The quality system at Mzumbe University (MU)

Jennifer K. Sesabo (PhD)
HOD Quality Assurance Department

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Why a quality assurance system at MU?

- The quality assurance system has the following objectives:
  - To assure high quality in education and learning environment
  - To assure the relevance of education for the labor market
  - To assure continuous quality development and improvement of the system
  - To assure participation of students and staff
  - One of requirements that the national regulatory body (Tanzania Commission for University) lays down for accreditation.
In a nutshell quality assurance system

- ensure that quality standards are met
- promote quality development
- document quality work
- detect problem areas

LONG-TERM GOAL:
Guarantee that the time students spend at MU is used effectively, and that the intended educational results are achieved
Quality Assurance process at MU

- Quality assurance quality at MU has been an important area for several years.
- The system is guided by the initiative for excellence as captured by the University vision statement.
- The quality assurance mechanism cuts across a number of areas/subsystems including academic programmes, academic staff, research and consultancy, student admissions, examinations and student assessment, student evaluation of lecturers, and quality control and quality assurance unit.
Quality of academic programmes

- Curricula for the academic programmes have to passed through internal and external scrutiny before their approval.
- Internal review is done by academic departments, faculties, faculty boards, the Senate and the University Council.
- External review is done by Tanzania Commission for Universities.
- The university also carries out participatory curriculum review of its programmes every four to six years in response to market demand and customer needs.
- However,
  - need to incorporate MU mission statements in curriculum development eg when formulating program objectives and learning outcome.
  - The courses can be initiated taking into account the local needs and in tune with the emerging and global trends.
  - Multi-skills development and involvement of stakeholders in curriculum updation.
(i) Quality Maintenance through Periodic Reviews of Programmes

- The university has undertaken major curricular reviews for Masters programmes in two faculties (Commerce and Public Administration and Management) from the support of NUFFIC project.

- No tracer study have been conducted since the commence of the university.

- the activity is going to take place during the 2008-2009 academic year so as to capture inputs from external stakeholders.

- This is ideal method because tracer studies are very expensive

- However the objectives of tracer study can be achieved through other means like stakeholders consultation and qualitative based methods.
(ii) Involvement of Industry (as stakeholder) in Quality Assurance

- Students in all programmes spend a full semester in relevant industries (workplaces).
- Field attachments give useful feedback about the quality of the programmes and test the employability of potential graduates of MU graduates.
- However, to get useful feedback is a challenge since not all organizations/industries participate fully in giving feedbacks.
- Industries participation can be improved via sensitization workshops, convocation, alumni etc.
(iii) Delivery

- The appropriate methodologies to facilitate effective learning outcome includes:
  - a combination of lectures,
  - seminars group discussions,
  - role-plays and
  - case studies
- new faculty members with no teaching experience are required to undergo a training of trainers programme to induct them into different delivery approaches.
- One of activities of Nuffic project was to improve teaching delivery (the project conduct many courses by engaging experts in this area from The Netherlands).
(iv) Workload Policy

- The University also has a workload policy in which workload allocation is done according to faculty rank and ‘standard class size’
(b) Staff development and capacity building

• Quality of academic programmes depends on the quality of academic staff responsible for the delivery of academic programmes including
  – supporting systems,
  – policies and procedures

• In order to ensure quality of existence staff and those who employed MU
  – has appraisal and human development policies MU
  – has a system in place that requires applicants for academic posts to have discipline specificity with respect to the post applied for, and to appear for an interview in the relevant department.
c) **Quality of Research and Consultancy Activities**

- Research - one of the core functions of MU
- As such, the University plays a significant role in research and consultancy activities (both tailored and competitive), focusing on national development priorities
- To ensure quality of its research and consultancy activities the university
  - has Research and Consultancy Policy and guidelines
  - use Conferences and workshops
    - To get inputs from all stakeholders for needs analysis
    - For output dissemination
(d) Students’ Admissions

- Mzumbe University has a system in place for screening applicants into its various programmes.
- Entry qualifications for every academic programme are clearly specified in the University Prospectus and advertised in the newspapers as well as in the University website for all interested applicants.
- The University follows the standard admission requirements set by the Tanzania Commission for Universities.
(e) Examinations and Students Assessment

- The student assessment system is guided by Examinations Regulation and Students Assessment Criteria, approved by the Senate and ratified by the University Council.
- The assessment is based on continuous assessment (throughout the semester) and end of semester assessment.
- Final examinations moderation by peer institutions provides a useful feedback, which serves as input in curricular reviews.
- The University also has Faculty examination committees to rule on examination irregularities.
(f) Students’ Evaluation of Lecturers

- The University has recently established a system whereby students evaluate the performance of their lecturers.
- Apart from evaluating their lecturers, Mzumbe University students are also involved in the quality assurance system of the university through participation in faculty boards, Senate and University Council meetings.
- However the evaluation process is problematic – cheap popularity and face resistance from academic staff point of view.
- This can be improved by using sensitization workshops (the need for evaluation) to academic staff and students.
(g) Self evaluation – Teaching and learning

