

MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES



QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|---------|--|
| DCEPD | Directorate of Continuing Education and Professional Development |
| DQA | Directorate of Quality Assurance |
| DVC-ARC | Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research and Consultancy |
| DVC-PFA | Deputy Vice Chancellor, Finance, Planning and Administration |
| IUCEA | Inter-University Council of East Africa |
| MUHAS | Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences |
| MAMC | MUHAS Academic Medical Center |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| TCU | Tanzania Commission for Universities |
| VC | Vice-Chancellor |

DEFINITIONS

In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires the following definitions will be used:

Accreditation

Is the process in which certification of competency or credibility is provided

Council

Refers to the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences Council

Employee

A person who works for MUHAS in return for financial or other compensations. Employees may either be on permanent and pensionable terms or on contract.

Employer

A person or firm that employs workers, for this policy employer shall mean the MUHAS Governing Board

Institute

An organization for promotion of a cause

Policy

A plan or course of action, as of MUHAS intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, and other matters.

Quality assurance

In this document and in the context of academic programmes at the University, the term quality refers to "Fit for purpose"

School

An institution within or associated with the University that gives instructions in a specialized field and recommends candidates for degrees.

Staff

See employee above.

The University

Refers to Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

MUHAS is not new to quality assurance. It understands the need for constant monitoring and evaluation of its approaches to its core activities to maintain and improve its standards. Rules, regulations and guidelines govern us on how we enrol, implement and examine our graduates; as well as how we conduct research and provide services. We have a number of quality checks at different stages of implementation to inform us on how we are performing. All this is good and lays a foundation for us to engage more robustly in the evaluation of our activities. But, developments occur quickly in technology and industry and the skills needed in the job market are forever changing. For us to stay abreast of the evolving nature of medical practice, we need to create a system that is suited to guide us properly to meet these needs and transform us into a nationally and internationally competitive institution. It is with this in mind that the quality assurance policy is being developed.

1.2 Background

Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences embarked on an ambitious plan to address the human resource for health shortage in the country by providing state-of-the-art health training, research and public service to Tanzanians. Over the years the university has succeeded in increasing the number of students enrolled in its programs and to expand its portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs. It has revised all its existing programmes to focus on the competencies needed by graduates to enter the job market successfully and expects to open its doors to a wide range of health care services in its 571-bed capacity teaching hospital (MUHAS academic medical centre – MAMC). In its vision to be “a premier institution excelling in training, research and health care services”, the University plans to open new centres of excellence in teaching and research such as the Centre of Excellence in Cardiovascular Research supported by a grant from the African Development Bank. Following these expansions, MUHAS realised the need to reconsider its strategy to monitor and evaluate quality beyond existing quality assurance mechanisms. This policy document is among the first steps in strengthening the monitoring process to promote a total quality assurance culture in the University.

1.3 Scope of application

This policy provides a general guide to the process of monitoring and evaluating quality in all aspects of MUHAS operations. All units in the University will use this document to inform their appraisal of activities carried out by their respective units and to identify challenging areas that may need more attention. Implementation of this proposed policy will be facilitated and guided by the Directorate of Quality Assurance – its main custodian through the different schools and institutes. The policy incorporates both internal and external quality assurance and quality management approaches. Accreditation by professional bodies will also be supported by this policy where such agencies need to do so.

1.4 Policy objectives

This quality assurance policy aims to support consistent and continuous quality improvement in teaching/learning, research, consultancy, and health care services to ensure suitable and proper values and standards are attained.

Specifically, the QA policy aims to achieve the following objectives, to:

- a) Ensure the University operations and services are of the highest quality possible.

