

# UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



## QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

By:  
Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance  
(DAPQA)

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>COBES</b>	-	Community-Based Education Services
<b>DAPQA</b>	-	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
<b>DDAPQA</b>	-	Director of Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
<b>DQAC</b>	-	Departmental Quality Assurance Committee
<b>FQAC</b>	-	Faculty Quality Assurance Committee
<b>HE</b>	-	Higher Education
<b>HEI</b>	-	Higher Educational Institution
<b>IIRaCS</b>	-	Institute for Interdisciplinary Research and Consultancy Services
<b>IQA</b>	-	Internal Quality Assurance
<b>NAB</b>	-	National Accreditation Board
<b>Pro-VC</b>	-	Pro-Vice-Chancellor
<b>QA</b>	-	Quality Assurance
<b>QAS</b>	-	Quality Assurance System
<b>SQAC</b>	-	School Quality Assurance Committee
<b>TTFPP</b>	-	Third Trimester Field Practical Programme
<b>UDS</b>	-	University for Development Studies
<b>UQAC</b>	-	University-wide Quality Assurance Committee
<b>VC</b>	-	Vice-Chancellor

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## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

**Implementing Units:** These refer to units, sections, centres, departments, faculties/schools, institutes and directorates in the University.

**Participating Organs:** These refer to committees and boards of implementing units in the University.

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Prof. Elias N. K. Sowley, the Director of DAPQA also deserves commendation for his efforts in restructuring the Directorate which saw its evolution from Academic Quality Assurance Unit (AQAU) when he took over office in 2013, through Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA) to the current designation as DAPQA. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) and the University of Duisburg-Essen, organisers of the Training on Internal Quality Assurance in Anglophone West Africa (TrainIQA) programme and their collaborators, Association of African Universities (AAU), the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE, Ghana), the National Accreditation Board (NAB, Ghana), the National Universities Commission (NUC, Nigeria) and the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA, Ghana) deserve commendation for selecting the UDS to participate in the training workshops which have informed some of the inputs made into this policy.

Furthermore, the Directorate extends its gratitude to the Association of African Universities (AAU), which organized an international workshop on Internal Quality Assurance for Sub-Saharan African Universities, in which UDS participated and derived a lot of benefits, some of which has informed this Policy. The Directorate is convinced that implementation of this Policy would lead to the growth and development of the University as a Centre of Academic Excellence.

In addition, the Directorate renders special gratitude to the following members of the Adhoc Committee on Quality Assurance Policy for taking some time off their busy schedules to deliberate on the provisions of this policy:

- |                              |           |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Prof. Elias N. K. Sowley  | Chairman  |
| 2. Prof. Seidu Al-Hassan     | Member    |
| 3. Prof. Samuel K. Oppong    | Member    |
| 4. Prof. Daniel Bagah        | Member    |
| 5. Dr. Mohammed H. A. Bolaji | Member    |
| 6. Dr. Isaac Sackey          | Member    |
| 7. Dr. Nafiu Amidu           | Member    |
| 8. Mr. Bawah A. Kassim       | Secretary |

The Adhoc Committee on Quality Assurance (QA) Policy is grateful to the Executive Committee of Academic Board for approving the draft QA policy at its 17<sup>th</sup> regular meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 and the University Council for ratifying the policy at its 81<sup>st</sup> meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

The University for Development Studies (UDS) was established by PNDC Law 279, 1992 with the mandate to blend academic work with community development. Since the inception of academic work in 1993, the University has been mindful of the need for quality staff and graduates of the University. In respect of this, the Training and Development Unit was established to build the capacity of both academic and administrative staff. The University also crafted her maiden Strategic Plan in 2003 which set out the strengths, weaknesses, goals, resource requirements and future prospects of the University. This Strategic Plan culminated in the building of a stronger and effective higher education institution for the enhancement of performance and quality.

The UDS is committed to achieving its statements of Vision, Mission and Objectives, which find a prominent place in its 2003 Strategic Plan. Therefore, the UDS underlined the importance of developing Internal Quality Assurance when it held its maiden workshop in 2008, with the view of improving the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The overall aim of UDS is to re-affirm its commitment to achieving the highest academic excellence in all its programmes and units by providing quality tertiary education that is commensurate with the pressing changes wrought by globalization at national, regional and international levels.