• MU conducted a institution self evaluation in 2006 as a requirement from TCU for chattering and accreditation

• MU’s Strategic Plan and other plans contain quality goals which has the following Key Results Area
  – Enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of MU resource utilization through planning and implementation (KRA B)
    • MU Strategy – improve faculties capacity in training, research and consultancy
  – Enhancing and maintaining competitiveness of MU product (KRA C)
    • MU strategies – Continuous improvement of academic programs and quality assurance system

• The University is now implementing Open Performance and Appraisal System (OPRAS) for individual self performance
Quality of non – core services

• In order to ensure quality of MU non- core services
  – The services have been outsourcing
  – The university have adopted the public service management system
  – The university use Performance standard and Contracts
Quality Assurance Department

- The University has a Quality Assurance Committee for tracking lapses in the quality of programme delivery.
- The Committee meets regularly to track quality challenges.
- In general Quality assurance issue is concentrated on the teaching and learning activities.
- In order to have effective quality assurance system, the MU quality assurance system needs to focus on key aspects that influence quality in the teaching and learning process and the support processes.
- In order to have effective quality assurance system the department is now in a process of developing MU Quality Assurance Strategy (QS) and Policy.
Areas for Improvement

• Infrastructure development – can be achieved through MU initiatives as well as partnership with national and international donors (e.g. Tanzania Education Authority)

• Resources. Mobilization of funds can be through govt, institutional collaboration, MU self initiatives)

• Change of attitude and behaviour – This can be possible through sensitization workshops,

• However, establishing the culture and systems for internal and external, quantitative and qualitative assessment is not easy and will take its due time
(IUCEA) in collaboration with higher education regulatory agencies in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania has established a quality assurance handbook ‘A road map to quality’ for East African universities.

The handbook aimed at:
- spell out the objectives and goals of a common East African QA framework,
- establish appropriate QA instruments,
- define QA and give benchmark standard guidelines for university core activities.

The Handbook has been distributed to all universities East Africa to be used as a common QA instrument.
IUCEA activities for established a common QA framework

- Training of quality assurance personnel from 23 pilot universities, including Mzumbe University.
- Meanwhile, a pilot self-evaluation project of some selected programmes using a quality assurance handbook has completed to all the 23 pilot universities.
- The programmes which were under review at Mzumbe University are Bachelor of Business Administration - Marketing (BBA- Marketing) and Bachelor of Science in Information and Communication Technology Management (Bsc. ICTM).
- For the time being the two programmes are waited to be evaluated by external reviewers.
Observation from the Self evaluation reports

- Data analysis demonstrates that following areas need to be addressed on priority basis:
  - Formulating mission, aims and goals of program in a thoughtful manner
  - Regular Curriculum revisions and implementation
  - Faculty Strength and student teacher ratio
  - Uniformity in: devising core courses; teaching methodology; assessment methods
  - Infrastructure development
  - Physical facilities: Space, ICT labs, modern teaching aids, physical environment, classes and offices
  - the use of agreed standards and guidelines which make the quality assurance in university more consistent
- Improvement is required in sharing opinions and experiences between stakeholder groups (institutes, students, alumni, representatives of the labor market).
- Cooperation at national and international level (especially in issue of benchmarking).
- Mutual trust between subordinate units need to be enhanced.
- The quality culture in the university need to be promoted in all areas.
The way forward

- Mzumbe university and the partners in this project have role to play in order to establish effective quality assurance system
- The following criteria save as one of the basis for assessment
  - **Curricular Aspects** *(curricular design and development, academic flexibility, feedback on curriculum, curriculum updates and best practices in curricular aspects)*
  - **Teaching and learning evaluation** *(admission process and student profile, catering to diverse needs, teaching and learning process, teaching quality, evaluation process and reforms, best practices in teaching and evaluation)*
  - **Research, Consultancy and extension services** *(promotion of research, Research and publication output, consultancy, extension services, collaborations, best practices in research and consultancy)*
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- **Infrastructure and learning resources** (physical facilities, maintenance of infrastructure, library as a learning resource, ICT as learning resources, other facilities, best practices in the development of infrastructure and learning resources)

- **Student Support and Progression** (student progression, student support, student activities, best practices in student support and progression)

- **Governance and leadership** (institution vision and leadership, organizational arrangements, strategy development and deployment, human resource management, financial management and resource mobilization, best practices in governance and leadership)

- **Innovative practices** (internal quality assurance system, inclusive practices, stakeholder relationships)
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• A developed culture of evaluation for internal self evaluation and external review is a vital component for any well-developed quality assurance system

• A note of caution:

A quality assurance system is not a free lunch!

Edulink Project workshop – Kampala, 8th October 2008
• Quality systems can be compared to Cod Liver Oil:
  – The language is strange
  – It tastes awful
  – It is difficult to get children to take
  – It is toxic in large amounts

• But when you have become addicted you cannot live without it!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION