earlier, the QA steps were described as follows:

- The QA Agency establishes the quality standards in consultation with higher education institutions;
- The QA Agency promotes a quality culture through the establishment of quality assurance units at institutional level and through capacity development in the use of standards developed and instruments to assess quality;
- The Institutions carry out self-assessment reports;
- The QA Agency carries out external validation through the use of experts;
- The QA Agency conducts training activities for the experts in preparing for external assessment;
- The Experts submit external assessment reports to the QA Agency; and
- The QA Agency uses the results of the external assessment results to accredit institutions or programmes.<sup>635</sup>

The priorities for QA in the country are developing capacity both at agency and institutional levels, accreditation of programmes and institutions and promoting a quality culture within higher education institutions.<sup>636</sup> The main needs of the organization to help fulfil these priorities were capacity development of staff to be able to interact with higher education institutions, capacity building of QA

units at institutional level in order to carry out self-evaluations and the mobilization of funds.<sup>637</sup>

The impact of the work of the agency was explained as follows:

- More than half of institutions have established quality assurance units;
- Established the standards and guidelines for quality assessment both for programmes and institutions;
- Accredited about 80 programmes between 2015 and 2017 according to published timetables and methods;
- Published reports and judgements;
- Provided advice to government on the status of quality within higher education institutions;
- Communicated information on the quality of programmes evaluated to inform student choice and employers' understanding;
- Institutions with no accredited judgements have taken the necessary steps to put things right within the agreed timescale;
- Carried out capacity development activities within institutions; and
- Carried out monitoring activities to assess the implementation of the QA system.<sup>638</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

#### **University of Zambeze**

The SARUA study (2012) found that the University of Zambeze has an internal quality assurance framework that included a focus on employing good quality professional staff members, building research and ensuring efficient administration. The quality of learning materials and internet access were areas the university gave attention to, in addition to enabling interaction between students and lecturers. The study found that student performance is tracked. The university did not report having a budget specifically allocated to quality assurance. The study also found that internal evaluations of work were sometimes conducted, and that the evaluation of the quality of individual teaching staff was mandatory.<sup>639</sup>

#### **Universidade Pedagógica**

An operational structure for QA is used by the QA department at the university. Reference is made to a Quality Assurance Policy. The university's approach to QA includes supporting the quality of the institution, the development of quality indicators and standards, informing society about the quality of the institution, pinpointing problems of the institution and proposing solutions, consultation

634 *ibid.*, p22

635 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

636 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

637 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

638 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

639 Mahlaha, N (2012). Chapter 9: Mozambique. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

and support dealing with the operationalisation of the policy of Quality Assurance, studying and analysing quality and consultation and contribution to integrate the Universidade Pedagógica in the Mozambican, regional and global system of quality assurance.<sup>640</sup> It was reported that QA at the institutional level is still in the process of development. At the programmatic level, the university was developing tools, policies and methods for evaluation.<sup>641</sup>

In terms of its approaches to QA, the university reported that CNAQ is responsible for accreditation. Courses within the university undergo internal evaluations. This is analysed by the QA department at the university and a decision is made about whether the courses can be accredited and are therefore ready for audit.<sup>642</sup> With regard to audits, the standards and norms of evaluation are defined and nominated by CNAQ. The university makes a request to accredit the courses. The key stakeholders were identified as lecturers, students, support staff, regulators and associations. Their roles and needs are reflected in the table<sup>643</sup> below:

Table 19 Stakeholders and their needs

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Lecturers	Commissioners, consultants, target group of the questionnaire	Exchange, dialogue and debate, participation, implementation of plans of modifications, quality of education
Students	Commissioners, consultants and target group of the questionnaire	Exchange, dialogue and debate, participation, implementation of plans of modifications, quality of education
Support staff	Commissioners, consultants and target group of the questionnaire	Exchange, dialogue and debate, participation, implementation of plans of modifications, quality of services
Regulations and associations	Commissioners, consultants and target group of the questionnaire	Quality of graduates

The steps in QA were reported as follows:

1. Developing the policies of quality assurance;
2. Developing the methodology of quality assurance;
3. Developing a system of designing evidence;
4. Evaluation of courses; and
5. First experiences with the accreditation<sup>644</sup>

The key quality criteria were identified as follows:

1. Objectives and mission of the faculty
2. System of quality assurance
3. Curriculum/ syllabus
4. Teaching staff (quality of the lecturers)
5. Students
6. Research
7. Buildings

8. Quality of the support staff
9. Academic exchange<sup>645</sup>

The key priorities of the university with regards to QA were the culture and institutional environment, execution skills and institutional development, and strategic thinking to assure quality, while the needs to fulfil these priorities were staff training for educational quality, adjustment of institutional action and action structures relating to the indicators of quality, qualified and specialized personnel and financing.<sup>646</sup> The impact of the work of the institution was reported as follows: participation in QA, having a quality structure and the pinpointing of developmental challenges.<sup>647</sup>

640 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

641 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

642 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

643 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

644 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

645 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

646 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

647 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

### Wutivi University

At Wutivi University, QA is focused at the programme and course levels, and the main approach to IQA in accreditation and audit. The respondent referred to the university having a self-assessment manual which outlines its QA framework. However, the manual was not provided. Wutivi university identified various QA stakeholders and their roles and needs/demands/priorities. The stakeholders were employers, parents, students and staff, with each reported to have the role in providing feedback on the quality of the university's services. The needs, demands or priorities of each of these stakeholders were a recognised curriculum, student services and well-trained staff.<sup>648</sup>

The key priorities with regard to QA at the institution were a recognised curriculum aligned with the institutional mission, student services that help to meet the main objectives of the curriculum, and well qualified staff to meet excellence in the provision of teaching activities prescribed in the curriculum. The main needs of the institution to help fulfil these priorities were training in self-assessment, report writing and the identification of areas needing further improvement. It was reported that the university is still in the beginning stages of self-assessment, due to changes in personnel in the unit of QA.<sup>649</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

The strengths of QA in the country were 'buy in' from institutions, the operationalisation of internal policies (gender policy, data protection policy, communication policy), the publishing of annual reports with details of activities, and the appointment and recruitment of experts to ensure there is no conflict of interest. Also, experts may not, for example, review their own institutions.<sup>650</sup> From an institutional perspective, a key strength was the provision of a system of QA in the country and QA learning opportunities resulting from the newly developed system.<sup>651</sup>

One of the challenges flagged in the 2014 report of Langa include the absence of adequate physical infrastructure for CNAQ to conduct its business.<sup>652</sup> Since its establishment in 2007 up to about 2010, it was reported that CNAQ had made no important movements with regards to its mandate. However, the report does indicate that attempts were being made to procure proper office in Maputo since

the induction of new leadership. The report also flagged issues around powers, autonomy and accountability.<sup>653</sup> While CNAQ was meant to have a higher degree of autonomy with its president appointed by the head of state and accountable only to parliament, in practice this did not transpire. It was found that CNAQ had relative autonomy having to report to the Minister of education or the Minister in charge of higher education. In respect of formal accountability, the CNAQ was meant to be directly accountable to the Minister responsible for higher education in all cases where the Act specifically requires the Minister to give approval. These include the power to promulgate rules, regulations or statutes governing the exercise of various functions of the CNAQ, decisions concerning the accreditation of institutions, and the implementation of the minister's directions. However, this accountability was found lacking at the time. Furthermore, in relation to the presentation of comprehensive reports to the Council on Higher Education (CES) and the National Council on Higher Education (NCES) as prescribed by the Minister, it was found that the CNAQ reports were only prepared by the CNAQ president and did not include the participation of executive and non-executive directors.<sup>654</sup>

Other challenges were a lack of capacity at both the QA Agency and institutional levels, high teaching loads of academic staff, little time to carry out quality assurance activities, lack of financial resources to carry out QA activities and implement improvement plans, and low qualifications of academic staff with few at the PhD level and many teaching with graduate degrees.<sup>655</sup> It was also felt that more time should be provided for the implementation of the quality assurance system and the learning process of all participants, and that better integration of evaluation, planning and management should flow from the results of quality evaluations.<sup>656</sup> Furthermore, politics was identified as a barrier facing QA in the country.

*The body overseeing QA should be made independent of politics. It depends so much on the minister supervising Higher Education.*<sup>657</sup>

The skills gaps were reported to include elaboration of self-assessment reports and the training of external experts.<sup>658</sup> Similarly, a participating university identified the gaps as self-assessment, as well as report writing for both self-assessment and external evaluation.<sup>659</sup> Another uni-

648 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

649 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

650 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

651 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

652 Langa, P. (2014). The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Commissions in Africa: A Case Study of the Mozambique National Council on Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CNAQ). CHET, South Africa, p23

653 *ibid.*, p23-24

654 *ibid.*, p24

655 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

656 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

657 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

658 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

659 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017

660 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

versity reported gaps in institutional evaluation, the ability to make plans based on the results of the evaluation and linking evaluation and the development of institutions.<sup>660</sup> Capacity development needs included developing tools for assessing quality, qualitative and quantitative data analysis, writing self-assessment reports and developing improvement plans.<sup>661</sup> From an institutional perspective, capacity building was required for the design of self-assessment instruments in order to implement and support QA processes<sup>662</sup>, and it was also felt that HEIs require skills for developing systems of evaluation.<sup>663</sup>

### Improving Quality Assurance

In reporting on what could be done to strengthen QA in the country, the following aspects were highlighted: building capacity, mobilizing financial and human resources, scholarships for PhDs and quality promotion.<sup>664</sup> It was also felt that the body overseeing QA should be made independent of politics.<sup>665</sup> Furthermore, all participants in QA would need to learn how to implement the system.<sup>666</sup> Strengthening the QA agency would involve the training of staff in quality assurance matters and the mobilizing funds to carry out QA activities.<sup>667</sup> One of the participating universities also highlighted the issue of education and identified the 'scientific education of members' of the QA agency as important.<sup>668</sup>

Finally, awareness of the SADCQF and its focus on learning outcomes, was noted:

*Yes, I am aware of the SADC Qualifications Framework. In my organisation, I am the person responsible for the development and implementation of the qualification framework for higher education in Mozambique. The SADCQF will add a lot of value since the qualification framework calls for the specifications of higher education programmes in terms of learning outcomes and our standards and guidelines also call for quality assurance to pay attention to the learning outcomes of programmes. Programme accreditation is a key feature of our QA system. It is during the process of programme accreditation that the learning outcomes for a specific programme are linked to those laid down in the descriptors of the SADC Qualification Framework and of our national framework of qualifications.*<sup>669</sup>

## NAMIBIA

### External Quality Assurance

The quality of higher education in Namibia is currently overseen by two quality assurance bodies, both operating under mandates established through legislation:

- The Namibia Qualifications Authority – established under the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act of 1996; and
- The National Council on Higher Education – established under the Higher Education Act of 2003 (<http://www.moe.gov.na/downloads.php>).<sup>670</sup>

The National Council on Higher Education is responsible for the registration of Higher Education Private Providers, whilst the Namibian Qualifications Authority (NQA) is responsible for the accreditation of both Vocational Education and Training and Higher Education Providers. Furthermore, all qualifications and part-qualifications being offered must be registered on the Namibia NQF, with the NQA being the custodian of the NQF and maintaining a register of all NQF qualifications and part-qualifications. Additionally, the credibility of an institution is rendered through three aspects:

- The provider must be registered;
- The provider must be accredited meaning it has the capacity to provide education and training courses leading to the award of qualifications to be registered on the Namibia Qualifications Framework; and
- Even if the provider is registered and accredited, the programme or credit bearing course that it is offering must be validated through registration on the Namibia National Qualifications Framework (NQF).<sup>671</sup>

It was reported that the legal mandates of each body contain several overlapping powers, duties, functions and spheres of operation.<sup>672</sup>

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) was established by an Act of Parliament (Act No. 26 of 2003) to advise the government on issues related to higher education.<sup>673</sup> According to the Higher Education Act, the NCHE is responsible for quality assurance, among other functions:

661 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

662 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017  
663 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

664 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

665 Questionnaire response from Wutivi University. Received September 18, 2017  
666 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

667 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

668 Questionnaire response from the Universidade Pedagógica. Received English version November 2, 2011

669 Questionnaire response from the National Council for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education - Mozambique. Received September 18, 2017

670 Respondent 2 feedback received from Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received November 15, 2017

671 *ibid.*

672 *ibid.*

673 Namibia National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) website. Accessed August 14, 2017 from <http://www.nche.org.na/about.php>

- 1) Accrediting, with the concurrence of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA), programmes of higher education provided at higher education institutions;
- 2) Monitoring the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions;
- 3) Taking measures to promote access of students to higher education institutions;
- 4) Undertaking such research with regard to its objectives as it may think necessary or as the Minister of Education may require; and
- 5) Advising the Minister of Education, either of its own accord or at request of the Minister on: - the structure of the higher education system in general; quality promotion and quality assurance in higher education; advise on the allocation of money to public higher education institutions; the governance of higher education institutions; any other aspect related to higher education; and performing such other functions as may be entrusted to the NCHE by or under this Act.<sup>674</sup>

The accreditation responsibility of the NCHE relates to that of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) which has legislative responsibility for accreditation of all qualifications including those of higher education, through the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act 1996, No 29 of 1996. All national qualifications are registered on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) housed by the NQA. The system is reported as being statutory while participation in the system varies.

*The NQA is established by an act of Parliament, Act. 29 of 2006. The accreditation of institutions is not compulsory at this stage, but we are revising the statutes to make it compulsory. The registration of qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is compulsory.*<sup>675</sup>

It is reported that the NQA has two Departments responsible for QA, namely the Accreditation, Audit and Assessment (AAA) Department and the Department of Qualification. The AAA Department is involved in the receipt and evaluation of applications made by persons, organizations and institutions seeking accreditation from the NQA, while the Qualifications Department is mainly responsible for the registration of qualifications on the NQF and the evaluation of qualifications.<sup>676</sup> The notion of the NQF was formalised through cabinet decisions in 1994 that led to the

creation of the NQA. NQF represents a set of agreements, rules and requirements that: promote the consistent use of qualification titles, provide people with a clearer understanding of what a person holding a particular qualification has achieved; assist people determine the similarities and differences between qualification in Namibia; improve the harmonisation of the different education and training sectors, and their alignment with the worlds of work; give people greater assurance of the quality of education, training and assessment in Namibia; and enhance the reputation of Namibia's education and training systems in the regional, continental and international communities.

The quality assurance system of the NCHE in Namibia consists of two sub-systems, viz. programme accreditation (and re-accreditation) and institutional audits. Both systems are evidence-based hence reports, statements, etc. need to be substantiated by documentary proof. In respect of programme accreditation,<sup>677</sup> the NCHE focuses on determining the capacity or potential of the new programme to meet the NCHE's quality requirements within a specified period of time. As a result, the evaluation focuses on the quality of the policies, strategies, procedures, curriculum, etc. that have been developed for the new programme. For existing programmes, the focus turns mostly to the evaluation of implementation aspects and the achieved learning outcomes. The institutional audit function involves concentrating efforts on an institution's policies, systems, strategies and resources for the quality assurance of its academic activities. The quality of academic activities per se is not evaluated. Audit panels, constituting experts in higher education issues, conduct evaluations using the NCHE's audit requirements as benchmarks. The nature of institutional audits is such that they are improvement oriented, but accountability aspects are also integrated into the system.<sup>678</sup>

In terms of the accreditation of providers and courses, regulations for the accreditation by the NQA of persons, institutions and organizations involved in education and training, were gazetted by the Minister of Education in August 2006. These Regulations provided the NQA with the legal mandate to carry out its obligations as stated in Section 13 of the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act No 29 of 1996. Accreditation by the NQA is an independent attestation that: specific courses or programmes offered by an education and training provider in Namibia meet acceptable standards; the education and training provider has the ability to teach or deliver those specified courses or programmes; and the education and training provider has the ability to assess the performance of learners

674 *ibid.*

675 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

676 Questionnaire response 2 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 18, 2017

677 *ibid.*

678 Namibia National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) website. Accessed August 14, 2017 from <http://www.nche.org.na/about.php>

taking the specified courses or programmes.<sup>679</sup> Providers wishing to be accredited to offer their courses or programmes make an accreditation application to the NQA in which they present evidence that they fully meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard contained in the Regulations. These requirements cover issues such as management and governance, course design and delivery, staffing, facilities and equipment, assessment systems and partnership arrangements. The evidence submitted as part of the application is subjected to extensive verification processes by the NQA and industry and/or subject discipline experts. The applicant is paid a visit and the staff, students and key stakeholders are interviewed to test the veracity of the statements made by the applicant in their application. On the basis of reports arising from the verification processes, the Council of the NQA makes a decision on the accreditation of the applicant and their courses or programmes. The NQA Act and the Regulations allow the Council to grant accreditation for a period of up to three years (whereupon the provider must apply for re-accreditation). The Council may also impose requirements or conditions as part of its decisions.<sup>680</sup>

In December 2009, the NCHE released the final draft of its Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia<sup>681</sup> which set out the principles, objectives and procedures for programme accreditation and institutional audits. The key aim of the programme accreditation system is 'to contribute towards safeguarding the quality of academic programmes offered at higher education institutions in Namibia and facilitating the employability of their graduates',<sup>682</sup> and the objectives are to: set national quality requirements for programmes which are internationally comparable, and to implement efficient procedures to validate whether the requirements are met; grant recognition status by means of accreditation to programmes that meet the NCHE's requirements; enhance the standards of programmes which are not of a sufficient quality by means of improvement measures; stimulate the development of institutional arrangements for ensuring and enhancing programme quality; and provide to the public independently verified information about programmes and their quality.<sup>683</sup>

The key objectives of the institutional audit system are to: set national requirements for institutional mechanisms for assuring quality, to validate whether the requirements are met, and to recommend appropriate improvement measures, where necessary; stimulate the development and enhancement of institutional mechanisms for quality assurance and improvement; ensure efficient institutional mechanisms for assuring the quality of academic programmes; enable students and other beneficiaries of higher education to have confidence in the quality of learning opportunities offered by higher education institutions; and provide to the public independently verified information about institutions and their mechanisms to secure and promote quality.<sup>684</sup>

Importantly, the NCHE's quality assurance system functions within the context of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme of 2007 (ETSIP),<sup>685</sup> Phase 1 (2006-11), and in the context of Vision 2030.<sup>686</sup> The national vision statement-Vision 2030 is a dramatic reform of the national development strategy. Vision 2030 sets a very ambitious target that by 2030, Namibia should join the ranks of high income countries and afford all its citizens a quality of life that is comparable to that of developed world. ETSIP represents the education and training sector's response to the call of vision 2030. Its key purpose is to substantially enhance the sector's contribution to the attainment of strategic national development goals, and to facilitate the transition to a knowledge based economy. Quality is included as an important element in one of the strategic goals of the ETSIP, which is 'to improve the effectiveness, quality, efficiency, and development-relevance of the tertiary education and training system.'<sup>687</sup> In respect of this goal, the ETSIP aims to focus on the following:

- 1) Strengthening institutional capacity for the management and delivery of tertiary education and training;
- 2) Building capacity for graduate studies with emphasis on research;
- 3) Improvement of quality and readiness of intake;
- 4) Strengthening quality assurance mechanisms; and
- 5) Diversification and mobilisation of financing resources.<sup>688</sup>

679 Namibia Qualifications Authority. Homepage. Retrieved September 25, 2017 from <http://www.namqa.org/about-us/Overview/131/>

680 NCHE website. Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (2009). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducation-innamibia\\_000.pdf](http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducation-innamibia_000.pdf)

681 NCHE website. Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (2009). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducation-innamibia\\_000.pdf](http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducation-innamibia_000.pdf), p6

682 *ibid.*, p6

683 *ibid.*, p32

684 Ministry of Education. Namibia Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (2007): ETSIP Phase 1 (2006-2011). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e\\_Attachmen%20](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e_Attachmen%20)

[2%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e_Attachmen%202%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf)

685 Namibia Government. Vision 2030 documents. Accessed August 14, 2017 from <http://www.gov.na/vision-2030>

686 Ministry of Education. Namibia Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (2007): ETSIP Phase 1 (2006-2011). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e\\_Attachmen%202%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e_Attachmen%202%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf), Sub-section 21

687 Ministry of Education. Namibia Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (2007): ETSIP Phase 1 (2006-2011). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e\\_Attachmen%202%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf](http://www.mcanamibia.org/files/files/70e_Attachmen%202%20-%201%20ETSIP%20Programme%20%20Document%20August%202007.pdf), Sub-section 21

688 *ibid.*, Sub-sections 24 and 25.