- b) Improve and maintain the academic standards and quality of education at the University.
- c) Ensure the integrity of the academic awards of the University are sustained.
- d) Ensure research and consultancy services are relevant and adhere to ethical standards.
- e) Develop, implement and maintain quality assurance mechanisms in the university.
- f) Continually provide support to students and staff to facilitate development of a culture of continuous quality improvement in all University activities.
- g) Strengthen quality assurance initiatives in all University organs
- h) Provide guidance in the development and implementation of quality assurance procedures and processes consistent with national and international standards

2.0 POLICY STATEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

In an effort to realise its vision and mission MUHAS shall consistently monitor and systematically evaluate the implementation of all its mandated activities. As a starting point, the University shall review all its existing policies, regulations and procedures and, where such instruments are lacking, develop appropriate ones, so as to ensure that all these guides contribute to the overall objectives of the University. In addition, the University shall ensure that at all times it has in place well stipulated and widely understood criteria for judging performance standards in all its core mission activities. This entails compilation and distribution of a comprehensive Quality Assurance Policy. In line with these guides, MUHAS shall constantly monitor and evaluate all its day-to-day activities in the core mission areas of teaching/learning, research, service to the public and support services to students and staff.

1. Innovative student-centred teaching/learning environment to meet national, regional and international expectations is improved.

Strategies:

- a) Build infrastructure commensurate to the needs of the programmes and number of students enrolled.
- b) Strive to provide the necessary learning materials and new novel teaching/learning infrastructure for effective delivery of all teaching programmes.
- c) Build the capacity of its staff to deliver its programmes and courses effectively through the use of appropriate technologies and pedagogical methods.
- d) Promote the use of digital technologies in teaching/learning to increase accessibility to learning material.
- e) Recruit and engage the best available academic and technical personnel using established and regularly updated quality criteria.
- f) Regularly consult students to gather opinions on the quality of the teaching/learning experience.
- g) Provide accessible social services to students and staff. These shall include catering, healthcare, recreational, academic advising and mentoring, social counselling and other services, and
- h) Continually encourage students to adopt new innovations that facilitate learning such as educational media and technology.

2. *Competence-based academic programmes that are relevant locally and internationally in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude are offered.*

Strategies:

- a) Develop and regularly review guidelines for curricula development and review in the University.
- b) Involve alumni and other stakeholders to identify key competencies that respond to societal needs.
- c) Ensure that all programmes have well defined learning outcomes and clear implementation strategies.
- d) Ensure best practices are followed in the setting, invigilation and marking of formative and summative assessments.
- e) Use performance indicators to gauge the quality of its graduates
- f) Maintain the academic integrity of MUHAS awards

3. *Consistently monitor and evaluate the quality and quantity of the research activities conducted.*

Strategies:

- a) Policy priorities and regulations guiding research at the University are at all times relevant, operational and effective.
- b) Conscious efforts are constantly made to secure and rationally use research funding and facilities.
- c) At all times the existing research policy and agendas are implemented vigilantly and successfully in light of the set objectives and performance criteria
- d) All research activities undertaken in various units are properly managed, and evaluated.
- e) Implementation of the various research projects constantly adheres to ethical and environmental considerations.
- f) A robust system is in place for ensuring that research outcomes are effectively disseminated, leading eventually to tangible contributions towards the improvement of quality of life in society.
- g) Research results are continually integrated in teaching/learning and, where applicable, their commercial value enhanced as per guidelines.

4. *Provide evidence-based health care services efficiently and effectively with respect and empathy to all our clients/patients at MUHAS ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER (MAMC) and other healthcare settings.*

Strategies:

- a) Relevant policies to guide MUHAS (and MAMC specifically) involvement in the provision of services to the broader society are developed and regularly reviewed
- b) Have in place a robust and operational system of planning, executing and evaluating public service activities
- c) Ensure that such engagement in public service provision contributes significantly towards the improvement of quality of life among the target communities.