Quality Assurance is an important component in the service delivery of every institution that wants to be responsive to its clients and environment. The establishment of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) in the University was meant to address issues that were militating against quality service delivery. In the light of this, a workshop was organized on 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2008 to discuss the issues. This formed the framework for this document. This Policy document throws light on the planned establishment of the DAPQA. It is envisaged that DAPQA will invest in the recruitment and employment of highly qualified staff, ensure high staff output, produce quality graduates, provide conducive teaching and learning

environments for all the Faculties and ensure efficient, transparent and accountable governance of the University.

### **1.1.1 The Vision of Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA)**

The vision of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) is to strive for continuous academic excellence in teaching and learning, research, and community engagement as dictated by the core mandate of the University and overall vision of the University of being “a home of world class pro-poor scholarship”.

### **1.1.2 DAPQA Philosophy**

The Directorate shall operate with the following guiding principles:

- (i) The hallmark of a University is the quality of its teaching programmes, research and community engagement;
- (ii) Quality is holistic and would require teamwork for effective implementation;
- (iii) Teaching and learning is a dynamic process and must be continually improved;
- (iv) The mark of academic excellence is teaching, research and publications;
- (v) Formal mentoring is central for effective teaching and impactful research; and
- (vi) The determination of programme quality is based on stakeholder confidence that is informed through both internal and external assessment.

### **1.1.3 DAPQA Goals**

The DAPQA shall facilitate the enhancement of the image of the University as a centre of excellence, through rigorous quality assurance processes which should reflect in the quality of graduates and research output.

### **1.1.4 Core Objectives of DAPQA**

The core objectives of DAPQA are to:

- (i) ensure high staff output;
- (ii) guarantee quality graduates who will meet stakeholders' expectation;
- (iii) facilitate the provision of a conducive teaching and learning environment; and
- (iv) safeguard efficient, transparent and accountable governance of the University in the most cost effective manner.

### **1.1.5 Significance of Quality Assurance System (QAS)**

Given the current competitive nature of the global job market, the significance of a quality assurance system in any institution of higher education cannot be underrated. In order to counteract this globalization threat to the survival and existence of higher learning institutions, the institutionalization of a QAS becomes paramount. Therefore, the QAS of all public universities has a number of roles to play, but not limited to the following:

- (i) Enhance the accreditation of the University's training programmes;
- (ii) Improve the provision of feedback to staff on their teaching and research;
- (iii) Enhance capacity building on teaching and learning among staff;
- (iv) Give enforcement impetus to quality issues in the University's Statutes; and
- (v) Strengthen the international image of the University.

## **2.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Quality in Higher Education**

Quality is a universally accepted norm in every successful institution; it is also something that everybody pays attention to in any transaction for goods or services. Broadly viewed, quality

can be described as the totality of features and characteristics of a service or object that bear on its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs. There have always been different conceptions of higher education and what its basic purpose should be. Therefore, the notion of quality in higher education is very much tied to a person's understanding of the purpose of such education.

There are two fundamentally distinct approaches to viewing QA. One approach pays particular attention to intrinsic qualities, that is, basic values and ideals such as the search for truth and the dispassionate pursuit of knowledge. The other approach emphasizes extrinsic qualities such as capacities of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to respond to the changing needs of society. The format of attention to quality will vary according to whether the emphasis is on intrinsic quality i.e. the development of an erudite class of individuals who are fascinated by knowledge for knowledge's sake or on extrinsic quality i.e. development of individuals directly responsive to socio-economic needs of society.

The two approaches are in line with two dominant perceptions of higher education. One perception sees it as being a 'social institution', whose main functions are the cultivation of good citizenship, the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage and the formation of skills and character in the students. The other perception stresses that higher education is an 'industry' that sells goods and services, trains an important part of the workforce and fosters economic development. The quality of such goods and services, therefore, cannot be assumed to be good unless they are independently tested and proven to meet professional set standards.

In systems where emphasis is on intrinsic quality, the mechanisms to check and monitor quality tend to be implied and systemic rather than explicitly stated and measured. This has largely been the case with most HEIs up to a few decades ago. The emphasis on the need to employ explicit and systematic measures to check and monitor quality is a relatively new phenomenon and is a manifestation of a shift of emphasis in the perception of the purpose of higher education i.e. the need to respond to societal demands comes first. In this context, Quality Assurance essentially means measures or a set of measures taken by an institution to satisfy itself and demonstrate to

its clients that it has constant capacity to keep its promise to deliver goods and services of the desired standard.