In respect of quality assurance, therefore, the ETSIP's focus is on improving the quality and readiness of the intake and strengthening quality assurance mechanisms. Quality and efficiency, access, equity and effectiveness also form part of ETSIP's critical sector priorities and strategic objectives.<sup>689</sup> The programme accreditation system support ETSIP as the blue print that guide strategic interventions aimed at responding to the obligation placed on the sector by Vision 2030, namely that of guaranteeing Namibia's transition to a knowledge-driven economy and the attainment of equitable social development.

In terms of the accreditation of providers and courses, regulations for the accreditation by the NQA of persons, institutions and organizations involved in education and training, were gazetted by the Minister of Education in August 2006. These Regulations provided the NQA with the legal mandate to carry out its obligations as stated in Section 13 of the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act No 29 of 1996. Accreditation by the NQA is an independent attestation that: specific courses or programmes offered by an education and training provider in Namibia meet acceptable standards; the education and training provider has the ability to teach or deliver those specified courses or programmes; and the education and training provider has the ability to assess the performance of learners taking the specified courses or programmes.<sup>690</sup> Quality is the key factor in all the work of the NQA. The NQA is committed to ensuring quality qualifications are available to all in Namibia. The council of the NQA must be assured that an applicant meets the standards for delivery of a course or courses and the assessment of the performance of people taking a course or courses set by the NQA.

Providers wishing to be accredited to offer their courses or programmes make an accreditation application to the NQA in which they present evidence that they fully meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard contained in the Regulations. These requirements cover issues such as management and governance, course design and delivery, staffing, facilities and equipment, assessment systems and partnership arrangements. The evidence submitted as part of the application is subjected to extensive verification processes by the NQA and industry and/or subject discipline experts. The applicant is paid a visit and the staff, students and key stakeholders are interviewed to test the veracity of the statements made by the applicant in their application. On the basis of

reports arising from the verification processes, the Council of the NQA makes a decision on the accreditation of the applicant and their courses or programmes. The NQA Act and the Regulations allow the Council to grant accreditation for a period of up to three years (whereupon the provider must apply for re-accreditation). The Council may also impose requirements or conditions as part of its decisions.<sup>691</sup>

The key priorities of Quality Assurance (QA) in the country are reported as the harmonization of QA in the country, a review of business processes, development of a policy, capacity building of QA officials, establishment of a standard setting body and continual improvement of processes. Another priority was promoting QA.<sup>692</sup> The main needs of the agency to help fulfil the various priorities were funding and institution building.<sup>693</sup>

The key QA stakeholders are education and training providers, government, other QA bodies in the country and students. The role of education and training providers is to provide education and training, while government's role is to fund Higher Education (HE), the QA agency's role is to act as a regulator and students' role was mainly as the recipients of education.<sup>694</sup> The impact of the work of the agency was reported as follows: the ongoing or continual improvement of QA, buy in of stakeholders and key players in the QA arena, and stakeholder engagement.<sup>695</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

With regard to programme accreditation, the quality assurance system makes provision for criteria pertaining to the internal quality assurance processes of institutions (Theme 6).<sup>696</sup> In summary, institutions will need a formal policy and associated procedures in place for the quality assurance of programmes that actively involve staff, students, and the professional field, where applicable. In this regard, formal mechanisms will need to exist for the design and approval of programmes. The proposed programme will also need to be approved by the relevant institutional structures. Formal mechanisms will also need to exist for periodic programme reviews, the results of which feed back into the programme for improvement purposes, and monitoring. The reviews will need to be linked to user surveys and impact studies, and include foreign expertise. Finally, mechanisms need to be in place for the periodic review of the institution's quality assurance policies for programmes, their implementation, and feedback mechanisms.<sup>697</sup>

690 Namibia Qualifications Authority website. About us. Accessed September 25, 2017 from <http://www.namqa.org/about-us/Overview/131/>

691 Namibia Qualifications Authority website. About us. Accessed September 25, 2017 from <http://www.namqa.org/about-us/Overview/131/>

692 Questionnaire response 2 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 18, 2017

693 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

694 Questionnaire response 2 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 18, 2017

695 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

696 National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (2009). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducationinnamibia\\_000.pdf](http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducationinnamibia_000.pdf), p23.

697 National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (2009). Retrieved August 14, 2017 from [http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducationinnamibia\\_000.pdf](http://www.unam.edu.na/sites/default/files/nche-qualityassurancesystemforhighereducationinnamibia_000.pdf), p23.

### University of Namibia

The University of Namibia (UNAM) has a Quality Assurance Framework<sup>698</sup> and a Quality Assurance and Management Policy.<sup>699</sup> It also has established Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Reviews.<sup>700</sup>

The purpose of the UNAM Quality Assurance and Management Policy is to ensure the delivery and maintenance of excellence in instruction, learning, acquisition, research, academic and administrative/support services, student welfare, governance and community service. These functions are supported by excellence in service delivery by management, academic and administrative/support services with quality infrastructure and physical facilities to ensure the realisation of the vision, mission and strategic priorities of UNAM.

More specifically, it aims to provide a framework for an efficient quality assurance system through the: establishment and development of a quality assurance culture across all UNAM's operations; establishment and development of an overarching and functional institutional quality assurance management system (QAMS) for UNAM; promotion of quality assurance, enhancement and improvement actions at institutional level; empowerment of staff in the execution and implementation of quality assurance management systems, processes and mechanisms; co-ordination and monitoring of quality assurance activities within various functional units of UNAM (faculties, schools, departments, directorates, centres, units, divisions, support services as well as staff and student welfare in general); co-ordination of feedback received from the different role players and stakeholders regarding academic, social, service and quality experiences at UNAM; and institutional quality assurance accountability required of UNAM at the national and statutory levels.<sup>701</sup>

The main purpose for QA as stated in UNAM's QA Framework is to ensure continuous improvement in the university's core business, namely, teaching and learning, research and community engagement. Quality is the responsibility of everyone at this university.<sup>702</sup>

QA at UNAM includes all aspects of the University's operations (academic and administrative). It was reported that quality academic provision should be supported by quality administrative services. Quality reviews/audits may take place at any level, i.e. whole institution, faculty, department (including administrative) and programme levels.<sup>703</sup> Programmes are accredited by professional bodies (where applicable) and the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). This is a cyclic process that occurs after every six years or as may be determined by the relevant accreditation agency. Faculties may also have their programmes accredited by relevant reputable international accreditation agencies.<sup>704</sup> All the qualifications of the university are registered on the NQF housed by the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA). Before a programme is registered, UNAM must prove the programme is relevant and that it was developed in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders.<sup>705</sup>

The NCHE is responsible for conducting institutional audits. The purpose of institutional audits is improvement. The NCHE requests the University to conduct a self-review and prepare an Institutional Portfolio. Thereafter, the NCHE constitutes a panel of external peers to conduct a site visit to the institution to validate claims made in the Institutional Portfolio. The outcome of an institutional audit is a report with recommendations. Recommendations are translated into a self-improvement plan which identifies actions to be taken (by whom, by when), resources required, timelines, and evidence that will be in place to show that recommendations have been addressed.<sup>706</sup> Apart from audits by the NCHE, UNAM has its own internal mechanism for cyclic reviews, the purpose of which is continuous improvement. It follows similar procedures to the NCHE external audits. One difference is that the internal reviews are internally coordinated by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM). With regard to curriculum approval and review, a curriculum must go through several structures before it is offered, namely: the department, the faculty management committee, the Faculty Board, the Academic Planning Committee, (UNAM Postgraduate Studies Committee, in case of postgraduate programmes) and Senate. All curricula are subjected to cyclic reviews to make sure that they remain current and relevant.<sup>707</sup>

698 University of Namibia. Quality Assurance Framework (2011). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

699 University of Namibia. Quality Assurance Policy (2015). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

700 University of Namibia. Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Reviews (2016). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

701 University of Namibia. Quality Assurance Policy (2015). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

702 University of Namibia. Quality Assurance Framework (2011). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

703 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

704 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

705 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

706 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

707 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

The roles of various stakeholders in QA, as well as their needs/demands/priorities are reflected in the table which follows:

Table 20 Stakeholder roles and their needs (University of Namibia)<sup>708</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Government	Funds higher education	Accountability for funding and return on investment
Quality assurance agencies	Ensure quality in higher education	Implementation of internal quality assurance systems which are adequately resourced.
Employers	Employ graduates	Employable graduates, relevant programmes
Students	Benefit from higher education	Affordable quality education
NGOs	Sponsor students	Employable graduates
Professional Bodies	License students	Employable and registrable graduates

Based on the QA approaches explained earlier, the QA steps were identified as follows:

- Programme approval, monitoring and periodic review; and
- Self-review, site visit, report.<sup>709</sup>

The Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Reviews<sup>710</sup> sets out the various stages for quality reviews. This is described below:

Step 1: Self-Review Committee

- Identification of a division to be reviewed and establishment of a Self-Review Committee by the division to be reviewed by CEQUAM facilitation.

Step 2: Self-Review Report (SRR)

- Preparation of a SRR (also referred to as Self Evaluation Report, SER) by the division to be reviewed under CEQUAM facilitation. The SRR is a reflective document outlining what the division is trying to do; how they are trying to do it; how they know it works; and what they could change in order to improve. Input from staff, students and stakeholders is sought as part of SRR preparation.

Step 3: Site Visit

- CEQUAM constitutes a Review Panel that typically includes internal and external experts, both national and international. The Review Panel studies the SRR

as a basis for the site visit. The Review Panel visits the division being reviewed under CEQUAM facilitation. The Review Panel meets with staff, student and stakeholders including current students, graduates and employers.

Step 4: Review Report

- The Review Panel writes a report commenting good practices and recommending improvements. The review Report is published following acceptance by the division under review and University management.

Step 5: Self Improvement Plan (SIP)

- The division that underwent a review prepares a SIP under CEQUAM facilitation and with involvement of key stakeholders. The SIP outlines how the division aims to address the recommendations included in the Panel Review Report.

Step 6: SIP Implementation

- The division that has been reviewed implements the SIP under CEQUAM facilitation.

Step 7: Follow ups

- The division that underwent a review prepares a progress review report. CEQUAM organizes meetings with IMEC and the division that underwent the review to present progress made in addressing the recommendations. IMEC in collaboration with CEQUAM

708 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

709 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

710 University of Namibia. Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Reviews (2016). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

presents progress reports to Dean's Committee and Pro-Vice Chancellor's Administration, Finance and Resource Mobilisation Forum on a continuous basis and possibly Senate and Vice-Chancellor Management Committee.<sup>711</sup>

The key quality criteria were reported as: assessment of the quality of programmes and courses; teaching and learning experience; research; community engagement activities and extension services; support services; and infrastructure, resources and facilities. Key QA priorities were commitment to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work; development and implementation of a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality; the formal status and public availability of the strategy, policy and procedures; and a role for students and other stakeholders in QA. Another QA priority was to ensure that UNAM has an efficient institutional quality assurance management system in place, one which is continuously monitored and improved.

*UNAM should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards.*<sup>712</sup>

The main needs of the institution to help fulfil these priorities were identified as: capacity building in quality assurance given that most of the QA practitioners do not have formal training on QA; adequate financial resources for QA activities; and adequate human resource capacity.<sup>713</sup>

The impact of the work of the institution was reported as follows:

- Quality has improved in general;
- A quality culture has been cultivated; and
- There have been structural changes to the institution as a result of QA interventions, i.e. new units, merged units, new policies, etc.<sup>714</sup>

### Namibia University of Science and Technology

Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) has a distinguished history of providing career-oriented qualifications that are challenging and at the same time rewarding to the student and to the Namibian employment sector. The institution is strongly committed to maintaining high academic standards by enhancing the quality of its activities including teaching and learning, research, community

engagement and support services. This is achieved through the refinement of its quality assurance processes which enable the institution to continuously improve, control, review and redefine its actions so as to attain its goals.<sup>715</sup>

It is reported that the institution has a Quality Management Framework (QMF) and the Quality Management Policy (QMP), which are the guiding documents with regards to the application of institutional quality.<sup>716</sup> The QA approach is reported as being based on issues such as self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student evaluation; and is described as an institution-wide one, covering all areas of institutional offerings - programmes and services.<sup>717</sup> QA is focused at both the institutional and programme level. At an institutional level, all staff members are expected to adhere to the policy regulations. At a programmatic level, all programmes are subjected to the QA rigour.<sup>718</sup> It was reported that the university is very active in national and professional accreditation. While it is also active in the promotion of audits by international QA agencies, this was dependent on the availability of funds.<sup>719</sup> NUST'S Quality Management framework is supported by a number of key documents such as:

- Guidelines for Departmental Self-Evaluation;
- Guidelines on Institutional Audits;
- Guidelines for the Development and Review of Institutional policies;
- Guidelines on Programme Accreditation;
- Guidelines for Quality Reviews (Departmental and Programme); and
- Self-Evaluation Preparatory Instrument (SEPI).<sup>720</sup>

NUST furthermore identified the key stakeholders in QA as 'everyone', including the VC, Council, Senate, Institutional staff, students and cleaners.<sup>721</sup>

711 University of Namibia. Guidelines and Procedures for Quality Reviews (2016). Provided by the Centre for Quality Assurance and Management (CEQUAM) as part of the supporting documents provided with the questionnaire response. Received September 11, 2017

712 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

713 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

714 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

715 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

716 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

717 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

718 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

719 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

720 Additional information received from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received November 23, 2017

721 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

Table 21 Stakeholder roles and their needs (Namibia University of Science and Technology)<sup>722</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Education and Training providers	Provide education and training	Custodians of quality and responsible for the quality of their programmes and assurance thereof
QA Bodies	Acts as regulators on QA matters with due regard to the legislative responsibility of other stakeholders in QA in higher education	Responsible for quality and quality assurance of specific professional programmes and occupations
Industries	Provide relevant corporate training	Ensure that programmes on offer lines up with what is needed
Students	Recipients of education	Quality education

It was reported that the QA steps and quality criteria of the university were aligned to the criteria of the national agencies in the country.

The main QA priority was to obtain funding to participate in programme accreditation and audits by professional and international bodies,<sup>723</sup> while the main need of the institution to help fulfil these priorities, was not surprisingly, funding:

*Funding opportunities to pay for accreditation and audits, because the agencies are in business and yet the institutions don't get enough funding from the government. African governments are faced with funding challenges for HEIs.<sup>724</sup>*

The SARUA study (2012)<sup>725</sup> found that the NUST, conducts internal quality assurance procedures. The aim of quality assurance at NUST is 'to enhance the effectiveness of the institution's core activities, which are teaching and learning, research and community engagement.'<sup>726</sup> Its quality assurance functions extend across both academic and support departments. In this regard, it was found to coordinate and monitor academic regulations, and regulate programmes, processes and the implementation of quality management systems both in academic departments and in support services.