- d) Regularly consult clients/patients on the quality of health care services provided at MAMC.
5. *Ensure good governance practices are implemented and maintained at all levels in line with the countries legal frameworks.*

Strategies:

- a) Maintain clear lines of authority and accountability while maximising transparency and legitimacy through effective and efficient participation of stakeholders in major decision-making processes
- b) Operate on the basis of an efficient governance structure, consisting of administrative structures and participatory organs or committees.
- c) Abide by the provisions of its charter and the principles emanating there from.

6. *Consistently adhere to selection and admission criteria.*

Strategies:

- a) Enrol students using a well-defined set and frequently reviewed selection criteria following a fair and transparent procedure.

7. *Ensure good governance practices in staff recruitment and appraisal*

Strategies:

- a) Maintain clear lines of staff recruitment and appraisal for both academic and supporting staffs as per existing guidelines.
- b) Adhere to conflict of interest policy in staff recruitment and appraisal

8. *Regularly conduct self-assessment of programmes, the hospital and institution as a whole*

Strategies:

- a) Monitor and periodically review programmes through internal and external self-assessment to ensure relevance.

3.0 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

There shall be a Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA), whose task will be to constantly monitor and evaluate quality assurance processes at MUHAS. The DQA shall spearhead the MUHAS QA system, which includes all implementation units and all measures they take to maintain high performance standards.

3.1 The linkage with other units

The DQA shall be a technical unit responsible for QA at the institutional level. It shall maintain a close working relationship with the DVCs by keeping them informed of newly arising QA issues falling under their respective jurisdictions and by providing them with technical advice on such issues. The DQA shall also maintain a close working relationship with all units, academic and non-academic, on matters pertaining to quality assurance in their spheres of operation. It shall update the unit heads with new information on QA issues as well as supplying them with various evaluation schedules and instruments. It will facilitate unit and programme evaluations and provide the unit heads with feedback on external and internal evaluation results; and shall advise them on

proper implementation of improvements recommended by review teams. The DQA shall also be a link organ between the University and external QA agencies. It shall prepare and submit the MUHAS portfolios to the TCU and other external bodies involved in mandatory or voluntary accreditation/re-accreditation of the institution and its programmes. The DQA shall organise and coordinate all external evaluation activities, and shall ultimately report (to units and the university management) on the results of such external evaluations. The Directorate shall also link MUHAS with professional bodies whose concerns and interests have bearing on the university's curricula development and implementation.

3.2 Roles of the implementing units

For the purpose of this policy the caption 'implementing unit' refers to a school, institute, directorate, department or any other basic segment of the MUHAS establishment, with a primary responsibility for planning and carrying out activities aimed at meeting a set of established institutional objectives. Implementing units shall have the primary responsibility not only to achieve and maintain high quality standards in carrying out their mandated roles but also to regularly conduct self-evaluations. Their role in the MUHAS QA system shall therefore include:

- a) Implementing their mandated roles effectively and in the most cost-effective manner so as to contribute to the efforts to achieve MUHAS goals and objectives;
- b) Developing and periodically revising unit-specific performance standards, and striving to meet those standards in practice;
- c) Preparing unit-specific QA procedures, operational manuals and measurement instruments, and providing the DQA with copies of such documents;
- d) Conducting regular self-evaluations to determine the extent to which it meets the set performance standards in practice, and using the results of such evaluations to improve practice;
- e) Providing the DQA with self- assessment reports in readiness for university-level and external evaluations;
- f) Implementing the recommendations resulting from internal and external evaluations and providing the DQA with timely reports on the status of such implementation; and
- g) Keeping staff, students and other stakeholders informed of the evaluation results and efforts being made to implement the recommended improvements.

3.3 Roles of participatory organs

Participatory organs include departmental meetings, school boards, senate and its technical committees (e.g. senate undergraduate studies/higher degrees committees and research and publications committees, etc.). The core QA role of these organs shall be to oversee quality in their respective areas of jurisdiction, taking into account the concerns that gave rise to the promulgation of this policy. Among other roles, their specific functions shall include:

- a) Ensuring that their respective unit/operational area has in place appropriate quality standards to guide the implementation of its mandated functions, and that the standards are regularly reviewed for sustained relevance;
- b) Regularly assessing the performance of implementers in the respective units/operational area in light of the set quality criteria and recommending improvement measures to implementers and/or relevant organs within or above the implementation unit concerned; and

- c) Frequently upraising implementation of recommended improvements and directing corrective measures against poor implementation.

As an agency of the VC, the DQA shall constantly monitor and periodically evaluate the functioning of these participatory organs to determine the extent to which they play their roles as per established regulations and schedules. The DQA shall also provide technical guidance to the organs whenever the need arises.

4.0 AUDITS AND PROGRAMME REVIEWS

4.1 External audits and programme reviews

The DQA shall regularly arrange and coordinate external institutional audits and programme reviews. Institutional audits shall focus on the structure and functioning of administrative and governance organs of the University, while programme audits shall evaluate the relevance of the teaching programmes on offer and the effectiveness of the delivery and valuation strategies employed. The DQA shall disseminate the results of institutional audits and programme reviews to the teaching units, to which units shall draw strategies to implement the subsequent recommendations. The DQA shall centrally coordinate institution and programme reviews and monitor implementation of the resultant recommendations.

4.2 Internal audits and programme reviews

The deans, directors and heads of departments/units shall be responsible for the implementation of the MUHAS policy on regular self-evaluation of the units. These reviews shall focus on the structure and function of the units and evaluate the implementation of teaching/learning of programmes. In each case the dean shall be responsible to constitute a school or directorate review team. The DQA shall draw the Terms of Reference to guide the review team. Whenever possible a three-member committee appointed by the VC will conduct a verification visit to the respective unit upon submission of the report by the review team.

4.3 Improvement plan

After each evaluation, the respective reports shall first be discussed at the department, school or directorate levels, where strategies for addressing the shortfalls emanating from these reviews are drawn. The improvements plans will be discussed by appropriate participatory organs at the institutional level and direct the implementation of its resultant recommendations and improvement strategies. The DQA shall be responsible for development of a monitoring and evaluation plan of the agreed strategies.

4.4 Programme and courses accreditation

All MUHAS teaching programmes shall be accredited by a qualified and legally competent agency (herewith the Tanzania Commission for Universities). However the internal procedures for such accreditation shall be coordinated and overseen by DQA. The University Senate will approve the final programme document upon recommendation by the respective board (Senate Undergraduate Education Committee or Senate Higher Degrees Committee/Senate Continuing Education and Professional development committee).

5.0 POLICY STATUS

This is a new policy document for the University

6.0 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders for this policy include the following:

- a) Staff, temporary and permanent, who are active in teaching, research and providing any form of support service to the core functions of the University
- b) Students registered with the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
- c) Researchers in health and health-related issues
- d) Government ministries and departments
- e) Partners and collaborators of the Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
- f) MUHAS alumni and
- g) Tanzanian community

7.0 APPROVAL AND ENDORSEMENT

The University Council will approve and endorse this policy.

8.0 RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

All University policies will be used to form the basis for setting of University operating standards. In this regard, the quality assurance policy will rely on other policies to identify important areas for monitoring and evaluation. These policies and documents are:

1. The University charter
2. Undergraduate and postgraduate prospectus
3. Postgraduate guidelines
4. Staff regulations
5. Student by-laws
6. ICT policy
7. Library policy
8. Research policy

9.0 EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy came in effect from 1st November 2017.

10.0 NEXT REVIEW

In the event that any statement in the policy provision is out dated or a need to introduce new statements arises as a result of the changing University environment, or market forces, or any other reason, such statements may be changed or modified at the direction and approval of the MUHAS Council. In any case the entire document will be reviewed after every 3 years.

11.0 POLICY CUSTODIAN

The directorate of quality assurance shall be the custodian of this policy.

12.0 CONTACT PERSON

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