From its inception to the present, UDS has explicitly pursued a combination of the two approaches to higher education, i.e. instilling of intrinsic values and development of practical capabilities among students. This would have meant the employment of extrinsic measures to check the fitness of its graduates for their post-graduation tasks. However, like other universities of its time, it did not put in place mechanisms for systematically and constantly checking the practical relevance of its education to students' post-graduation tasks.

## **2.2 Traditional Safeguards of Quality in Higher Learning Institutions**

As centres of higher learning, universities have always regarded quality as a crucial factor in building reputation, and winning admiration of, and support from, the public. Responsibility for maintaining and promoting the quality of academic programmes has always been vested in the Academic Board and the University Council. This mandate has been carried out through the following functions:

- (i) Satisfying itself regarding the content and academic standard of any course of study offered by the institution;
- (ii) Formulating by-laws regarding eligibility of persons for admission to any course of study;
- (iii) Formulating the standard of proficiency to be gained in each examination;
- (iv) Deciding whether any candidate has attained the required proficiency and therefore fit for receiving the particular academic award; and
- (v) Guarding and protecting all examination questions in order to avoid leakages for UDS to gain reputation and recognition.

However, these traditional safeguards have been questioned as to their efficiency in achieving quality in the University's programmes.

## **2.3 Changing Perceptions and New Demands**

In the past, universities were perceived as honest, self-steering, self-censuring and quality conscious centres of learning. In recent times, questions have been raised as to whether this

traditional trust was well founded and still valid. It is in this context that calls were made for the establishment of external mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the soundness of universities operations. Cloete (2002: 163), for instance, stressed that universities be regarded as “service industries” and that they accordingly be “formally evaluated” and “held accountable for their performance”.

It is in response to such calls that the 1990s witnessed the establishment of more than 50 national higher education quality assurance agencies in several countries around the world. They all arose because of the perception that traditional academic controls were inadequate to the challenges of a modern education and that more explicit assurances about quality were needed.

This change of perception was largely due to four important developments:

- (i) Demand for greater accountability and efficiency in respect of public financing;
- (ii) Trends towards mass participation in higher education even in the face of shrinking resources;
- (iii) Greater stakeholder scrutiny of education and training processes and outcomes; and
- (iv) Lack of trust in the efficiency and effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms.

In terms of scope, the mandates and responsibilities of these formal quality assurance agencies had varied considerably but included any or all of the following:

- (i) To assist and support institutions in their internal quality assurance activities in order to improve the quality of their output;
- (ii) To assess or evaluate designated institutions against a set of standards, benchmarks or intended outcomes;
- (iii) To review an institution’s systems of managing quality in order to establish whether they are appropriate, adequate and effective; and
- (iv) To check whether an institution is good enough for some specified purpose, such as recognition, accreditation and/or state funding.

These external agencies evaluate not only the curriculum contents and examination system, but also the capacity of the units to deliver the intended products. The focus is on the institution’s policies, systems, strategies and resources for quality management of the core functions of

teaching, research and community engagement. Admittedly, although the concept of quality assurance is not altogether new, the range of terms and methodologies now used to define, develop and apply it are relatively new. Given the growing importance of student mobility and the international labour market, there is the need to have some reliable and explicit ways of measuring standards and qualifications in higher education across the globe.

## **2.4 Quality Assurance at UDS**

The University for Development Studies (UDS) formally established a Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) in October 2008 under the office of the Vice Chancellor. The Unit was created to fulfill National Accreditation Board's (NAB) requirement that urged all recognized tertiary institutions to establish an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU). The establishment of the Unit was to further ensure quality teaching and learning in the University through improved academic standards, value for money in investment in higher education and improved service delivery. It was also to boost the image of the University as a centre of excellence in teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The Unit was also to assist in turning out graduates of the University that would be more competitive in the job market through rigorous training and intellectual development.

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) established in 2008 has not only metamorphosed in its name but also assumed more functions. In 2011, the Unit was re-designated as the Academic Quality Assurance Unit (AQAU) to reflect its new functions. The Unit was further re-designated by the management of the University as the Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA) in February 2014. In keeping with the current practice across the higher educational landscape in Ghana and elsewhere, the academic planning function of the University has been added to quality assurance, hence, the new designation, Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA).