Employing the National Qualifications Framework, the quality assurance process was found to also oversee the quality of academic programmes, and supervise departmental self-evaluation, programme accreditation and programme reviews.<sup>727</sup> Regular self-evaluation underpins the internal quality assurance at the NUST and furthermore, an internal quality assurance management system is in place. The study found that the quality assurance office is responsible for liaising with stakeholders and develops internal quality management systems and procedures, which are internationally benchmarked to ensure constant and continuous improvement across all aspects of the university's operation in order to achieve the university mission, vision values and objectives.<sup>728</sup>

#### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The key strengths of QA in the country were the legal requirements and related regulations as well as political will and support:

*We have legislature and relevant regulations in place. Strong political will and support exists.<sup>729</sup>*

From an institutional perspective, the key strengths of QA in the country were strong support from University management and an internationally benchmarked QA system<sup>730</sup>, and having staff that are well-versed with QA systems<sup>731</sup>

722 Additional information received from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received November 23, 2017

723 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

724 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

725 Mahlaha, N (2012). Chapter 10: Namibia. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

726 *ibid.*, p68

727 *ibid.*, p68

728 Mahlaha, N (2012). Chapter 10: Namibia. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>, p68

729 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

730 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

731 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

A key impact of the work of one of the universities was the change in the worldviews of academics about QA.<sup>732</sup>

The challenges facing QA were identified as follows: lack/limited skills, overlapping of mandates between three QA Agencies in the country and the lengthy review of legislature ('taking too long').<sup>733</sup> A lack of funding was also highlighted. Funding, it was reported, is required to explore international accreditation opportunities.<sup>734</sup> Furthermore, while the legislative instruments are regarded as a strength, it was also reported that there is a need to change legislation, such as making accreditation compulsory.<sup>735</sup> Additionally, the measurement of impact was highlighted as a key challenge:

*It is difficult to measure the impact. QA has improved organizational management processes but has little impact on student learning experience.*<sup>736</sup>

There are also various skills gaps pertaining to QA in the country. It was reported that training was required in standard setting, accreditation and audits, as well as in business process engineering.<sup>737</sup> From an institutional perspective, it was reported that there were gaps pertaining to the management of QA institutions, and skills gaps in the development and implementation of national and institutional QA systems.<sup>738</sup> Furthermore, a key skills gap was in relation to the preparation of self-evaluation reports by academics.<sup>739</sup>

Capacity building was required in the areas of curriculum development and qualifications development (outcome based), self-assessment and the development of self-evaluation reports (SER). These aspects were important for enabling institutions to implement and support QA processes.<sup>740</sup> From an institutional perspective, HEIs require capacity building in the development and implementation of internal quality assurance systems in order to implement and support QA processes.<sup>741</sup> There is also a need for workshops on QA systems so that HEIs could support and implement QA processes.<sup>742</sup> Furthermore, training needs to include both QA staff and the providers of education and training.<sup>743</sup>

### Improving QA in the Country

Strengthening QA in the country would include effective communication, the placement of experts at the NQA for capacity building in QA (especially with regard to site visits; audits; drafting of reports), and setting up of the NQF information management system.<sup>744</sup> From an institutional perspective, this would require more financial resources to be availed, training for QA practitioners and benchmarking and networking opportunities.<sup>745</sup> It was furthermore felt that workshop and conference opportunities would strengthen QA in higher education in the country.<sup>746</sup> Quality assurance should also have an impact on student learning, and needs to be informed by relevant learning theories:

*Quality assurance needs to move away from the common-sense approaches which do not have an impact on student learning experiences, towards quality enhancement and quality development, informed by theories of learning and scholarship of teaching and learning.*<sup>747</sup>

The strengthening of the QA agency in the country requires skills development, the strengthening of strategic planning and governance, adequate resourcing (human and funding) and management.<sup>748</sup> The provisioning of funding for the QA agency was also raised from an institutional perspective, together with the training of external QA practitioners.<sup>749</sup> Addressing the overlap in functions at the QA agency was also highlighted:

*Some believe their functions are overlapping.*<sup>750</sup>

Furthermore, there was awareness of the SADCQF and its value was noted. It was reported that the SADCQF would:

- Enhance student mobility;
- Ensure quality qualifications and trust between member states;
- Enhance qualification verification and referencing; and
- Address fraudulent qualifications.<sup>751</sup>

732 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

733 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

734 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

735 Questionnaire response 2 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 18, 2017

736 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

737 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

738 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

739 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

740 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

741 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

742 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

743 Questionnaire response 2 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 18, 2017

744 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

745 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

746 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

747 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

748 Questionnaire response from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

749 Questionnaire response from University of Namibia. Received September 11, 2017

750 Questionnaire response from Namibia University of Science and Technology. Received September 12, 2017

751 Questionnaire response 1 from the Namibia Qualifications Authority. Received September 19, 2017

## SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act of 2005 mandates the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This includes the establishment of a qualifications structure, setting standards for academic and professional training, ensuring quality in line with the SQA, providing recognition of foreign qualifications, recognising prior learning, ensuring an information management system and developing rules to govern access and quality in higher education.<sup>752</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) is responsible for external QA. Its purpose can be summarised as follows:

*The main purpose of the quality assurance system is to assure stakeholders that the registered institution is providing good quality education. Subsequently, to assure that education and training providers offer 'value for money' in terms of quality input and output, and the interests of students are protected. The QA approach recognises the need for a developmental model of quality assurance, which balances the dual purposes of accountability and quality improvement.*<sup>753</sup>

The QA system is voluntary (non-statutory) in line with the provisions of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority Act, 2005. The Act does not spell out 'compulsory institutional participation'. However, the voluntary nature of the provisions of the Act has been an issue of contention for several years and the SQA is currently lobbying for funding to review the Act and in the process, assure that institutional participation becomes compulsory.<sup>754</sup> It was also pointed out that it is compulsory for all government HEIs who want their qualifications to be recognized nationally, to go through the process of quality assurance for their programmes to be validated and institution to be accredited.<sup>755</sup>

There are three steps in the QA process:

- Institutional accreditation;
- Programme validation; and
- Programme accreditation.

The first two steps are necessary for demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the TEC Education Act and the Seychelles Qualifications Framework. The third is optional, unless there are specific concerns about a programme.<sup>756</sup>

SQA assists and guides HEIs to establish IQA mechanisms and processes. It also conducts accreditation of institutions via external accreditation teams contracted by the SQA and acting on behalf of the Authority. Providers submit programmes to the SQA for programme validation. The SQA contracts validation sub-committees to conduct programme validation. It approves, for a specified period of time (three to five years), a specific education and training programme offered by an institution, leading to the award of a specific qualification to be registered on the Seychelles Qualification Framework. SQA also sets unit standards for NQF qualifications (Level 3-6), and evaluates/verifies qualifications. There is provision in the QA Manual for programme accreditation and institutional audits by the SQA, but this is yet to be implemented.<sup>757</sup>

The institution submits the completed validation template together with all required documents and information. A validation team evaluates the submission and fills in a result sheet giving comments on each of the areas. If there are weaknesses the team then meets with the institution to discuss the results and explain the areas where improvement is required and provide guidance. The results sheet is then forwarded to the institution giving them a timeframe within which to work on the recommendations and re-submit.

The roles of stakeholders and their needs/demands/priorities are reflected in the table below:

752 Ts'ephe, L. (2012). Chapter 11 - Seychelles. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 22, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/Country%20Reports%202012/Seychelles%20country%20profile%20Eng.pdf>

753 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

754 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority.

Received September 21, 2017

755 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

756 Seychelles Qualifications Authority. (2011). Quality Assurance Manual of the Seychelles Qualifications Authority

757 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

Table 22 Key stakeholders and their needs (Seychelles Qualifications Authority)<sup>758</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Learners and their families	To enquire about the recognition status of programmes learners enrol in and whether certification is recognised nationally.	Education and training that is of good quality/quality assured.
Local and international communities	Verify with the SQA that programmes and qualifications are recognised by the Authority.	Assurance that qualifications are recognised on the Seychelles NQF.
Government	Assure sufficient annual budgets for the SQA and education and training providers for implementation of activities that would ultimately promote quality in education and training.	Value for money
Partner institutions	Establish qualification pathways and credit transfer mechanisms	Quality student intakes
Seychelles Qualifications Authority	Maintain standards of education and training in the country and promote international recognition of local qualifications through a system of accreditation, validation and quality assurance and protect the interest of learners.	Make a major contribution to the growth of a credible and reputable education and training system through the development and regular review of a high quality, learner-centred national qualifications framework (NQF) that is recognised both nationally and internationally.
Employers	Provide inputs in programme development to articulate their needs and accept learners for work attachments.	Recruit graduates well equipped with knowledge, skills and aptitude for the job at hand.

The priorities with regards to QA in the country were identified as follows:

- To have all institutions accredited;
- To have all programmes of tertiary education and training institutions validated;
- All tertiary education and training institutions have robust IQA mechanisms and processes established and a QA Unit functional within each institution; and
- To ensure that tertiary institutions offer quality programmes in line with industry needs.<sup>759</sup>

The needs to fulfil these priorities were highlighted as follows:

- Additional staff and capacity building for QA Officers/ attachments for QA Officers;
- Increased financial resources and Funding to recruit overseas consultants for specific projects (e.g. review

of the SQA Act, review of the NQF and related documents, training for implementation of RPL); and

- Funding for secondment to the SQA of experienced QA personnel from the region.<sup>760</sup>

#### **Internal Quality Assurance**

University of Seychelles (UniSey) became operational in 2009 and initial QA processes focused on student evaluation of learning. In 2015 an external examiner system was developed, and in 2016 a programme monitoring and review process was established, with support and expertise from colleagues in the UK. Thus, in 2015, UniSey achieved:

- ‘Centre Recognition Status’ from the University of London (one of three universities in Africa to have achieved this so far);

<sup>758</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>759</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>760</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

- A weeklong training in Assessment and the External Examiner System; and
- Full Accreditation Centre Status from SQA.<sup>761</sup>

Further, in 2016 the university participated in week-long training in Self-Regulation. As a result of this workshop, the following was achieved:

- A draft QA Manual was prepared and is due to be presented to the Senate for Approval by the end of 2017;
- A QA committee was established to oversee programme approval, programme review as well as to be the ‘watchdog’ over QA matters at the institution. This Committee reports to the Senate on a quarterly basis.
- Draft key performance indicators have been prepared.<sup>762</sup>

The draft Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy comprises four aspects:

- 1) Validation of Programmes;
- 2) Quality Assurance of Student Learning;
- 3) Institutional Quality Assurance; and
- 4) Quality Enhancement.<sup>763</sup>

A Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy has been agreed and, currently, work is being undertaken to develop a comprehensive framework to embrace all aspects of Un-

iSey’s work. Their approach to QA reportedly focuses on accreditation, by meeting standards set by the University of London, and the SQA. QA at the institutional level focuses on programme monitoring and review, and the evaluation is student experience. At the programme level, the university has an external examiner system for benchmarking assessment processes and the qualification. The university also conducts staff peer reviews.<sup>764</sup>

The following is a summary of the QA processes:

- Programme approval and validation;
- Annual programme review;
- Periodic programme review;
- Evaluation of learning (four weeks into the start of a new module and two weeks before the end (to determine weaknesses and address these, and the second evaluation is to determine changes, if any));
- Evaluation of services and facilities;
- Graduate destination surveys; evaluation of internships; employers feedback (end 2017); and
- Determining drop-out rates; retention rates; gender statistics<sup>765</sup>

The following table provides an indication of the key stakeholders and their needs

Table 23 Key stakeholders and their needs (University of Seychelles)<sup>766</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
SQA	National Regulatory Body	Clear processes and procedures; Meaningful data
University of London	Provide programmes and conduct institutional review	Clear processes and procedures; Meaningful data
Government	Sponsor Students	Validated programmes

The key priorities of the university were identified as “monitoring review and evaluation of student experiences, proper documentation and review”. It was reported that few students respond to evaluation questionnaire, and thus, the university would benefit from an external evaluation from a third party to provide much needed information / insights that the university is presently struggling to obtain from existing mechanisms.<sup>767</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

Respondents from the SQA highlighted that one of the major strengths was the implementation of QA policies, and the compliance to QA policies and procedures by the SQA and tertiary education and training institutions<sup>768</sup>. The existence of regulations, policies and guidelines was foregrounded as a key strength:

<sup>761</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>762</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>763</sup> University of Seychelles. (2014). Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy. Retrieved August 22, 2017 from <http://www.unisey.ac.sc/images/All%20Downloads/QA-and-Enhancement-Policy.pdf>

<sup>764</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>765</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>766</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>767</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>768</sup> Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

*There are established regulations, policies and guidelines to help institutions to move forward in their quest to ensure quality and credible education and training that meet the needs and expectations of learners and other stakeholders.*<sup>769</sup>

The SQA respondents also further highlighted that all HEIs have undergone QA processes at least once and some institutions have had all their programmes validated.<sup>770</sup> Additionally, the following achievements were noted:

- SQA has established its presence as an Authority nationally
- Individuals and organizations (private and public) consult with the SQA on qualifications and programme issues
- Majority of programmes leading to qualifications are validated and recognized on the Seychelles NQF
- Tertiary education and training providers are either accredited or provisionally accredited.<sup>771</sup>

At the institutional level, the University of Seychelles noted that it now has increased ownership of QA responsibilities and staff are empowered to perform QA activities. Further, *Staff members are willing and ready to embrace the change; new therefore daunting yet promising*<sup>772</sup>

Respondents highlighted challenges at various levels – such as at the government level, SQA level, institutional level. The challenges relate to inadequate human and physical resources to implement QA policies and for institutions to follow through on EQA requirements.<sup>773</sup> Additional challenges relate to lack of knowledge of QA, budgetary constraints, resistance to change and a lack of advocacy for QA from the Ministry and government. These are outlined in more detail below:

#### Ministry and Government level

- Officials have not fully understood the importance of QA despite advocating for it;
- Ministry does not take action on recommendations advanced by the SQA (e.g. programme validation and institutional accreditation); and
- Heads of institutions are not made accountable for outputs.

#### SQA Level

- Acute shortage of personnel with knowledge of QA and who would be willing to take up a QA officer position (SQA level); and
- Budget constraints, which limits QA related activities and projects that can be implemented annually (SQA is a budget dependent entity and does not retain the revenue that it generates).

#### Institutional level

- Most institutions do not have a QA unit/person responsible for QA;
- Lack of ownership and involvement by the staff and heads of institutions, and staff are resistant to change;
- Institutions are not made accountable by the responsible ministry;
- Unwillingness to respond to challenges or additional responsibilities;
- Staff shortages and budget constraints; and
- Staff turnover (transfer to other positions at the responsible ministry headquarters or other government ministries and Agencies or resignations to move to private organisations that offer more attractive salary packages. As a result, there is lack of continuity in terms of capacity building for quality assurance.<sup>774</sup>

The respondent from UniSeY echoed the challenge reported by SQA regarding staff shortages and further noted that there is a lack of experience and skills in QA at the HEI level.<sup>775</sup> The SQA noted that skills related to all areas of QA is required:

*There are gaps in practically all areas as people involved in QA have not been formally trained and experience is lacking.*<sup>776</sup>

Other reported skills gaps were related to accessing information, and preparing reports.<sup>777</sup>

#### Improving QA in the Country

To improve QA in the Seychelles, respondents noted that capacity building in IQA was key to implement and support QA processes, and general QA workshops would be useful in strengthening QA in HE.<sup>778</sup>

<sup>768</sup> Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

<sup>769</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>770</sup> Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

<sup>771</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>772</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>773</sup> Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority.

Received October 4, 2017

<sup>774</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>775</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017

<sup>776</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

<sup>777</sup> Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017

<sup>778</sup> Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017

*Institutions need further capacity building in the area of setting up internal quality assurance structures, (and in) writing procedures.*<sup>779</sup>

The respondent from UniSey further highlighted the need to empower QA staff 'via in-house consultancies'.<sup>780</sup>

To strengthen SQA, respondents emphasised the need for training of SQA staff, staff recruitment, exchange programmes, and additional financial resources such as donor funding to implement QA projects.<sup>781, 782, 783</sup>

Respondents from the SQA were aware of the SADCQF, and acknowledged the importance of working together and to enable recognition of qualifications in the region:

*It will serve a motivation for institutions to seek accreditation and have all their programmes validated as the SADCQF will facilitate recognition of qualifications in the region.*<sup>784</sup>

*The SADC Qualifications framework is an important tool for African countries in this fast-growing economy. It is time countries stop operating in isolation and start developing better synergies to solve the problems [of] education, training, qualification and mobility that have existed for many years. Only then will we be able to move forward and see the full extent of our continent's potential, when there are no barriers....*<sup>785</sup>

## SOUTH AFRICA

### External Quality Assurance

South Africa has a formalized, legislated and functioning national quality assurance agency for higher education in the form of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), was formally launched in May 2001 as a sub-committee of the CHE responsible for quality assurance matters.<sup>786</sup> Among other mandated functions including advising the Ministry on all matters pertaining to higher education, the CHE has executive responsibility for quality assurance and promotion, and discharges this responsibility through the HEQC as a permanent committee (as required by the *Higher Education Act*).<sup>787</sup> In this regard, it is specifically tasked with developing and implementing a system of quality assurance for higher education, including programme accreditation, institutional audits, quality promotion and capacity development, standards development and the development and implementation of the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). The HEQSF is a recent framework specifically crafted for higher education qualifications and is currently being implemented by the CHE.<sup>788</sup> According to a respondent from the CHE, national reviews of programmes are also undertaken.<sup>789</sup> By the end of 2004, the HEQC was in full-scale implementation of many of its systems. Importantly, support is provided to institutions through a range of frameworks and documents including the Framework for Institutional Audits<sup>790</sup> and the accompanying Criteria for Institutional Audits.<sup>791</sup> It can thus be said that the South African higher education sector has operationalized structured quality assurance processes at the national level which caters for both public and private institutions.

Participation in the system is compulsory, as explained by a respondent from the CHE:

*The CHE is through legislation (NQF Act 2008) the only Quality Council for higher education. It is a statutory independent body that has a mandate to accredit programmes, set standards for qualifications and*

779 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017  
 780 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017  
 781 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017  
 782 Questionnaire response from University of Seychelles. Received October 10, 2017  
 783 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017  
 784 Questionnaire response 1 from the Seychelles Qualification Authority. Received September 21, 2017  
 785 Questionnaire response 2 from Seychelles Qualifications Authority. Received October 4, 2017  
 786 Higher Education Quality Committee Founding Document (2001). Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/HEQC\\_Founding\\_document\\_web\\_2001.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/HEQC_Founding_document_web_2001.pdf)

787 Council on Higher Education. (no date.) CHE Mandate. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/about/overview\\_and\\_mandate/mandate](http://www.che.ac.za/about/overview_and_mandate/mandate)  
 788 Government Gazette 38116. Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework - HEQSF (2014). Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Government%20Gazette%2038116%2017%20October%202014%20HEQSF.pdf>  
 789 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017  
 790 Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Committee. (2004). Framework for Institutional Audits. Retrieved on August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE\\_Institutional-Audit-Framework\\_June2004.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Framework_June2004.pdf)  
 791 Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Committee. (2004). Criteria for Institutional Audits. Retrieved on August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE\\_Institutional-Audit-Criteria\\_June2004.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Criteria_June2004.pdf)

*audit HEIs – hence participation is compulsory.*<sup>792</sup>

The establishment of the HEQC was legitimated by a number of policy and legislative developments in South Africa which came into effect after the new democratic dispensation in 1994. In a Letter to Nelson Mandela, the State President at the time, attached to Chapter 1 of the 1996 Report of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)<sup>793</sup>, the NCHE acknowledges a system characterised by fragmentation, discriminatory policies and practices, inequitable allocation of resources and undemocratic governance structures. Post-apartheid, the new government of South Africa initiated and implemented a systematic overhaul of the education system as part of its transformation agenda, a system which was to be characterised by a single, co-ordinated higher education system, cooperative governance and goal-directed funding.

The key purposes of the external QA system in South Africa are underpinned by accountability as well as developmental objectives:

*There are different purposes ranging from a hard-edge accountability QA perspective from functions such as institutional audits, programme accreditation and a more developmental approach from functions such as the quality enhancement and quality promotion.*<sup>794</sup>

Earlier, the purpose of South Africa's external QA system was also briefly described by referring to the mandate of the HEQC. Some of the key policies/frameworks and legislation leading to the establishment of the HEQC are now discussed to firstly provide a historical lens on higher education quality as a key area of focus, and secondly to demonstrate how the purpose of higher education quality assurance is given expression in these documents.

### **Report of the National Commission on Higher Education, A Framework for Transformation, 1996**

All chapters of the NCHE Report can be found on the CHE website.<sup>795</sup> In addition to the principles of equity, democratization, development, academic freedom/institutional autonomy, effectiveness and efficiency, Chapter 1 of the NCHE Report highlights quality as one of the key principles underpinning the new framework, and states that 'all the services and products of higher education should pursue and maintain the highest attainable levels of quality'. Chapter 6 of the NCHE Report<sup>796</sup> which focuses on a

single-coordinated system, draws attention to quality and states that the system will 'seek to enhance quality and promote articulation by the inclusion of higher education programmes in the NQF (National Qualification Framework), and in a quality assurance system to be developed within the broad ambit of SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority) in ways appropriate to the nature and goals of higher education'.

### **Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997**<sup>797</sup>

Following the NCHE Report, and as stated in its introduction, the Education White Paper 3 'outlines a comprehensive set of initiatives for the transformation of higher education through the development of a single co-ordinated system with new planning, governing and funding arrangements'. Notably, quality features as one of the fundamental principles guiding the transformation of the higher education sector. Section 1.21 specifically draws attention to quality as follows: 'The pursuit of the principle of quality means maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, both in the sense of specific expectations and requirements that should be complied with, and in the sense of ideals of excellence that should be aimed at. These expectations and ideals may differ from context to context, partly depending on the specific purposes pursued. Applying the principle of quality entails evaluating services and products against set standards, with a view to improvement, renewal or progress'. The White Paper further called for the enactment of the Higher Education Act and informed the provisions of the yet-to-be enacted Act. It proposed that the Higher Education Act would provide for the co-ordination of quality assurance in higher education through a HEQC which would be established as a permanent committee of the CHE. It further proposed that the establishment of the HEQC, its registration with SAQA as the education and training quality assurer (ETQA) for higher education and its modus operandi would be determined by the CHE within the framework and procedural guidelines developed by SAQA – SAQA being the South African Qualifications Authority. SAQA at the time had the mandate of quality assuring education and training in its entirety from primary school to PhD levels. SAQA then used to delegate some of the quality assurance responsibilities to the ETQAs, and hence for the newly established HEQC to legitimately operate as a quality assurer of higher education, it needed to be registered and 'accredited' as an ETQA by SAQA.<sup>798</sup>

792 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

793 Chapter 1 of the NCHE Report (1996). Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Chapter%201.pdf>

794 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

795 Council on Higher Education. (no date.) NCHE Report: A Framework for Transformation, 1996. Retrieved August 5, 2017. [http://www.che.ac.za/media\\_and\\_publications/other-stakeholder-s-publications/nche-report-framework-transformation-1996](http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/other-stakeholder-s-publications/nche-report-framework-transformation-1996)

796 Chapter 6 of the NCHE Report (1996). A Single Coordinated Higher Education System. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/Chapter%206.pdf>

797 Education White Paper 3 (1997): A Programme for Higher Education Transformation. Government of South Africa. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.dhet.gov.za/KNOWLEDGE%20CENTER/HE%20FRAMEWORK/White%20Paper%203-A.pdf#search=Education%20White%20Paper%203%20A%20programme%20for%20the%20transformation%20of%20higher%20education>

798 Input from the Council on Higher Education. Received December 13, 2017

Section 1.21 further stated that the functions of the HEQC will include programme accreditation, institutional auditing and quality promotion. It should operate within an agreed framework underpinned by:

- The formulation of criteria and procedures in consultation with higher education institutions;
- A formative notion of quality assurance, focused on improvement and development rather than punitive sanction; and
- A mix of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment.<sup>799</sup>

The stipulated functions of the HEQC are in essence an articulation of the purpose of the national quality assurance system, as well as the form it takes (i.e. mix of institutional self-evaluation and external independent assessment, formative rather than punitive, and consultative in relation to the formulation of criteria and procedures). The functions of the HEQC were subsequently also expressed in the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, discussed next.

#### Higher Education Act 101 of 1997<sup>800</sup>

Chapter Two of the Act is dedicated to the Council on Higher Education and describes, among other aspects, its establishment, functions, composition and quality promotion and quality assurance functions. Following on the recommendations of the White Paper on higher education, the Higher Education Act of 1997 made provision for the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to establish a permanent sub-committee, the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), the mandate of which was summarised earlier. The Higher Education Act explains the purpose of the national quality assurance system as follows:

- 1) To promote quality among constituent providers in higher education to facilitate the development of quality awareness and quality responsiveness in public and private provision;
- 2) To audit the quality assurance mechanism of institutions;
- 3) To accredit providers of higher education to offer programmes leading to particular NQF-registered qualifications by certifying their systems, processes and capacity to do so. In relevant cases, this would be done co-operatively with professional councils

and Sector Education and Training Associations (SETAs);

- 4) To co-ordinate and facilitate quality assurance activities in higher education within a partnership model with other Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) (RSA, 1997, p. 10); and
- 5) To undertake a comprehensive range of functions within the complex framework and requirements of SAQA criteria and guidelines for ETQAs. The primary responsibility of the HEQC as an ETQA would be to ensure that the quality of the provision of qualifications in higher education is maintained and enhanced through evaluating and monitoring the capacity of higher education providers to deliver those qualifications effectively and efficiently.

A mapping of the specific legal mandates of QA agencies in Sub-Saharan Africa was undertaken as part of a detailed comparative study on Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa, hereafter referred to as the Sub-Saharan Africa study. The SADC study found that the HEQC's legal mandate does not include the advising of governments regarding visitations, ranking institutions, overseeing/evaluating transfers between institutions, approving admissions to institutions, and standardisation of academic designations and titles – this is unlike some other SADC countries whose QA agencies perform these QA functions due to an absence of separate bodies to oversee such functions.<sup>801</sup>

The Sub-Saharan African study further mapped actual QA processes and found that the QA system of the HEQC involves peer reviews, institutional self-assessments, site visits and a report, and that the stages of accreditation included provisional registration/authorization, approval for candidacy for accreditation, programme accreditation only and reaccreditations (every four to six years). The reaccreditation that occurs every four to six years is for programmes offered by private higher education institutions since reaccreditation of their programmes is a requirement for renewal of their registration with the Department of Higher Education and Training.<sup>802</sup> On the other hand, the study found that the HEQC was not involved in the process of applying for registration, as this is a DHET function. Over and above this, the study mapped the criteria used by the HEQC in accreditation and audits which was found to include: the

799 Education White Paper 3 (1997): A Programme for Higher Education Transformation. Government of South Africa. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.dhet.gov.za/KNOWLEDGE%20CENTER/HE%20FRAMEWORK/White%20Paper%203-A.pdf#search=Education%20White%20Paper%203%20A%20programme%20for%20the%20transformation%20of%20higher%20education>

800 Higher Education Act 101 of 1997. Government of South Africa. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.dhet.gov.za/Council%20on%20Higher%20Education/Higher%20Education%20Act%20101%20of%201997.pdf#search=Higher%20Education%20Act%20of%201997>

801 Materu. P (2007). Higher Education Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan

Africa: Status, Challenges, Opportunities, and Promising Practices. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

802 Input from the Council on Higher Education. Received December 13, 2017

803 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

mission and purpose, planning and evaluation, governance, academic programmes, staff (quality, research, teaching and service), students (recruitment, resources, learning), library and information resources, physical and technological resources, finances, integrity, quality assurance mechanisms and national development and community service. A study on Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa<sup>803</sup> pointed out a distinguishing criterion of the HEQC in South Africa, which pertains to transformation. In this regard, South African universities are required to indicate how they are meeting the transformation goals set for higher education. The Framework for Institutional Audits<sup>804</sup> states that ‘the audit system seeks to be responsive to as well as proactive in advancing the objectives of higher education transformation, as reflected in various policy and legislative documents that have been published since 1994. Ensuring that improved and sustainable quality is part of the transformation objectives of higher education institutions is, therefore, a fundamental premise of the HEQC’s approach to quality assurance in general and to institutional audits in particular’. Such transformation goals include increased access and equity for previously disadvantaged groups, increasing the pool of black and women researchers, and improved throughput and retention rates. The transformation imperative is also given expression in the Criteria for Institutional Audits<sup>805</sup>. The criterion which was not used by the HEQC was ‘industrial links and work-based experience’, which Mauritius was found to have.<sup>806</sup>

Key stakeholders in the QA system were identified as institutions, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The DHET was responsible for the registration of institutions and programmes. Accreditation is required for both public and private providers to offer their qualifications, however, it has funding impacts for the public universities. The SAQA was responsible for the registration of qualifications, for which accreditation is a pre-requisite.<sup>807</sup>

The CHE is in the process of adopting a more integrated and holistic approach to QA, as past efforts have been disjointed:

***Currently the various QA processes are conducted discretely which results in a fragmented approach. We are in the process of designing an integrated QA framework that will combine the CHE’s understanding of***

***the quality of the institution and its programmes from various lenses and engage with the institution on the effectiveness of its QA systems***<sup>808</sup>

The key priorities with regard to QA in South Africa were reported as follows:

- Maintaining good levels and standards of programmes;
- Instituting a second cycle of institutional reviews;
- Upscaling the national reviews of programmes;
- Developing standards for qualifications;
- Promoting quality among providers to entrench the principle that the responsibility for the provision of quality higher education lies with the institutions themselves; and
- Developing a new online system to support the functioning of an integrated system.<sup>809</sup>

Prioritising the development of an online system suggests that the CHE is open to embracing technology to support its mandate. The CHE is also in the process of re-introducing institutional audits which will be renamed ‘reviews’ going forward. This follows the first cycle of audits which commenced in 2004 and concluded in 2010. Funding has been a major challenge contributing to the delay.<sup>810</sup> The needs of the CH, to help in fulfilling the various priorities, will require additional financial and human resources.<sup>811</sup> This is not surprising, given the size of the South African higher education system.

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

As described in the Sub-Saharan Africa study, ‘quality assurance within institutions of higher learning takes place throughout the teaching and learning process. It includes screening of candidates for admission, staff recruitment and promotion procedures, curriculum reviews, teaching and learning facilities, quality of research, policy development and management mechanisms, student evaluation of staff, external examiners for end-of-semester or end-of-year examinations, tracer studies, academic reviews and audits.’<sup>812</sup>

Drawing from the SARUA (2012) study, which was limited to public HEIs, it was found that at an institutional level, all universities that responded to the SARUA survey confirmed that they had internal quality assurance systems in place.

804 CHE: Framework for Institutional Audits (2004). Retrieved on August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE\\_Institutional-Audit-Framework\\_June2004.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Framework_June2004.pdf)

805 CHE: Criteria for Institutional Audits (2004). Retrieved on August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE\\_Institutional-Audit-Criteria\\_June2004.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Criteria_June2004.pdf)

806 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

807 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

808 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

809 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017. Further inputs from the CHE. Received December 14, 2017

810 Response from the CEO of the CHE during a briefing session ahead of regional workshop on 9-10 Oct 2017. September 8, 2017

811 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

812 Materu, P (2007). Higher Education Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Status, Challenges, Opportunities, and Promising Practices. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124\\_qa\\_higher\\_edu\\_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/qa-connect/wp124_qa_higher_edu_africa.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

These universities were found to have a quality assurance framework as well as processes for allocating budget for quality-related activities. Institutional quality frameworks incorporated issues such as 'teaching, research, community service, student performance monitoring, administrative processes, entrepreneurship, staff training and development, and external relations and partnerships.'<sup>813</sup>

The study found the existence of research offices, teaching and learning strategies and dedicated offices for the tracking of students' performance and throughput. Newly appointed staff were exposed to staff development and orientation activities among all universities that responded to the survey. It was also found that mechanisms do exist for evaluating individual teaching staff, student support and research activities as part of enhancing and ensuring quality at all institutional levels. Furthermore, a moderation process was in place among all universities for external examinations. The study summarised that overall the responses from South African universities 'provide evidence of an active and rigorous effort at national and institutional levels to maintain a high quality of higher education management and output' however concluding that nonetheless, 'South African higher education still shows high levels of dropout and generally low levels of throughput and success.'<sup>814</sup>

#### University of Cape Town

A QA Framework at UCT does not yet exist but is in the initial phases of development.<sup>815</sup> The main thrust underpinning the QA approach at UCT is continuous improvement:

*The approach that we promote is one which emphasizes continuous improvement and is not intended to be punitive. The intention/purpose is to encourage everyone to take ownership of quality and quality assurance, as opposed to imposing rules from a central point that often results in nothing more than mere compliance.'*<sup>816</sup>

It was felt that QA at the institutional level should be regarded as a 'strategic imperative'. QA activities were reported as occurring at the programmatic level, although there was an insufficient understanding of the QA activities being implemented and how consistently this was being done. It was reported that the intention is to partner mainly with academics and to emphasize a culture of quality as a 'way we do things', as opposed to 'what we have to do.'<sup>817</sup> UCT's is involved in both accreditation and audits. Accreditation was described as a basic requirement but not the 'sum

total of QA'. Key to the overall QA approach is a high-level philosophy and approach to contextualise processes such as accreditation and audits. The purpose of this includes the promotion of good practice and collaboration:

*It is intended to promote good practice, share collaborative ideas, encourage reflection and self-improvement and also to look at the supporting framework that enables the entire institution to own quality and excellence.'*<sup>818</sup>

With regard to the key stakeholders in QA and their roles, it was reported that QA is the responsibility of both academic and administrative staff, with Senate, the QA committee and students being the key stakeholders. Senate was accountable for quality-related concerns, the quality assurance committee was the custodian for quality and students were those who had 'first-hand' experience of the university and the effectiveness of its services.<sup>819</sup>

It was reported that there were a number of projects involving QA, which were not necessarily process-related. All documentation and policies would need to go through a number of governance structures for input and/or approval before it reaches Senate.<sup>820</sup>

The key priorities were identified as follows:

- Assure the institution and others that the university's offerings are assured of quality;
- Ensure that mechanisms and systems are in place to manage quality;
- Encourage reflection and continuous improvement; and
- Promote good practices.<sup>821</sup>

The main needs of the institution to help fulfil these priorities were buy-in from the academic constituency and additional resources.<sup>822</sup>

With regard to the impact of the work of the university, while it is reported that there has been a positive shift, resistance related to accountability was highlighted:

*There has been a positive shift in willingness to engage with quality from academics, but the resistance, as is always the case, is on accountability; with quality assurance sometimes being viewed as managerialism and an infringement on academic freedom.'*<sup>823</sup>

813 Fongwa, S (2012). Chapter 12: South Africa. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

814 Fongwa, S (2012). Chapter 12: South Africa. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>, p81

815 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

816 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

817 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

818 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

819 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

820 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

821 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

822 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

823 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

### Milpark Education

Milpark Education does have a QA Policy.<sup>824</sup> The following principles underpin the policy and procedures for quality assurance:

- Quality;
- Continuous Improvement;
- Transparency and fairness;
- Consistency;
- Conceptuality; and
- Provider responsibility and equality.<sup>825</sup>

The Academic Board and its sub-committees are responsible for quality assurance. The Policy outlines a clear governance structure which is in place to drive quality assurance. The main purposes of quality assurance as described in the Policy are as follows: to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and research in the institution; to ensure the students receive a quality education through relevant and appropriate qualifications; and to maintain high academic standards.<sup>826</sup> Further to this, compliance was foregrounded as a key purpose:

*To address all 19 criteria as per the accreditation framework in RSA.*

*To comply with all requirements set by the national regulatory and legislative bodies.<sup>827</sup>*

With specific reference to quality provision in delivery, it was reported that courses are provided for academics:

*We also have an online course for all lecturers in online course delivery which focuses on all the key quality provisions in delivery. And a lecturing course for all our lecturers.<sup>828</sup>*

It was reported that QA at Milpark Education is focussed at both the institutional and programmatic level. At the institutional level the focus is on values in relation to the 'core areas of academic functionality' such as research and teaching and learning. At the programmatic level, detailed QA requirements are provided for activities including programme review, module review, moderation, external input, benchmarking and external advisory functions.<sup>829</sup>

Milpark Education has only been involved in accreditation processes to date. It has not yet experienced an audit process, but has participated in the Quality Enhancement Project of the CHE. Accreditation is an activity which is familiar to the institution with a 'value for money' approach:

*Accreditation is an activity to which we have all become accustomed. We use the criteria to determine our policy*

*framework, and our procedures and practices. However, we go beyond these directed and minimum standards in attempting to ensure that our students and clients receive value for money education.<sup>830</sup>*

The key stakeholders were identified as academic staff, the CEO and the management team, and the academic leadership. The training needs foregrounded for all academic staff were the interpretation of the national framework and determining the impact of activities:

*Need to be trained in the 'translation' and 'interpretation' of the framework nationally into the framework institutionally and then the impact in the tasks they perform as part of their day to day activities.<sup>831</sup>*

The CEO and management were described as being responsible for financial control and revenue generation. It was felt that it was important that resource allocation and academic planning 'align to the business drivers.'<sup>832</sup> In this regard, much support was provided by management for quality assurance:

*In our experience, good quality is good for business, and we have much support from the CEO, CFO in this regard.*

*The need to understand the quality provisions at a high level is ever-present.<sup>833</sup>*

QA is undertaken at various stages in the academic process. For example, both internal and external moderation of examinations occurs. Furthermore, the student and invigilator ratio are considered, and the recruitment and training of invigilators and their roles and responsibilities are described. Internal and external examiners are appointed for the assessment of dissertations. Additionally, the quality assurance procedures provide for the involvement of external experts in the review of the programmes, curricula, and modules. The essential elements in the selection of these experts are independence, transparency and professionalism.<sup>834</sup>

A key QA priority for the institution is the preparation of students to be effective in financial services and management. The outcomes to achieve this would need to be integrated into the curricula:

*We need to prepare students to be ethical, effective and knowledgeable practitioners in the financial services sector in particular, and in management roles in general. In order to do this, our curricula have to contain the outcomes needed to achieve this.<sup>835</sup>*

824 Milpark Education. Academic Policies document (no date.). Provided as a supporting document with the questionnaire. Received September 28, 2017

825 Milpark Education. Supplementary Policies and Procedures to QMS (2016). Provided as a supporting document with the questionnaire. Received September 28, 2017

826 Milpark Education. Academic Policies document (no date. Provided as a supporting document with the questionnaire. Received September 28, 2017

827 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

828 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

829 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

830 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

831 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

832 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

833 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

834 Milpark Education. Academic Procedures document (2013). Provided as a supporting document with the questionnaire. Received September 28, 2017.

Another key priority pertained to having content which remains relevant:

*Our QA/programme management must ensure that we remain abreast of developments in each of the sub-disciplines in this field, and our content has to be current and relevant.*<sup>836</sup>

Furthermore, a priority was having physical, human and online resources which were suitable to the 'nature and level' of all students, while it was also important that staff teaching on the programmes understood their roles and were enabled with the 'skills and values' to deliver on these aspects. The key need to fulfil these priorities was time, given that the duplication of work was an issue. It was felt that a more streamlined approach would enable a better engagement with quality issues:

*We spend a lot of time repeating/duplicating work already done in some of the accreditation and registration processes. A more streamlined approach would mean that we could engage more fully with the qualitative depth of quality concerns rather than seeking always to provide the answer that will make the question go away.*<sup>837</sup>

On the other hand, the funding/financing of quality by the institution was not identified as a need:

*We are lucky at Milpark as the funding/financing of quality is never at issue. The business always has and continues to make available the human and other resources needed to deliver quality programmes.*<sup>838</sup>

In terms of the impact of the work of the institution, it was reported that all Milpark Education's qualifications in Financial Services are listed in the FSB's list of programmes for 'fit and proper' requirements. Some management and commerce programmes are also listed. It was reported that students are able to transition into studies at other institutions and 'do not struggle to articulate' into these studies. It was reported that employers are satisfied with the knowledge of Milpark graduates in their employ and that the Masters in Business Administration is ranked number one among private institutions:

*Clients have expressed happiness with the results in respect of their employees' knowledge. The MBA is regularly rated #1 private and #2 overall MBA in SA (although this is not seen as a measure of academic quality, rather as a measure of, if anything, employer satisfaction).*<sup>839</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

With regard to support to institutions ahead of an accreditation or audit process, a study on Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa<sup>840</sup> pointed out that South Africa had particularly well-developed and effective programmes, workshops and documentation to assist universities. Furthermore, it found that South Africa had an evidence-based approach to quality assurance which was given expression in the standards set by the HEQC. In particular, all standards required outcome analysis as part of the evaluation process including tracer studies, data on employment, and efforts to assess the value added of the academic programs. The maturity and credibility of the system were reported as follows:

*well-established processes - credible, robust, high intellectual capacity, peer driven system.*<sup>841</sup>

In terms of recent activities, the CHE has been actively involved on an ongoing basis in implementing the key purposes of the national quality assurance system, as documented extensively on its website.<sup>842</sup> A major achievement pertains to its comprehensive adherence to the good practice guidelines for external quality assurance agencies, for which it received formal recognition by the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) on 7 November 2011 – becoming the first quality agency in Africa to be formally recognized for this.<sup>843</sup> The CHE also plays a pivotal role in promoting regional quality assurance. As reported in one of its newsletters, in October 2016, the CHE hosted the 3rd Regional Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education of the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN). The conference was attended by 120 delegates from a variety of quality assurance bodies and higher education institutions from 12 African countries.<sup>844</sup> From 9-10 October 2017, the CHE and the DAAD jointly hosted a regional workshop entitled: Identifying Capacity Building Needs for the Improvement of Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Southern Africa. The CHE is actively implementing its mandate and has given a prominent voice to quality assurance matters. This augurs well for the ongoing quality assurance of the higher education sector in South Africa. It was reported that the CHE has achieved a high impact. QA is established and supported by HEIs:

835 Questionnaire response from MilparkEducation. Received September 28, 2017  
836 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017  
837 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017  
838 Questionnaire response from MilparkEducation. Received September 28, 2017  
839 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017  
840 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

841 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

842 CHE website. Home page. Retrieved August 5, 2017, <http://www.che.ac.za/>  
843 Council on Higher Education. (2011). HEQC aligned with INQAAHE good practice guidelines for external quality agencies. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/HEQC\\_aligned\\_with\\_INQAAHE\\_good\\_practice\\_guidelines\\_20111213.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/HEQC_aligned_with_INQAAHE_good_practice_guidelines_20111213.pdf)

844 CHE website. Publications. CHE Newsletter: Quality Matters 4th Edition (October 2016). Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/media\\_and\\_publications/che-newsletters/che-newsletter-quality-matters-4th-edition-october-2016-o#sadc](http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/che-newsletters/che-newsletter-quality-matters-4th-edition-october-2016-o#sadc)

*High impact. QA is embedded in fabric of higher education. High level of acceptance and co-operation from the sector.*<sup>845</sup>

The enabling work of the CHE was also highlighted by participating universities. From an institutional perspective, a main strength of QA in the country was the existence of a national oversight body in the form of the Council on Higher Education (CHE):

*It has helped significantly for minimal standards to be put in place, so that all institutions work from the same base.*<sup>846</sup>

Another university reported that a key strength is having a QA framework in place for some time, leading to familiarity with the process. The QA framework was described as relatively 'stable', 'comprehensive' and addressing all the main aspects of delivery.<sup>847</sup>

It was felt that a key challenge facing QA in the country was the underfunding of the CHE with regard to the low salaries of management staff.<sup>848</sup> From an institutional perspective the challenges were reported as follows:

- The unevenness of academic provision – not all public institutions are equally equipped or funded mostly due to the country's history;
- Funding – declining state subsidies essentially impacts on the ability to attract and retain excellent staff; and
- Striking the balance between quality, access and support for all those entering and currently progressing on the student's academic journey.<sup>849</sup>

Other reported challenges relate to perceived over-regulated system, in a bid to address poor providers. It was further reported that there are very few people who understand the entire QA framework 'in all its complexities' in SA. On the other hand, it was felt that this was not an easy area to provide training in as learning occurred through experience in the area over time:

*It is the kind of thing you learn from having worked in the area for ages*<sup>850</sup>

It was also felt that actual quality building was affected by the politics of relationships leading to providers adopting a compliance driven approach instead:

*It also, whether we like it or not, depends to some extent on relationships, although not my experience, there is a perception that if the regulator 'does not like' a provider, then they will have difficulties. I am sure this is not the case, but it makes providers defensive at the outset, and prone to avoidance and compliance rather than actual quality-building.*<sup>851</sup>

A variety of issues face Africa with regard to quality assurance, accreditation and quality audits. In respect of South Africa, the study on Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa<sup>852</sup> found that the extent of the audit and accreditation process was viewed as a limitation among a large number of academic and professional staff members who saw this as far too time-consuming. The study interpreted this as pointing to both the magnitude of the programme adopted by the HEQC and also the significant staffing needs of accreditation if it was to be done properly. The study also indicated that the cost of the accreditation and audit process was seen as a critical factor affecting success in all study cases, apart from one. In respect of South Africa, which the study at the time pointed out had a stronger economy than any of the other countries studied, cost was regarded as a serious issue for the institutions, but not for the HEQC. The study cites respondents who felt that some of the financial problems could be attributed to the nature of the criteria, an ambitious audit and accreditation process and reporting requirements in the areas such as research and service-learning. The study pointed out that the HEQC was exploring ways of limiting the burden of cost to institutions.<sup>853</sup> Currently, however, cost is a critical factor for the CHE, and by extension the HEQC.<sup>854</sup>

With regard to the consultation process, the study found that the HEQC had consulted extensively with stakeholders during the preparation of policies and standards and treated consultations in a serious light. However, some participants felt that too much time had been spent on the consultation process. Positively, it was found that the HEQC was upfront in its communication strategy, and at the same time acknowledged that communication in the public sector could have been improved. At the time of the study, it was found that the HEQC was working towards improving its public communication strategy, and was also trying to enhance the effectiveness of site visits by con-

845 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

846 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

847 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

848 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

849 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

850 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

851 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

852 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper

presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

853 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

854 Input from the Council on Higher Education. Received December 13, 2017

ducting post-site visit surveys which have assisted them in revising their policies and procedures.<sup>855</sup>

Another challenge relates to closing the gap between universities and the labour market. The study found that for many institutions, there was minimal contact between them and employers, while others felt there was an ongoing tension between meeting the needs of employers and maintaining academic and professional knowledge. The study reported that measures taken by institutions to focus on outcomes in this area in the form of graduate surveys, employer interviews and other outcomes assessments, will help bridge this gap. In South Africa, the Framework for Institutional Audits<sup>856</sup> makes provision for user surveys, benchmarking and impact studies in Area 1 of the scope and to date (2017) there are known instances and anecdotal evidence that some universities do undertake graduate exit surveys and employer surveys. The study suggested that universities need to find ways to increase input from the professions and business.<sup>857</sup>

### Improving QA in the Country

Respondents reported that capacity building in curriculum development, teaching and learning (pedagogy) and assessment was required to implement and support QA processes.<sup>858</sup> From an institutional perspective, it was reported that additional resources would enable further efforts to implement and support QA processes.<sup>859</sup> The state's perception of private providers was highlighted as an issue which compromised cooperation between private providers and regulators:

*There needs to be a fundamental shift in the way the state uses the term 'private' in a pejorative sense. Once this has happened, it will be easier for us to work together to build common ground.*<sup>860</sup>

On the other hand, it was reported that public universities are increasingly cooperating with the private providers in respect of 'understanding and responding to the frameworks and other QA and state initiatives/policies.' It was felt that this needed to be 'matched by a similar move' from the regulators. General capacity building initiatives in the following areas were also identified as being useful:

- Benchmarking – what is it?;
- Cohorts/cohort analysis /throughput and success;
- Institutional research for private providers – themes/ data and ideas;
- What is quality? How do we measure it? How is this aligned to the Accreditation/Audit criteria? Does it?;
- How to integrate your QA activities so that they do not run parallel to what you do (i.e. actual quality v compliance quality); and
- Quality and the place of evidence. What is evidence? What gives evidence weight?<sup>861</sup>

Earlier it was reported that one of the key priorities of the CHE was to develop an online system to support the new integrated system. This was once again echoed, this time in relation to the strengthening of QA in the country. It was reported that technical support would be required as the CHE moves into the new integrated framework. Furthermore, the new framework would need to be consulted with HEIs and other stakeholders.<sup>862</sup> From an institutional perspective, it was reported that the system works very well.<sup>863</sup>

Key to strengthening the QA agency were high level discussions with QA experts around changes in QA approaches as well as global trends:

*International QA experts to engage in high level strategic discussions on shifts in approaches and international trends.*<sup>864</sup>

It was further reported that more communication and collaboration across the African continent would be useful, with the HAQAA project being cited as an example.<sup>865</sup> Increasing capacity at the required levels in the CHE was reported as key to strengthening the agency to conduct its work effectively:

*They are hugely over-worked and I suspect could do far more, more effectively and meaningfully if there were more capacity. So much of what they do is really important administration – and it cannot be done by low level people – it has to be done by educated high level staff with a real sense of its significance. So, they need to be properly capacitated so that they can conduct their work effectively.*<sup>866</sup>

855 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

856 CHE: Framework for Institutional Audits (2004). Retrieved on August 5, 2017 from [http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE\\_Institutional-Audit-Framework\\_June2004.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/CHE_Institutional-Audit-Framework_June2004.pdf)

857 Hayward, F. (2006). Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa. Paper presented in Burkino Faso at the Conference on Higher Education Reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the Keys of Success. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)

858 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

859 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

860 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

861 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

862 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

863 Questionnaire response from University of Cape Town. Received September 18, 2017

864 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

865 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

866 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

It was also felt that redundancies in the system needed to be removed along with ‘unnecessary intricacies’, ‘duplications’ and ‘over-reporting’.<sup>867</sup> Another key aspect was finding effective ways to deal with private providers who are not offering quality education. Criteria, it was reported, are designed for entry into the system and not exit from the system and were not ‘hard’ enough. A suggestion for an independent body to regulate this was put forward, and this was likened to the process of administration public HEIs are subjected to:

*There needs – perhaps – to be an independent adjudicating panel who receives these, investigates them and makes a determination based on a separate set of requirements. Kind of like how publics are subjected to Ministerial ‘administration’.*<sup>868</sup>

In terms of awareness of the SADCQF and its value, the CHE reported that it has engaged with the SADCQF.<sup>869</sup>

## SWAZILAND

### External Quality Assurance

In Swaziland, the responsibility of QA in HE rests with the Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC), which established a QA framework in 2016. The purpose of the country’s QA approach is to ensure that HEIs offer quality education, hence the assessment is done at different levels such as when an institution has applied for establishment, registration and accreditation. The QA system is statutory as the Higher Education Act of 2013 which established the SHEC compels all higher education institutions to register with the latter in order to operate. The legislation empowers SHEC with authority to close institutions that fail to comply with quality standards. The key QA assurance priorities are: to provide quality education, infrastructure and facilities, adequately and relevantly qualified personnel, relevant academic programmes.<sup>870</sup>

At the institutional level, QA focuses on the establishment, registration, and accreditation of HEIs. Guidelines for these are available from the SHEC website.<sup>871</sup> There is also programme accreditation and guidelines have been programme accreditation guidelines have been prepared to guide the institution in preparing its self-evaluation report. Before accrediting institutions/programmes, they are subjected to an assessment using quality standards. Accreditation is the last stage that is undertaken after an HEI has been registered with SHEC. It is valid for a period of five years and upon lapse of that period, the HEI applies again for re-accreditation. An institutional audit is conducted after an institution submits a self-evaluation report. A validation meeting comprising subject matter experts is undertaken, which includes an inspection of facilities, review of HEI documentation, and interviews with key stakeholders such as management, academic staff, students and support staff. This assessment is executed in line with the Institutional Assessment Guidelines SHEC and uses Institutional Assessment Guidelines which comprise the following quality standards: vision and mission, institutional governance and management, internal quality assurance, programme design and review, infrastructure and facilities, staffing, student recruitment, selection and admission, teaching, learning and assessment, student progression and support, financial and administrative systems, research activities and management information systems. If the outcome of the assessment is positive, the HEI is granted a five-year license to operate and upon lapse of the five years, the latter is eligible to apply for accreditation.<sup>872</sup>

867 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

868 Questionnaire response from Milpark Education. Received September 28, 2017

869 Questionnaire response from the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (CHE). Received September 28, 2017

870 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC).

Received October 16, 2017

871 Swaziland Higher Education Council. (no date). Home Page – Documents tab. Retrieved November 4, 2017 from <http://www.shec.org.sz/#>

872 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

The following table summarises the key stakeholders in Swaziland's QA in HE:

Table 24 Key stakeholders and their needs (Swaziland Higher Education Council)<sup>873</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Students	Participate in QA by evaluating the delivery of programmes, evaluating lecturer performance and in programme review	Quality education that will lead to better employment/self-employment opportunities. The education should also facilitate individual academic growth
Higher education institutions	Introduce internal quality assurance policies and structures	Credibility of their institutions and the programmes they offer
Industry	Inform programmes required by the economy and further participate in programme review	Skills gaps will be addressed
Professional bodies	Participate in programme accreditation and register qualified personnel in their areas of speciality	Adequately qualified graduates will join the different professions

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

The University of Swaziland (UNISWA) has a Quality Assurance Policy and Framework. The university aims to strive for and maintain a reputation for delivering a high-quality educational experience to students; provide a nurturing and supportive work environment for all staff; and give value to all its stakeholders. At the institutional level, QA focuses on administration and academic programmes and includes assessment of faculties, institutions, centres, units, and individuals.<sup>874</sup>

UNISWA is required to conform to SHEC Quality Standards for accreditation purposes. The university also adopts an audit approach for some administrative functions – for example, there are financial audits with regards to bursaries. Further, it adopts best practices derived mainly from the Bologna Process, UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency that are combined to provide a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach to quality particularly emphasising on continuous improvement (Quality Enhancements).