The University for Development Studies' concern about quality is evident in the rules, regulations and guidelines governing the inputs, the processes and the outputs of the academic programmes as well as other community engagement programmes such as the Third Trimester

Field Practical Programme (TTFPP), Community-Based Education Services (COBES), Practicum and Industrial Attachment. Thus there are:

- (i) Strict compliance with the National Council for Tertiary Education's (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board's (NAB) accreditation requirements and procedures;
- (ii) Formal admission conditions and requirements that filter out unqualified applicants;
- (iii) Recruitment, appraisal and staff development requirements and procedures that ensure that only qualified staff are engaged and retained;
- (iv) Stipulations that ensure quality course contents, structure and assessment; and
- (v) Examination regulations and degree classification procedures.

Also, in line with the recommendations of the NAB/NCTE for efficiency and output quality, the University has, in recent years, deployed appropriate tools for measuring quality including academic auditing and institutional self-evaluation.

In her bid to institutionalize quality assurance, UDS organized a workshop in 2008 during which the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Soliciting student feedback/assessment of courses and programmes;
- (ii) Ensuring the practice of Staff Performance Appraisal (Academic and Non Academic);
- (iii) Complying with the Code of Conduct for staff and students;
- (iv) Revising promotion formats with content areas; and
- (v) Designing appropriate training modules.

The outcome of the workshop gave the impetus to the establishment of a strong mechanism for coordinating and monitoring the quality of the programmes of the University.

### **3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY**

#### **3.1 Main objective**

The main objective of the quality assurance policy is to ensure that relevant and appropriate standards with respect to teaching, research and extension are achieved. In particular, the QA policy aims at achieving the following specific objectives:

- (i) To improve academic standards and quality of teaching and learning at the University;
- (ii) To ensure the integrity of the academic awards of the University;
- (iii) To ensure that high standard academic programmes are designed and mounted at the University;
- (iv) To ensure that all academic programmes are relevant to the stakeholders;
- (v) To continually improve the quality of community service programmes offered by the University;
- (vi) To provide quality support services to students and staff of the University and its affiliates;
- (vii) To develop, refine and apply existing internal quality assurance and enhancement tools that are appropriate across all the programmes in the University and its affiliates; and
- (viii) To develop and sustain a quality culture in the University.

### **3.2 Scope of the QA Policy**

Ultimately, attention to quality has to become an embedded feature of the institutional culture. The entire institution has to view quality as an overarching principle of all its operations. The scope of the policy encompasses the following: Colleges, Schools, Faculties, Directorates, Institutes, Centres, Units, and other academic/administrative departments as well as:

- (i) all staff of the University;
- (ii) all students of the University;
- (iii) all teaching and learning facilities, infrastructure and other resources; and
- (iv) University's governance structure.

### **3.3. Expected Benefits of the QA Policy**

It is anticipated that the successful implementation of this policy will result in:

- (i) an improved academic performance of students;
- (ii) a better work performance of all staff;
- (iii) an increased satisfaction of stakeholders' interests and expectations;
- (iv) an enriched stakeholders' confidence;

- (v) a transparent and well-functioning governance structure;
- (vi) an improved University image both nationally and internationally; and
- (vii) an enhanced competitiveness of the University both nationally and internationally.

## **4.0 POLICY STATEMENTS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

### **4.1 Policy Statements**

In an effort to realize its vision, mission and objectives, the UDS shall consistently monitor and systematically evaluate the implementation of all its mandated activities. First, 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 are in line with its vision, mission and overall objectives. 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 Handbook. In line with these guides, the UDS shall constantly monitor and evaluate all its day to day activities in the core mission area of teaching/learning, research, community service and support services to students and staff.

#### **4.1.1 Teaching/Learning**

To ensure quality in the area of teaching and learning, the UDS shall:

- (a) Periodically review teaching programmes in order to confirm the extent to which:
  - i. The programmes are meaningfully structured and organized;
  - ii. The goals and learning objectives are achieved;
  - iii. The Programmes not only meet students' needs, but actually provide an experience that lives up to their highest expectations;
  - iv. The programmes help in the attainment of the University's academic vision and mission;
  - v. The teaching and learning practice constantly addresses critical national human resources requirement;
  - vi. The quality and quantity of available human, material and financial resources meet the programmes' requirements;

- vii. The programmes are both viable and relevant;
  - viii. The periodic monitoring and improvement of the outreach programmes, namely TTFPP, COBES and industrial practical attachment are in line with the prescribed standards.
- (b) Ensure that establishment and running of units/programmes proceed on the principle of rational use of resources and cost effectiveness;
- (c) Regularly arrange external evaluation of the quality of the programmes offered by its units in terms of their contents, delivery methods and internal assessment processes. This will entail a reconsideration of the suitability and the effectiveness of the existing practices, such as the external examination system and academic audits.
- (d) Involve professional bodies, potential employers and other stakeholders in the introduction, review and evaluation of academic programmes through curriculum review workshops, tracer studies and other appropriate means; and
- (e) Ensure that each programme undergoes a review at least once within five years.