The SARUA (2012) study noted that the university has a specific budget allocated to internal QA. UNISWA also makes use of peer review processes and has mandatory processes in place for evaluating individual teaching staff. Training is provided for newly appointed staff members and ongoing staff development opportunities are reported to be available. External moderators are used as part of the examinations process. UNISWA also reportedly has procedures in place for gathering student feedback in the areas of academic issues, university governance and student services.<sup>875</sup>

The following table provides an indication of the key stakeholders with regards to QA at UNISWA:

873 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

874 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

875 *ibid.*

Table 25 Key stakeholders and their needs (University of Swaziland)<sup>876</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Government/SHEC	Major financial contributor and responsible for the QA Agencies (SHEC)	Value for money; meeting national economic needs; accreditation of university degrees.
Employers	Major employer of graduates	Graduates with knowledge and skills that meet their needs.
Parents and Learners	Customers	Education to equip students for the changing world of work, and reassures their parents that their children are receiving a quality education
Council/Senate	Owners of QA Policies	An untarnished University reputation for quality; cost saving efficiencies; income raising activities.
Faculties, Academic Centres and Institutions	Main users of the QA system	High quality teaching programmes, research, and community engagement.
Admin Centres	Main users of enabling services	Cost effective and efficient administrative processes.
Individual	To continuously seek to improve quality through their own actions.	Well equipped (e.g. competencies and skills) to perform their job to, at least, a satisfactory level

UNISWA's draft QA framework highlights that the internal QA system must address the following questions

- What quality assurance policies and practices does the institution have in place or in the process of development to assure the quality of its performance?
- How effective and how fully deployed are these?
- What processes does the institution have to evaluate and monitor the quality of its outcomes?
- What quality-related indicators does the institution use and why?
- What are the institution's priorities for improvement?
- What quality initiatives has the institution undertaken (since the last review) and
- What evidence of improved performance is there?<sup>877</sup>

The university's key priorities with regards to QA are:

- 1) Improvements in teaching and learning, research outputs, and community engagement through the development and deployment of QA Policies and Procedures.

- 2) Alignment of programmes with national and regional economic needs;
- 3) Benchmarking of programmes against other University offerings in the region;
- 4) Regular (external and internal) programme reviews; and review of the new programme approval procedure.
- 5) Introduction of Blended Learning and Outcome-based learning approaches
- 6) Increased efficiency in administrative processes.
- 7) Specification and collection of key performance data (specially to inform the Self-assessment process).
- 8) More and better dialogue and engagement with stakeholders.

<sup>876</sup> Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

<sup>877</sup> The University of Swaziland. (2017). The University's Quality Assurance Policy and Framework - Draft B. Draft received with questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

- 9) Improved learning resources and ICT infrastructure.
- 10) More staff training and awareness of QA systems, Management and Leadership, Pedagogy, and strategic planning.
- 11) And generally, the adoption of a self-regulated Quality culture throughout the whole university.<sup>878</sup>

The university respondent highlighted that in order to fulfil these priorities, UNISWA requires awareness and training in QA approaches and systems; consultancy and support on QA implementation; and financial aid to provide appropriate educational resources and infrastructure (particularly ICT) for an effective learning environment.<sup>879</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

According to the SHEC respondent, one of the major strengths is that the QA framework was established through a legislation which compels all HEIs to adhere to quality standards. Institutions and programmes which have not complied with quality standards have been forced to cease operations. Other institutions have since put in place internal quality assurance units within their organograms as a means of strengthening the delivery of quality programmes.<sup>880</sup> The UNISWA respondent noted that its strengths come from the close networking with other HEIs in the region, and organizations like SARUA in order to build on their best practices; a national recognition for the need for QA; and a willingness to change.<sup>881</sup>

Challenges include inadequate personnel in the QAA, lack of understanding of the importance of IQA among HEIs, shortage of subject matter experts, training needs of quality assurance officers and lack of resources in terms of paying subject matter experts.<sup>882</sup> The University of Swaziland also reported challenges relating to lack of finance, lack of awareness and training in QA and in pedagogy within the university. The university respondent highlighted several skills gaps, but these were not specifically related to QA. He highlighted the need for awareness of QA systems and strategic planning methods amongst members of staff, and for training of QA coordinators (to enact) and assessors (to monitor and evaluate).<sup>883</sup>

*The recent initiative for the national accreditation of degrees has been beneficial in moving UNISWA away from a piecemeal to a more systematic approach to QA. Although this process has only just begun (Jan 2017), UNISWA does have many existing policies, but lacks, for example, a standard approach to writing policies... Further, communication within the University can be poor, so staff are not always aware that policies exist or where to find them. Finally, the QA process and the creation of the University's strategic plan (see <http://www.uniswa.sz/administration/upc/stratplan>) are intrinsically linked mainly through the Self-assessment process and the drive for Quality Enhancement, and thus share common operational action plans and strategic objectives.*<sup>884</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

In order to improve QA in Swaziland the responses highlighted the need for further work to be done by both SHEC and HEIs. With regards to SHEC, the following was suggested:

- SHEC should operate autonomously from the government and should receive sufficient resources to operate.<sup>885</sup>
- The QAA (SHEC) should change its approach to QA - from being 'agency regulated' to self-regulated - thus providing more guidance, training, and advice rather than imposing and assessing standards.<sup>886</sup>

With regards to HEIs, the following was suggested:

- There should be financial incentives for HEIs successfully adopting and deploying QA systems.<sup>887</sup>
- HEIs should be made to understand the importance of QA, QA units within HEIs should be allocated budget, HEIs and industry should work hand in hand when developing programmes.<sup>888</sup>
- A national QA Training and Implementation Unit should be established within SHEC.<sup>889</sup>

Respondents further noted that QA exchange programmes would be appreciated to build capacity.<sup>890</sup> It was also noted that SHEC is in the process of aligning the Swaziland Qualifications Framework to the SADCQF which will help in the mobility of quality qualifications within the region.<sup>891</sup>

878 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

879 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

880 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

881 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

882 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

883 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

884 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

885 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

886 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

887 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

888 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

889 Questionnaire response from University of Swaziland. Received September 26, 2017

890 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

891 Questionnaire response from Swaziland Higher Education Council (SHEC). Received October 16, 2017

## TANZANIA

Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) is responsible for QA and accreditation of higher education in Tanzania.<sup>892</sup> The TCU was established on 1 July 2005 under the Universities Act Cap.346 of the Laws of Tanzania. Among the major roles of TCU is to ensure orderly performance of the universities and the maintenance of the set quality standards by providing support to universities in terms of coordinating the admission of students.<sup>893</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

The TCU can be described as a semi-autonomous body. Its statutory responsibilities provide for almost full responsibility, in three significant domains.

- It has a regulatory role, which involves ‘conducting periodic evaluation of universities, their systems and programmes so as to oversee quality assurance systems at the universities and in the process leading to new institutions to be registered to operate in Tanzania, and the existing institutions to be accredited, and validation of university qualifications attained from local and foreign institutions for use in Tanzania’.
- It plays a supportive role in overseeing QA systems at the universities and in process leading to new institutions to be registered, offering training and other sensitisation interventions in key areas like QA, university leadership and management, fund raising and resources mobilisation, gender aspects in university management and gender mainstreaming.
- It performs an advisory role that entails ‘advising government and the general public on matters related to the higher education system in Tanzania, including programme and policy formulation on higher education, and the international issues pertaining to higher education.’<sup>894</sup>

Section 5(1) (f) of the Universities Act gives the TCU the mandate, among other things, to:

- Audit, on a regular basis, the QA mechanisms of universities;
- Provide guidance and monitor criteria for student admission to universities, proposals of outlines of academic programmes or syllabi, and general curriculum regulations;
- Standardise, recognise and equate degrees, diplomas and certificates conferred or awarded by foreign

- institutions and local institutions;
- Establish and maintain a qualifications framework for universities;
- Regulate and standardise promotion criteria, designation and titles of academic and senior administrative staff;
- Put in place a credit and transfer system that can be used for university students who wish to be transferred from one university to another and from one programme to another;
- Oversee the provision by universities of essential resources for the needs of their current academic programmes and related functions.<sup>895</sup>

The TCU is also responsible for Institutional accreditation of all activities done at university, accreditation of new programmes and validation of reviewed programmes after one complete cycle of the programme. Audits of universities is also conducted. This is geared towards re-accreditation and improvement of core and supportive activities. Additionally, Tanzania follows the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) regional QA guidelines, and thus regional audits are also conducted.<sup>896</sup>

The TCU has thus put in place a comprehensive set of guidelines on norms and standards for monitoring quality in higher education. It has developed general guidelines and minimum standards in order to:

- Harmonise and rationalise university governance units to operate in a cost-effective manner;
- Standardise the criteria for academic staff recruitment, appointment, appraisal and promotion and workload distribution;
- Standardise the criteria for harmonisation of various programmes and awards offered by university institutions in Tanzania;
- Standardise the criteria for postgraduate training to ensure that the learning outcomes of programmes are harmonised and the graduates are competitive; and
- Standardise the criteria and procedures to facilitate the mobility of students across institutions and programmes within and outside Tanzania.

Minimum standards have also been set for key qualifications (postgraduate diploma, academic master’s degrees, professional master’s degree, professional doctoral degrees, and academic doctoral degrees), supervision, training resources and human resources, including acceptable staff/student ratios.<sup>897</sup>

893 African Quality Assurance Network and Commission for Higher Education. (2012). AfriQAN – INQAAHE Workshop on Good Practices on Quality Assurance. Proceedings of the Workshop held at The Kenya School of Monetary Studies in Nairobi, 15th May 2012. Retrieved September 7, 2017 from <http://www.cue.or.ke/old/downloads/AfriQAN-INQAAHE%20Workshop.pdf>

894 Cross, M., Khossa, E., Persson, V., and Sesabo, J.K. (2015). Assessment of quality assurance systems for postgraduate programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique. Sida. Retrieved September 8, 2017 from [http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf)

[42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf)

895 *ibid.*

896 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

897 Cross, M., Khossa, E., Persson, V., and Sesabo, J.K. (2015). Assessment of quality assurance systems for postgraduate programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique. Sida. Retrieved September 8, 2017 from <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf>

The TCU has also developed several QA tools. These are:

- Minimum Guidelines and Norms for Governance Units;
- Minimum Guidelines for the Harmonisation of Awards offered in Tanzania;
- Credit Accumulation and Transfer General Guidelines;
- Employment, Staff Performance Review and Career Development;
- Minimum Standards for Postgraduate Training;
- Practical Training Framework; and
- University Qualifications Framework (UQF).<sup>898</sup>

For institutional accreditation, the following steps are taken:

- TCU appoints External Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC);
- TEC conducts a comprehensive evaluation of physical facilities, resources, teaching and learning, governance systems, etc.;
- TEC prepares and submits a report with recommendations to guide TCU decisions;
- Secretariat seeks views of the owners/founders of the institution on objectivity of report;
- External evaluation reports with recommendations are discussed by the Accreditation Committee and then by the Commission; and
- The Commission then approves/disapproves granting of deserved status and certificate of registration.<sup>899</sup>

For programme accreditation, the following process is followed:

- Universities design academic programmes in line with their mission, plans and resources (which are in line with TCU guidelines);
- Programmes have to be approved internally by Senate and submitted to TCU;

- TCU appoints experts to review the programmes according to specified Terms of Reference;
- TCU sends a team to inspect facilities and arrangements made at the institution for offering the programme;
- Review report and technical verification report for facilities are submitted to TCU; and
- TCU Secretariat communicates recommendations of the review teams to the institution for improvement of the curriculum and facilities before the programme is considered by the Accreditation Committee.<sup>900</sup>

For programme validation, the following process is followed:

- Revised curricula are verified by TCU Secretariat and if satisfied are considered by the Accreditation Committee;
- Recommendations by the Committee are forwarded to the Commission for noting or approval; and
- The TCU Secretariat informs the institution about the decision of the Commission.<sup>901</sup>

For audits, the process is as follows:

- HEIs conduct an institution-wide self-assessment of its programmes and operations;
- HEIs prepare a self (internal) assessment report; and
- HEI's obtain endorsement of Senate and/or Academic Committee before submitting to TCU as a basis for external assessment (audit) leading to the institution's deserved stage of registration.<sup>902</sup>

The following table outlines the key stakeholders in Tanzania QA system:

Table 26 Key stakeholders and their needs (Tertiary Commission for Universities – Tanzania)<sup>903</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Government	Legislation, regulation, support, and evaluation.	Quality, streamlined, and harmonised HE; and meeting skills needs.
Parents	Support and finance through fees.	Quality education meeting criterion of 'value for money'
Industries/Business	Provide inputs to curricula development, support research, and the evaluation of curricula.	Skilled and competent graduates.
Students	Provide input to curricula, evaluate core activities of university.	Quality HE, skills and competences required in the work environment.

898 *ibid.*

899 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

900 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

901 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

902 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

903 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

Additionally, the TCU reported having the following needs to improve the work they are doing:

- Strengthen staff capacity in IQA and EQA;
- Funds to support establishment of QA structures in all universities;
- Training of stakeholders on EQA to support institutional audit;
- Capacitate staff on curriculum development and evaluation;
- Capacitate staff on qualifications framework development;
- Capacitate staff on monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- Acquisition of vehicles to support mobility on the ground;
- Training on ICT and ICT gadgets for QA data entry and analysis;
- Training on HE management;
- Capacitate staff on accreditation and QA; and
- Establishment of HE repository at TCU<sup>904</sup>

### Internal Quality Assurance

In terms of the Public Service (Amendment) Act No. 9 of 2008, all public service institutions (including universities) must put in place results management and open performance and review systems. This system involves self-evaluation, peer evaluation, student appraisal, as well as management review and evaluation (URT 2010:27).<sup>905</sup>

The TCU is entrusted by the Universities Act with the power to require a 'university to conduct a self-study and academic audit covering the institution in general and the programmes and awards of the institution in particular and prepare and submit the report in the manner as may be prescribed'. The institutions are also required by the Act 'to conduct self-assessment for the purposes of reaccreditation after every five years; conduct programme review after the completion of the programme cycle, normally within three, four or five years depending on the duration of the programmes; and comply with any other requirements as may be issued by the Commission from time to time'. While there is compliance concerning the accreditation requirement of new institutions and programmes, expectations for reaccreditation are varied:

- The majority have remained silent on external programme review or do not see it as a regulatory requirement.

- Some university departments expect a more participatory and less prescriptive process.
- Where the departments recognise the necessity of programme review for reaccreditation, cost appears to be the main stumbling block.<sup>906</sup>

There also does not appear to be a clear plan and programme from the TCU for how institutional quality should be promoted.<sup>907</sup>

The SARUA (2012) study found that at the institutional level, six of the eight participating universities reported having peer review quality assessments in place, three regularly conduct internal evaluations, and three sometimes conduct internal evaluations. Most of the universities reported that they have training and orientation for new staff members, and five universities have mechanisms in place for ongoing staff development. Six of the eight universities make use of external and independent moderators for their examinations.<sup>908</sup>

### **St Augustine University of Tanzania**

One university from Tanzania responded to this survey, namely St Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT). This university does have a QA policy. The main objective of its QA approach is to ensure SAUT delivers quality education in teaching, research and public service. The university foregrounds the aspect of 'fitness for purpose' in interpreting quality.

*St. Augustine University of Tanzania interprets quality first and foremost as 'fitness for purpose' the purpose being summarized in the University's vision and mission statement. In assuring quality, the University aims to balance the notions of excellence, efficiency and service.*<sup>909</sup>

The specific objectives of its QA approach include the following:

- 1) To create, promote and uphold efficient, transparent and accountable core service delivery process in accordance to SAUT's mission and vision;
- 2) To ensure sustainable provision of relevant high quality academic programmes that respond to the prevailing needs of the society;
- 3) To provide an enabling environment for capacity building, among the teaching staff, to enhance high quality community service delivery through research and consultancy services;

904 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

905 Mawoyo, I.G., and Wilson-Strydom, M. (2012). Chapter 14: Tanzania. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

906 Cross, M., Khossa, E., Persson, V., and Sesabo, J.K. (2015). Assessment of quality assurance systems for postgraduate programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique. Sida. Retrieved September 8, 2017 from <http://www.sida.se/>

contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf

907 *ibid.*

908 Mawoyo, I.G., and Wilson-Strydom, M. (2012). Chapter 14: Tanzania. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

909 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

- 4) To ensure constant improvement of the provision of institutional staff and student support services;
- 5) To establish functional institutional quality assurance strategies, and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that systematically work across the institution;
- 6) To initiate quality assurance network with other institutions that have similar quality assurance programmes for the purpose of learning and external review; and
- 7) To initiate and preserve a quality seeking and assurance identity as living tradition among members of the university community.<sup>910</sup>

The university's focus is to assure quality education in teaching, research and public service. The university also conducts 'programme validation' which involves 'reviews and alignment with University Commission requirements'. Whilst accreditation is performed by the TCU, internal re-accreditation is also done annually using the TCU's guidelines. External peer reviewers are used to perform audits at the department and faculty level. The TCU conducts audit self-assessments at the institutional level. Internal quality assurance is conducted through a range of instruments such as student satisfaction surveys, graduate tracer studies and lecture course evaluations, while external quality assurance is undertaken through benchmarking exercises.<sup>911</sup>

The university provided an indication of the key stakeholders in the QA system, as well as their roles and needs/demands/priorities. This is summarized in the table 27 on the next site.

With regards to the approaches to QA, for institutional re-accreditation, the quality assurance directorate prepares a self-assessment report after every three years which is sent to the Commission. The following steps are undertaken:

- Step 1: A quality assurance committee is called upon;
- Step 2: The main contents of the report are discussed and divided to individual departments and units;
- Step 3: A questionnaire is formulated and circulated to respective departments and units;
- Step 4: Data is collected;
- Step 5: Report is written;
- Step 6: Report is discussed; and
- Step 7: Report is sent to the Commission pending for re-accreditation.<sup>913</sup>

For programme accreditation the following steps are undertaken:

- Step 1: User department performs needs assessment;
- Step 2: A programme is developed by the department;
- Step 3: A programme is submitted to the Quality Assurance Directorate for review to check if it aligns with the Commission Programme development framework; and
- Step 4: The programme is then submitted to the office of Academic affairs for further validation<sup>914</sup>

For audits, particularly faculty evaluations, the following steps are undertaken:

- Step 1: The faculty concerned identify list of peer reviewers;
- Step 2: The faculty develops a faculty self-assessment report;
- Step 3: Peers are contacted and contracted;
- Step 4: The self-assessment and other relevant documents are sent to peers;
- Step 5: Peers do a site visit to audit the faculty self-assessment findings and evaluate the faculty;
- Step 6: Peers write their findings and the report is sent to the University;
- Step 7: The findings are disseminated; and
- Step 8: An improvement action plan is developed.<sup>915</sup>

In addition, the university conducts graduate tracer studies which focus on determining the employability of graduates, the relevance of the programme and satisfaction levels of graduates.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The TEC reported the following strengths of QA in Tanzania:

- Existence of QA structures in most universities;
- Presence of QA officers/coordinators in many universities;
- Existence of general guidelines and minimum standards for provision of university education in Tanzania (2014);
- Establishment of national credit accumulation and transfer system;
- Establishment of university qualifications framework;
- Continuous benchmarking of programmes guided by IUCEA;
- IQA and EQA is practiced; and
- All universities are sensitized about QA and have received some training on QA issues.<sup>916</sup>

910 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

911 *ibid.*

912 *ibid.*

913 *ibid.*

914 *ibid.*

915 *ibid.*

916 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

Table 27 Key stakeholders (St Augustine University of Tanzania)<sup>912</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Regulatory (determines norms and standards; policies and procedures; registers, licenses, and accredits new and existing HEIs; and accredits new/existing programmes in public and private HEIs.</li> <li>– Distributive (determines budget allocation; distributes financial resources; and monitors expenditure).</li> <li>– Monitoring (collects and analyses systems and institution-level data, develops performance indicators, tracks developments and trends, publishes and disseminates HEI information).</li> <li>– Advisory (provides advice to relevant institutions).</li> <li>– Coordination of HEI system.</li> </ul>	Graduates who can solve problems, are creative and innovative, and who can transform and build their communities. Universities need to be knowledgeable about the requirements set by the government to improve HE.
Quality Assurance Directorate and University Quality Assurance Committee	Sets performance standards; develops and updates manuals and instruments; monitors and implements QA activities; provides advice to implementation units; coordinates internal self-assessment of QA systems; analyses QA reports, external examiners reports, and peer review reports; updates management on developments in QA; and links the university with the TCU and other professional bodies	Ensure delivery of quality education in teaching, research and public service.
Staff members and students	Provides feedback on the quality of their experiences and making suggestions about how they can be improved	Key priority is to provide and receive quality education
Alumni	Providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and making suggestions about how they can be improved.	
Employer/Parents	Providing feedback on the quality of their experiences and making suggestions about how they can be improved	The key priorities being to receive quality staff who are well trained to meet their objectives

These strengths were also noticed at the university level. SAUT reported the following key strengths:

- Supportive governance structure;
- Strong national, regional and international linkages, networking, and information dissemination to stakeholders;
- Supportive legal environment and policies; and
- Regular capacity building initiatives.<sup>917</sup>

Cross et al; (2015) highlights some of the achievements in QA in Tanzania

*At the systemic level, the vision, policies, instruments and guidelines have been put in place in Tanzania. The TCU has developed national QA policies, standards and guidelines. It has also registered considerable achievements in its advisory, regulatory and supportive roles. Its regulatory role is manifested in the accreditation of over 51 institutions of higher education, with several undergoing the process of re-accreditation. Its supportive role is evident in training initiatives and advice provided to higher education institutions (HEIs). The TCU is instrumental in the institutionalisation of a coordinated fees structure in Tanzanian higher education. Similar efforts are emerging at institutional and unit levels where different kinds of student, course, lecture and lecturer assessments take place. As a country, Tanzania has a potentially strong national QA system in higher education that is relatively well synchronized with regional and international demands. Its collaboration with other professional bodies such as the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has been exemplary.*<sup>918</sup>

However, the TCU faces several challenges. These were articulated as follows:

- Absence of a National Qualifications Framework;
- Little knowledge and skills in QA matters;
- Inadequate funds for QA capacity building to TCU staff, university staff and stakeholders;
- Few programmes have been benchmarked;
- Lack of transport facilities to conduct QA activities at universities;
- Lack of working tools, for example ICT equipment for QA practitioners; and
- Lack of information dissemination on QA issues.<sup>919</sup>

The TCU also reported gaps in skills in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, curriculum/programme development and evaluation, developing and Qualifications Framework,

benchmarking skills, and accreditation of foreign awards.<sup>920</sup> SAUT also provided indications of skills gaps in the country as follows:

- The ability to develop quality assurance manuals that fit the needs of institutions;
- The ability to 'display tact and discretion at all times' particularly when dealing with confidential matters such as the drafting of documents prior to publication (e.g. validation of new programmes or annual monitoring reports);
- The ability to analyze and understand complex regulatory and procedural documentation and to communicate such issues with clarity both orally and in written form;
- The ability to use online systems which could be used to collect and analyse the information of students, employer or other stakeholders; and
- The ability to filter information and assess priorities.<sup>921</sup>

SAUT highlighted that universities require capacity in curriculum development and evaluation; benchmarking of programmes; developing IQA structures and systems, conducting tracer studies, preparing QA improvement plans, and creating linkages with the labour market/industry<sup>922</sup>

SAUT further reported the following main challenges pertaining to QA in Tanzania:

- Funds to assist operationalization of the QA approaches;
- Lack of benchmark standards guidelines for some academic programmes;
- Inadequately informed collaboration strategies with higher education stakeholders;
- Lack of cooperation from key stakeholders e.g. students don't see why they need to respond to interviews or questionnaires;
- Poor technological infrastructures to reach some key stakeholders who are diversely located, making online surveys a challenge; and
- Lack of policies and frameworks of performing quality assurance.<sup>923</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

In order to strengthen QA in Tanzania, the TCU indicated that it is important to link the TCU and universities with industry/business. SAUT highlighted the need to create opportunities to share experiences and benchmarking.

917 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

918 Cross, M., Khossa, E., Persson, V., and Sesabo, J.K. (2015). Assessment of quality assurance systems for postgraduate programmes in Tanzania and Mozambique. Sida. Retrieved September 8, 2017 from <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/2478900d36f74b4bb891384c8379f84e/e8336fea-1501-42fe-b8c6-36ffebaf67a9.pdf>

919 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

920 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

921 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

922 Questionnaire response from Tertiary Commission for Universities (TCU), Tanzania. Received September 14, 2017

923 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

*Involve the national higher education Institutions in forums where more successful institutions are also participants which could assist in sharing experiences and knowledge and performing more benchmarking with experienced and successful universities<sup>924</sup>*

To strengthen the TCU, the following was suggested:

- Provide clear, well communicated, and easily accessible policies for QA;
- Facilitate information sharing about QA and HE systems;
- Strengthen cooperation with other networks to promote policy dialogue, information sharing, and dissemination of good practice on the quality assurance;
- Undertake projects and initiatives aimed at supporting institutions in implementing recommendations after their audits; and
- Establish regular channels of communication to facilitate information sharing, strengthen mutual understanding, and explore ways in which to cooperate.<sup>925</sup>

The TCU was positive about the SADCQF noting that it will enhance credit transfer, student and staff mobility in the region.

## ZAMBIA

### External Quality Assurance

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) in Zambia bears responsibility for quality assurance in higher education. It was established by the Higher Education Act of 2013.<sup>926</sup> Its responsibilities include setting standards, quality assurance, registration and accreditation and advisory and regulatory services. In respect of standard setting, the functions of the HEA include: facilitating a common interpretation and understanding of standards for higher education; promoting and enhancing quality assurance by setting quality criteria and standards; and formulating and facilitating the development and implementation of common standards for Higher Education. In respect of quality assurance, the HEA indicates that it will 'ensure that higher education institutions provide tangible evidence to demonstrate that they are providing acceptable quality and relevant education, in an appropriate environment, which is recognized nationally and internationally'.<sup>927</sup>

The HEA describes its functions in respect of its quality assurance role as follows: promote and enhance quality assurance by setting quality criteria and standards; ensure that quality assurance procedures are put in place, followed and monitored; conduct quality assurance audits to all institutions under its mandate; and facilitate common quality assurance systems in all institutions under its mandate.<sup>928</sup> The legal mandate of the HEA is to have both a programme accreditation and institutional audit process in place. The HEA is also involved in the registration of private higher education institutions and the accreditation of learning programmes of both public and private higher education institutions. The HEA has recently (2015) developed The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Zambia<sup>929</sup> which sets out the procedures and criteria for the registration of private higher education institutions, the grading of higher education institutions, and the accreditation of higher learning programmes. Participation in the QA system is intended to be compulsory.<sup>930</sup> The National Qualification Framework (NQF) is developed and managed through the Zambia Qualifications Authority (ZAQA) which was created under the Zambia Qualification Authority Act of 2011 as the custodian of all qualifications in Zambia. The National Qualification Assurance system, therefore, is being created with reference to the NQF. QA

924 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

925 Questionnaire response from St Augustine University of Tanzania. Received September 13, 2017

926 Zambia Higher Education Act (No 4, 2013). Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.heg.org.zm/index.php/downloads>

927 Zambian Higher Education Authority (HEA) website. About the HEA: Quality Assurance. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.heg.org.zm/index.php/about-heg/our-functions/quality-assurance>

928 Zambian Higher Education Authority (HEA) website. About the HEA: Quality Assurance. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.heg.org.zm/index.php/about-heg/our-functions/quality-assurance>

929 The Higher Education Authority. (2015). The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Zambia. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.heg.org.zm/index.php/downloads?download=3:quality-assurance-system-for-he-in-zambia>

930 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

policies and tools have been developed by the HEA, however, work is underway to implement a QA system that transcends to international institutional frameworks.<sup>931</sup>

The HEA has recently been involved in hosting quality assurance training workshops (two thus far), the most recent of which was held in July 2017 with a focus on effective teaching for higher education.<sup>932</sup> Participants of the workshop were exposed to methods of lecturing and the evaluation of current and future developments in teaching and learning technologies. As part of this they explored student-centred learning strategies which include, amongst others, blended learning, the flipped classroom, and eLearning. The HEA's current Director of Quality Assurance, Registration and Accreditation, Dr. Chifwepa, stated that 'effective teaching methods will provide the HEA with tangible evidence to demonstrate that the HEIs are providing acceptable quality and relevant education'.<sup>933</sup>

Registration and auditing of higher education institutions occurs at the institutional level while accreditation is undertaken at the programmatic level.<sup>934</sup> Public Higher Education Institutions are established by the Minister, while Private Higher Education Institutions are registered by the Higher Education Authority. Foreign universities seeking to establish a higher education institution in Zambia will require registration by the Higher Education Authority. All higher education institutions (public and private) are required to obtain the accreditation of their Learning Programmes by the Higher Education Authority.<sup>935</sup> Audit is limited to private

higher education institutions, and is undertaken to ensure that quality standards are maintained.<sup>936</sup>

The quality standards and system for measurement is designed to achieve two main objectives: (a) to provide a platform for external monitoring and accountability; and (b) to provide a reference base for continuous improvement. Quality standards and indicators are developed for the following categories of core requirements: governance and management; academic programmes; student admission and learner support; staff; physical infrastructure; financial resources; and health and safety. Standards and indicators have also been developed for non-core requirements in the following areas: vision, mission and strategy; research; and technological infrastructure.<sup>937</sup> The quality standards for learning programmes include: aims and objectives; fully-developed curriculum; appropriateness of curriculum content; curriculum implementation; student performance assessment methods; adequate staff, physical facilities in sufficient quantity and quality to ensure learning and teaching; academic support; library services, established internal quality assurance measures and financial resources to support the learning programme.<sup>938</sup> The quality standards are supported by performance indicators (PIs) associated with each quality standard.

The two key stakeholders in QA were higher education institutions and the Zambia Qualifications Authority. Their roles as well as their needs/demands/priorities, are explained in the table which follows:

Table 28 Stakeholders and their roles and needs (Higher Education Authority)<sup>939</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Higher Education Institutions	Internal quality assurance	Quality assurance tools and skills
Zambia Qualification Authority	Custodian of National qualification framework and the actual qualifications	Capacity building and information systems

931 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

932 Zambia Business Times Article (11 July 2017). HEA Conducts Quality Assurance Workshop in Higher Education Teaching. Retrieved August 13, 2017, from <https://zambiabusinessstimes.com/2017/07/11/hea-conducts-quality-assurance-workshop-in-higher-education-teaching/>

933 *ibid.*

934 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

935 The Higher Education Authority. (2015). The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Zambia. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from [http://www.hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads?download=3:quality-assurance-](http://www.hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads?download=3:quality-assurance-system-for-he-in-zambia)

[system-for-he-in-zambia](http://www.hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads?download=3:quality-assurance-system-for-he-in-zambia)

936 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

937 The Higher Education Authority. (2015). The Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Zambia. Retrieved August 13, 2017 from <http://www.hea.org.zm/index.php/downloads?download=3:quality-assurance-system-for-he-in-zambia>

938 HEA. Scoring Conventional Learning Programmes (2016). Received as a supporting document with the questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017

939 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

The HEA reports that the QA steps include the following:

- Self-assessment by institutions;
- Working with subject experts and professional bodies to review the institutional profiles;
- Conducting site visits for verification;
- Sharing reports with the higher education institutions for comments; and
- Approval of the reports and publishing of the results in the public media and national gazettes.<sup>940</sup>

The key QA priorities include capacity building for regulatory bodies and information systems for monitoring and evaluation as well as the status of higher education institutions. The needs resonated with the priorities and were mainly around training to build capacity and a need for monitoring systems development.<sup>941</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

A 2012 study by SARUA found that Zambian universities use both internal and external examiners as quality control mechanisms. Furthermore, curriculum reviews, staff and student exchange programmes and staff performance assessment systems were found to be a regular occurrence. Moderation of examinations was found to be an internal process together with the administration of examinations, while lectures and class attendance were monitored.<sup>942</sup>

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The impact of the work of the agency QA agency pertains specifically to learners and employers and was reported as:

- Transferability of credits and qualifications of the learner;
- Employer confidence; and
- Quality learning programmes.<sup>943</sup>

QA in the country is still in the process of being fully developed, with the key strengths reported to be relevant legislation and the existence of a QA body:

*still at infancy stage however there is legislation and the QA organisation<sup>944</sup>*

On the other hand, a key challenge of QA in the country was the early stage of QA development in the country:

*the regulatory bodies were formed much later than the establishment of the higher education institutions.<sup>945</sup>*

Key skills gaps were reported as the absence of training programmes in QA and limited staff capacity due to the limited budget.<sup>946</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

Capacity building required to implement and support QA processes included the establishment of the QA units and internal quality management.<sup>947</sup> Furthermore, it was reported that QA in the country could be strengthened through collaboration among QA bodies within and outside the country and staff exchanges. This would also strengthen the QA Agency.<sup>948</sup>

The HEA furthermore reported being aware of the SADQF, and made a reference to customising the SADQF for applicability to the national context:

*Yes, need to adapt it to our set up.<sup>949</sup>*

940 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

941 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

942 Hampwaye, G. and Mweemba, L. (2012). Chapter 15: Zambia. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

943 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

944 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

945 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

946 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

947 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

948 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

949 Questionnaire response from the Higher Education Authority - Zambia. Received September 15, 2017.

## ZIMBABWE

According to a study by SARUA in 2012, Zimbabwe was once a regional leader in education but has since experienced major impediments in the higher education system. The study indicated that the higher education system has experienced 'economic and academic shortcomings' and has been 'entangled in the political wrangles that have dominated development discourse in the country'. However, despite the setbacks there have also been some positive development in the HE system such as the growing number of public and private higher education institutions and the increasing focus on quality (including the establishment of ZIMCHE).<sup>950</sup>

### External Quality Assurance

The rapid expansion of educational provision since the country gained independence in 1980, which included increasing access by allowing private providers of higher education, led to establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Zimbabwe in 1990. This signalled an overall acceptance of quality assurance. The main task of the NCHE was to 'receive and consider applications from would-be higher education private providers and make recommendations to the Minister for possible approval of private university charters.' The establishment of eight more universities between 1999 and 2005 (five public and three private) prompted calls for a more rigorous and robust national quality assurance system. This culminated in the establishment of the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) which was legalised by an Act of Parliament promulgated in 2006. It has since served as the national quality assurance body in Zimbabwe. Among other specialist committees, ZIMCHE has a Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee. It has a clear vision, mission and mandate, and while relatively new, is evolving into a well-established and functioning external national quality assurance system.<sup>951</sup>

The mandate of ZIMCHE points to its instrumental role in quality assurance and gives expression to the purposes of the quality assurance system: 'to promote and co-ordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and to act as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher educa-

tion'. It categorizes and describes its functions as serving three roles: 1) it acts as a regulatory body (in respect of the accreditation, registration, auditing and, where necessary, de-registration or closure of institutions – all these aspects are central to the quality assurance function of the agency), 2) it acts as an advisory body (advising the Minister and higher education institutions, similar to the CHE in South Africa) and 3) it coordinates the development of higher education in the country; facilitates the promotion of quality, the training of higher education personnel and cooperation between institutions; and promotes regional cooperation in higher education). Its services include registration, accreditation, academic and institutional audits and qualification assessment for foreign qualifications.<sup>952</sup>