#### **4.1.2 Research**

In fulfilling the obligation to ensure that high quality research is carried out in its constituent units, the UDS shall consistently monitor and evaluate research activities focusing on the:

- (i) relevance and appropriateness of the set priorities;
- (ii) adequacy of financial allocations to research activities;
- (iii) proper structuring of research projects/programmes;
- (iv) adequacy of research outputs;
- (v) effectiveness of dissemination channels and impacts of research results; and
- (vi) integration of research outputs into teaching and learning.

#### **4.1.3 Community Service**

The UDS shall constantly monitor and evaluate the services rendered to the community by its staff and students, with a view to assuring the highest possible quality in terms of the:

- (i) relevance of the priorities set centrally and by the individual units;
- (ii) adequacy and the quality of outputs in community service provision; and
- (iii) overall impact of the UDS on the community.

#### **4.1.4 Support Services**

In discharging its responsibility in the area of provision of the support service, the UDS shall continually monitor and regularly assess the appropriateness and the adequacy of the support services to its students and staff in terms of the:

- (i) academic and social counselling services;
- (ii) teaching and learning resources and infrastructure;
- (iii) health and recreational facilities;
- (iv) career advisory services; and
- (v) other social amenities.

#### **4.2 Policy Assumptions**

The UDS has set for itself the goal of becoming a “reputable world-class University” through an “unrelenting pursuit of quality” in carrying out all its core mission activities. To realize this vision, the UDS and all its units shall abide by the rules, regulations and quality criteria developed internally to guide the implementation of its set objectives in all spheres of its operation, particularly in teaching and learning, research and community service as well as the support services to students and staff.

##### **4.2.1 Teaching and Learning**

In ensuring quality in the area of teaching and learning, the UDS commits itself to continually seek the highest possible standards in respect of the input resources, the implementation processes and the final outputs.

###### **4.2.1.1 Input Resources**

The inputs into the teaching and learning process are the academic, administrative and technical staff, the students, the programmes and resources, and an efficient organizational structure. The UDS is committed to ensuring that its inputs are of the highest possible quality, and to this end it shall:

- (i) Recruit and engage the best available academic, administrative and technical personnel, selected on the basis of established and regularly updated quality criteria, and through a transparent procedure;
- (ii) Admit its students from among the highest qualified candidates available, by using regularly reviewed selection criteria, following a transparent procedure;
- (iii) Offer academic programmes that are relevant locally and internationally in terms of both academic and professional content.
- (iv) Seek adequate financing of the University's core mission activities: the teaching and learning, research, community service and the provision of internal support services; and
- (v) Strive to provide the necessary teaching and learning resources and infrastructure.

#### **4.2.1.2 Implementation Processes**

In carrying out its core functions of facilitating learning, the UDS shall ensure that:

- (i) its programmes are effectively delivered through the use of appropriate technologies and pedagogic skills;
- (ii) delivery of its programmes that emphasize practical training in order to achieve a balance between academic knowledge and practical skills;
- (iii) its academic, administrative and technical staff is sufficiently motivated to fulfill their obligations in the teaching/learning process.

#### **4.2.1.3 Outputs**

The ultimate goal for the University engagement in its core activities of teaching and learning is to produce knowledgeable and skilled graduates who can make a positive impact on society. The UDS, therefore, always anticipates that its graduates shall demonstrate excellent knowledge, skills, creativity and appropriate social values in their post-graduation engagements.

#### **4.2.2 Research**

Since research and teaching and learning are so inextricably linked, the UDS gives equal weight to the two processes, and is, thus, committed to achieving the highest possible quality research outputs. To ensure quality in research the UDS shall:

- (i) enforce guidelines on research at the University;

- (ii) make conscious efforts to secure and utilize research funding and facilities rationally;
- (iii) implement the existing research policy and agenda;
- (iv) manage, conduct and evaluate all research activities;
- (v) consider the ethical and environmental issues during the implementation of all research projects;
- (vi) put in place a robust system for ensuring that research outcomes are effectively disseminated beyond the University; and
- (vii) ensure the integration of research findings into the teaching and learning processes on one hand and into policy and practices on the other.