Since being established in 2006, ZIMCHE has received many applications to register institutions. With regard to audits, the intervals for conducting academic and institutional audits are agreed to between ZIMCHE and institutions and performed by trained personnel who are selected from higher education institutions. In undertaking academic and institutional audits, ZIMCHE uses audit instruments and makes site visits, and pays attention to the mandate of the institution, infrastructure and equipment, staff qualifications, the student population (particularly the lecturer/student ratio), governance structures in the area of teaching, learning and community service, and benchmarks to determine the value of an institution to higher education in Zimbabwe.<sup>953</sup> To foster quality assurance within institutions, ZIMCHE has also encouraged universities to create Institutional Quality Assurance Units to carry out internal audits for the purpose of ensuring quality in their operations.<sup>954</sup>

The Standards for Accreditation, referred to as Quality Assurance Standards for Higher Education are an articulation by the ZIMCHE of what a Higher Education Institution (HEI) must do in order to deserve public trust. They also function as a framework for institutional development and self-evaluation. Covering areas of institutional, academic and administrative operations, the Standards are largely qualitative, in keeping with their need to apply to a variety of institutions with different mandates. The 15 standards cover the following categories: Strategic Statements of the Institution; Governance And Leadership; Planning; Infrastructure, ICT and Library Resources; Research, Consultancy And Extension Services; Integrity; Institutional Self-Assessment And Self-Evaluation; Student Admissions

950 Mawoyo, I. (2012). Chapter 16: Zimbabwe. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

951 Garwe, E.C. (2014). Quality assurance in higher education in Zimbabwe. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1064120.pdf>

952 Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) website. Homepage: Background. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.zimche.ac.zw/background.html>

953 Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE). (no date). Homepage: Background. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://www.zimche.ac.zw/background.html>

954 Garwe, E.C. (2014). Quality assurance in higher education in Zimbabwe. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1064120.pdf>

And Retention; Student Support And Development Services; Professional Staff; Mode of Delivery; Assessment of Student Learning; Academic Programmes; General Education; and Programme Design and Administration.<sup>955</sup>

Questionnaire responses to the priorities of the organization with regard to QA are described below:

- Institutional registration, programme accreditation and maintaining the university's mandate;
- Promoting and co-ordinating education provided by institutions of higher education;
- Acting as a regulator in the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examinations, academic qualifications and research in institutions of higher education;
- Advising stakeholders in higher education;
- Credible qualifications;
- Facilities that meet standards;
- Appropriately qualified staff/staff training; and
- Inclusivity.<sup>956</sup>

With regard to the needs to fulfil these priorities, questionnaire responses were as follows:

- Financial Resources/funding;
- Human capital development/capacity building;
- Vehicles;
- Networks; and
- Exposure to similar systems.<sup>957</sup>

### **Internal Quality Assurance**

The SARUA study (2012) found that institutions do report to ZIMCHE on quality matters. Furthermore, institutions were found to have mechanisms in place to enhance the quality of education. Such mechanisms included: peer evaluation; departmental platforms; external evaluation; and students' evaluation of staff members and their learning experience.<sup>958</sup> It was reported that literature on issues of quality and quality assurance in the Zimbabwean higher education sector is limited.<sup>959</sup>

The Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) is one known case where the establishment of a quality assurance unit has led to improvements in quality. A qualitative study undertaken at ZOU among a sample of full-time and part-time staff, students and key stakeholders as such the manager of quality assurance and regional quality assurance coordinators,

yielded positive results. The study found that the Quality Assurance Unit in ZOU has 'positively impacted on teaching and learning, research and managerial practice resulting in the institution receiving three international awards between 2012 and 2015. Customer satisfaction improved over the period from 30.4% in 2011 to 77.3% in 2013. University ranking improved from 11 in 2011 to 5 in 2014. Academics research output increased from 242 in 2013 to 282 in 2014.'<sup>960</sup>

### **Catholic University of Zimbabwe**

The Catholic University of Zimbabwe reported that the university did not yet have a QA Framework. The purpose of the QA approach was to ensure quality teaching, research and service. It was reported that QA at the institutional level was guided by the institution's 10-year strategic plan while QA at the programmatic level was guided by the institution's annual strategic operational plans. Specific IQA approaches include seminars on university teaching, learning and research; student evaluations at the end of the course; peer evaluation of teaching; external examiners; and alumni and stakeholders' feedback.<sup>961</sup>

The key stakeholders in QA were identified as students, teaching staff, administrative staff and governance bodies. Their roles, as well as needs/demands/priorities are reflected in the table 29 on the next site:

955 Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Quality Assurance Standards for Higher Education (no date). Provided by respondent to questionnaire as a supporting document. Received September 11, 2017

956 A summary of five questionnaire responses from the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Received September 11, 2017

957 *ibid.*

958 Mawoyo, I. (2012). Chapter 16: Zimbabwe. In Kotecha, P., Wilson-Strydom, M., Fongwa, S (2012). A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa: Volume 2: National Perspectives. SARUA. Retrieved August 15, 2017 from <http://www.sarua.org/files/publications/SARUA%20leadership%20Dialogue%20Series/SARUA%20Profiles%20of%20HE%20Vol%202.pdf>

959 Garwe, E.C. (2014). Quality assurance in higher education in Zimbabwe. Retrieved August 5, 2017 from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1064120.pdf>

960 Nyenya, T., Gabi, T. (2016). The Impact of the Quality Assurance Unit on Quality Improvement in Zimbabwe Open University. International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE) Volume 3, Issue 2. Retrieved August 10, 2017 from <https://www.arcjournals.org/pdfs/ijhsse/v3-i2/11.pdf>

961 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

Table 29 Stakeholders and their roles and needs<sup>962</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
Students	Learning	Research skills, effective teaching methods buttressed by ITC
Teaching staff	Teaching and research	Teaching/research skills, resources
Administrative staff	Service delivery	Management skills, resources
Governance bodies	Oversight	Analytical/appreciation skills

It was furthermore reported that quality criteria at this stage was basic and pertained to outputs and outcomes. The key priorities with regard to QA in the institution were reported as follows:

- Implementation of agreed activities as measured by desired results/outputs/ outcomes;
- Customer satisfaction; and
- Positive reputation<sup>963</sup>

To address these priorities, the university reported requiring assistance in setting up QA structures appropriate to a small-sized private university.<sup>964</sup>

The impact of the work of the institution in relation to QA included graduates being well-received in the job market, and the institution was furthermore perceived as inculcating high moral and ethical values to students.<sup>965</sup>

#### Lupane State University

Lupane State University (LSU) has a QA Policy which sets out its quality assurance philosophies, management structure, roles and responsibilities in QA, quality assurance mechanisms and implementation strategy. Through its Strategic Plan, LSU has defined the direction that it should follow to serve and meet the changing needs of its target market and the society at large by providing quality higher education in Zimbabwe and beyond. Central to achieving this strategy is the development of an effective and efficient Quality Assurance (QA) system underpinned by quality teaching, learning, research, curriculum development, student progression and welfare, quality governance and administrative systems that support the teaching, learning and research processes. Through the Quality Assurance Policy and other supportive University Policies, a Quality Assurance system is now being instituted for the effective

and efficient administration of University-wide quality assurance interventions. Quality assurance at LSU currently is characterised by a range of methods, both internal and external. Over the years, Internal Quality Assurance within Lupane State University has taken the form of peer review of teaching, student evaluation of teaching and learning, moderation of examination papers by peers and vetting of new programmes by the Programmes Review Committee, before they go through the Academic Board and Senate. External Quality Assurance measures comprise a system of engaging external examiners to review examination papers, and carry out some postmarking moderation, and the engagement of other senior academics from other universities for vetting publications of academic staff that apply for promotion. The procedures put emphasis on controlling inputs and little attention is given to the processes and outputs. These measures have largely been limited in their scope of effectiveness in coping with the rapid expansion of the University.<sup>966</sup>

The purpose of the QA approach at LSU was to create a QA 'consciousness' and promote adherence to quality standards and best practices to improve teaching, learning, research and governance:

*To create consciousness of quality standards and best practices, and promote adherence (compliance) thereto for the efficient and effective delivery of teaching, learning and research, and overall governance of the University, in order to safeguard and continuously enhance the quality and standards of Lupane State University awards.*<sup>967</sup>

QA occurs at both the institutional and programmatic level. At the institutional level, the QA Directorate in the Vice Chancellor's Office was reported to coordinate the imple-

962 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

963 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

964 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

965 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

966 Lupane State University website. Quality Assurance Policy (2016). Retrieved September 25, 2017 from [https://www.lsu.ac.zw/pdf/LSU\\_quality\\_assurance\\_policy.pdf](https://www.lsu.ac.zw/pdf/LSU_quality_assurance_policy.pdf)

967 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

mentation of all quality assurance initiatives across the University. Additionally, it was reported that the university has a Quality Assurance Committee (a sub-committee of Senate) which has representation from all units in the university, and works in collaboration with the Directorate in implementing the Quality Assurance Policy. The Quality Assurance Committee was also involved in coordinating the activities of Faculty and Departmental Quality Assurance Committees. At the programmatic level, each Department and Faculty has a Quality Assurance Committee that reviews new and existing programmes prior to submitting them to a Programmes Review Committee. The latter reviews all programmes before they are submitted to the Academic Board for consideration. Following the Academic Board review, programmes are submitted to the national accreditation body (ZIMCHE) for review and accreditation. It was further reported that Quality Circles lead the quality assurance process for non-teaching departments

to ensure that support services meet quality standards in teaching, learning and research.<sup>968</sup>

The university is involved in both accreditation and audit processes, in line with the requirements of ZIMCHE. Proposed new programmes would need to be submitted to ZIMCHE for review and accreditation, prior to the university implementing them. It was further reported that the Quality Assurance Directorate conducts internal quality audits, and that ZIMCHE undertakes periodic external quality audits in all institutions. The university also send outs their regulations for proposed new programmes to industry for input, to ensure relevance of academic programmes to industry.<sup>969</sup>

The key stakeholders in the QA system were ZIMCHE, all staff and students, industry and external examiners. Their roles and needs/demands/priorities, are reflected in the table which follows:

Table 30 Stakeholders and their roles and needs (Lupane State University)<sup>970</sup>

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
ZIMCHE	Accreditation of institutions and programmes	Standards that set out criteria for accreditation of both institutions and programmes  Criteria and mechanisms for quality audits of institutions
All staff	Each respective unit provides services that support academic provision and the expectation is that all staff play their role in upholding set quality standards for academic provision and delivery of support services.  In the academic faculties, lecturers carry out peer evaluation as part of ensuring that standards of academic provision are upheld.	Quality Assurance Policy  Terms of Reference for Various Committees  Standards and Procedures for managing different subsystems of the University Quality Management System
Students	Student evaluation of the teaching and learning process.  Active participation, both in lecturer-led and self-directed learning.	Clear guidance from the lecturers  Quality content  Fairness in both formative and summative assessments  Conducive learning environment; adequate furniture, access to internet, library facilities, accommodation, sporting and other recreation facilities, and ablutions among other things.

968 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

969 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

970 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

Stakeholder	Roles	Needs/demands/priorities
		Conducive learning environment; adequate furniture, access to internet, library facilities, accommodation, sporting and other recreation facilities, and ablutions among other things.
Industry	<p>Review of programme content for relevance to industry needs.</p> <p>Provision of opportunities for work related learning for students to gain practical experience.</p> <p>Provision of opportunities for collaboration with academia for research and development</p>	<p>Competent graduates with the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies.</p> <p>Innovative solutions to industry problems from graduates</p> <p>Commercialisable inventions from graduates</p>
External Examiners	Evaluate the examination process; formative and summative assessments, quality of content, examination items and marking.	<p>Course outlines</p> <p>Examination papers</p> <p>Samples of marked examination scripts</p> <p>Marking guides/schemes</p>

All quality assurance processes are managed by committees that have been set up in faculties, teaching departments and non-teaching departments. Composition, terms of reference and operating guidelines for each committee are clearly outlined in the Quality Assurance Policy. The key quality criterion is identified as that of fitness for purpose. The key priorities with regard to QA at the university were the quality of teaching, the learning environment and research, while the main need of the institution to help fulfil these priorities was capacity building, especially for academic staff.<sup>971</sup>

*The Quality Management System (QMS) is still in its developmental stage and as an institution we would need help in developing procedure manuals and clear quality standards for each unit or section, which become yardsticks for measuring performance in academic provision and support service delivery.*<sup>972</sup>

In terms of the impact of the work of the institution, it was reported that through training of committee members of various quality assurance committees, there has been a greater appreciation of the QA concept within the institution. Furthermore, there has been an observed improvement in the setting and marking of examinations, which has also been confirmed by external examiners' reports.<sup>973</sup>

### Strengths and Weaknesses

Respondents identified various strengths of QA in the country. These were reported as follows:

- The legal framework - QA has been governed by the Act of parliament, which means institutions are forced to comply. The Act of parliament provides adequate muscle to the regulatory body;
- Cooperation between the QA agency and higher education institutions brought upon by ZIMCHE;
- Institutions starting their own internal quality assurance units with assistance from ZIMCHE, which became the first line of defence for quality in institutions;
- Highly competent staff;
- Support from all stakeholders; and
- Higher education being viewed in awe by all citizens.<sup>974</sup>

Furthermore, respondents were confident about the impact of the work of the agency. It was reported that the public and institutions now appreciate the existence of ZIMCHE and its roles, and that this was significant given that a QA agency did not exist before 2009. Furthermore, several milestones have been noticed in the enhancement of quality in institutions. It was felt that ZIMCHE had brought 'sanity' and order to the higher education system. It was also reported that the implementation of the Cred-

971 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

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it Accumulation and Transfer system, will enable student transferability between institutions.<sup>975</sup>

From an institutional perspective, the main strengths were the use of ICTs and the high standards demanded by stakeholders,<sup>976</sup> and the fact that the national accreditation body, ZIMCHE, has very clear standards for quality assurance, institutional and programme accreditation and external quality audits for institutions.<sup>977</sup>

In addition to the strengths of QA in the country, there were also several challenges. The challenges facing QA in the country were reported as follows:

- The lack of a National Qualification framework and minimum bodies of knowledge;
- Economic hardship;
- Political interference for some of the assessed qualifications;
- A lack of resources and funding;
- A lack of sufficient manpower to deal with pressing matters in QA; and
- 'Brain drain'.<sup>978</sup>

From an institutional perspective, key challenges were the maintenance of high standards in the face of increasing student numbers and ill-motivated staff, as well as limited resources. Furthermore, a key gap and thus a capacity building need was developing and setting up viable QA frameworks (for a private university).<sup>979</sup> Another reported challenge was the slow adoption of QA as a concept in HEIs and limited collaboration among the QA practitioners.<sup>980</sup>

Furthermore, there were various skills gaps with regard to QA in the country. It was reported that ZIMCHE should have a vibrant database which can cover all its requirements for it to perform effectively and efficiently. In addition to most QA personnel not being trained in QA, there were gaps in staff exposure to other systems as well as gaps in teaching and research skills.<sup>981</sup>

From an institutional perspective, other gaps were in the areas of policy formulation, QA systems development and quality audit skills, and it was reported that capacity building would involve training in these areas.<sup>982</sup> Additionally, training was required for peer reviewers, the

Director of Quality Assurance personnel and personnel in quality assurance. Training was also required in the areas of programme design, research, and teaching and assessment. Furthermore, it was reported that there was a need for skilled personnel in QA and appropriately qualified personnel to teach programmes especially for private universities.<sup>983</sup>

### **Improving QA in the Country**

Strengthening QA in the country was reported to include skills development and the establishment of a NQF, continued support from both the Government and the parent ministry, training of personnel in quality assurance and funding for capacity building.<sup>984</sup> Training in QA was also raised by the participating universities. It was reported that strengthening QA would involve having more QA workshops.<sup>985</sup> Another institution highlighted the training and development of QA practitioners, the enforcement of the establishment of formal QA structures in every HEI, the formation of an association/network of QA Practitioners for networking and sharing of experiences, and the adoption and implementation of a particular standard, such as ISO 9001:2015 to guide the institutions' quality management systems.<sup>986</sup>

Funding and capacitating staff in QA were key among what was identified as being required to strengthen the quality assurance agency. This was a common thread across responses from the agency and universities, in addition to other suggestions. It was reported that strengthening the quality assurance agency in Zimbabwe would include:

- Resource mobilisation; capacitating the Agency's staff with training and funding;
- Sharing of experiences with other QA Agencies;
- Contact visits and representation at international quality assurance fora;
- Enacting legislation which would make it an offence for HEIs to teach programmes which are not quality assured; and
- Streamlining the affiliates of institutions.<sup>987</sup>

From an institutional perspective, it was felt that strengthening the QA agency would require the provision of requisite resources and skills,<sup>988</sup> and this echoes some of the

975 A summary of 5 questionnaire responses received from the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Received September 11, 2017

976 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

977 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

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979 Questionnaire response from the Catholic University of Zimbabwe. Received September 14, 2017

980 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

981 A summary of 5 questionnaire responses received from the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education. Received September 11, 2017

982 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

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feedback provided by respondents from the QA agency. Another university reported that strengthening the QA agency would involve the following:

- Continuous capacity building for the personnel in QA covering all aspects
- Development of a more structured way of formal and regular monitoring of the implementation of QA interventions in institutions by the QA Agency
- Strengthening of its networking with regional and international QA Agencies
- Providing funding for capacity building of QA Practitioners for all HEIs at a national level.<sup>989</sup>

Furthermore, it was reported that continuous sharing of information on the value of QA in HEIs at an institutional and national level will go a 'long way' in inculcating a quality culture across all institutions. Additionally, capacity building initiatives need to be strengthened for QA practitioners at a national level, and for members of various QA committees at an institutional level.<sup>990</sup>

Awareness of the SADCQF existed, and its value was noted. It was reported that some of the ZIMCHE members had been attending the SADC meetings/conferences. It was believed that the SADCQF meant that all the countries in the region would now using the same measurement in referring to qualifications, and thus the quality of graduates should be the same. It would streamline the QA systems in the countries and synchronise the qualification.<sup>991</sup>

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989 Questionnaire response from Lupane State University. Received September 11, 2017

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