### **4.2.3 Public Service Provision**

Being one of the leading public universities, and having historically been a symbol of national development, the UDS has an obligation not only to produce skillful and innovative graduates, but also to provide expert services to the public. To this end, the UDS shall:

- (i) establish a relevant and effective policy to guide the provision of services to the public;
- (ii) have in place a robust and operational system of planning, executing and evaluating public service activities; and
- (iii) ensure that such engagement in public service provision contributes significantly towards the improvement of quality of life among target communities.

### **4.2.4 Institutional Set-up**

To achieve its core mission goals, the UDS shall operate on the basis of an efficient governance structure, consisting of administrative structures and participating organs or committees. It shall maintain clear lines of authority and accountability while maximizing transparency and legitimacy through efficient participation of stakeholders in major decision-making processes. In creating and constantly improving such a governance system, the UDS shall abide by the provisions of its Statutes and the principles emanating therefrom.

#### **4.2.5 Student and Staff Support Services**

A conducive environment is needed for students and members of staff to effectively engage in a productive education process. The UDS therefore takes the responsibility to continually strive to create and maintain this environment. In this regard, the University shall ensure that:

- (i) Physical infrastructure sufficiently supports the core mission activities of teaching, learning and research and also the provision of services to the public through TTFPP, COBES and other such programmes;
- (ii) Excellent and accessible social services are made available to students and staff. These shall include catering, healthcare, recreational, academic advising and mentoring, social counseling and other services; and
- (iii) Students' learning is continually enhanced through constant adoption of latest innovations in education and technology as well as pedagogy.

### **5.0 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

#### **5.1 The Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance**

Whereas the University and its various operational units shall continue to strive to meet the set internal quality standards in carrying out their day to day activities, there shall be a Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA), whose task will be to constantly monitor and evaluate the Quality Assurance (QA) processes. The pivotal role of this organ is to determine whether or not the quality standards set internally for measuring performance in all core operational areas of the University are constantly met and updated. The DAPQA shall spearhead the UDS QA system, which includes all the implementation units and all measures they take to maintain high performance standards.

##### **5.1.1 The Composition of the DAPQA**

The DAPQA shall be headed by a Director, who shall be assisted by a Deputy Director. The Directorate shall be responsible for assuring quality teaching and learning, research and community service. The Directorate shall be supported by a secretariat consisting of an administrator not below the rank of Deputy Registrar and other supporting staff.

Faculties/Schools on each Campus shall have a QA office to be headed by an Academic staff not below the rank of Senior Lecturer who shall be responsible through the Dean to the Director of DAPQA. He/she shall coordinate all QA activities of the Faculty/School in collaboration with Departmental QA Officers who should not be below the rank of Senior Lecturer. The Director of DAPQA shall be appointed by the VC through the recommendation of the Academic Board.

### **5.1.2 Functions of the DAPQA**

The DAPQA shall be responsible for the overall management of quality assurance activities at the UDS. The DAPQA shall function as the VC's secretariat on QA issues across the University. Its day to day activities shall focus on monitoring and evaluation of all QA operations at UDS, which shall include the following:

- (i) The provision of a framework for the evaluation of teaching, learning and community service and based on the outcomes of the evaluation advise management appropriately;
- (ii) The appropriate training to build capacity on teaching, research, administrative and other functions;
- (iii) The facilitation of the provision of conducive environment to enhance staff output;
- (iv) The facilitation of proper orientation of newly employed staff;
- (v) The implementation of the periodic review of the curricula of the University;
- (vi) The enforcement of the timely commencement of lectures on all Campuses;
- (vii) The execution of University-wide peer review of questions and timely release of all results;
- (viii) The compliance with the programme-specific requirements during admissions;
- (ix) The collation and maintenance of the integrity of the approved examination results;
- (x) The review of Standards and Assessment Procedures;

- (xi) The provision of expert advice to the management on omissions and commissions in the University that impact negatively on the quality of the University's programmes;
- (xii) The organization of Academic Audits and the provision of advice to the management on the teaching load of the staff and other relevant issues at the various Departments;
- (xiii) The execution of welfare issues of students, staff and their families;
- (xiv) The facilitation of the accreditation of all academic programmes;
- (xv) The maintenance of a data bank on Course Outlines, Curricula, marking schemes, Performance Evaluation Outcomes, Minutes, Reports, End-of-Trimester Examination Reports, Examination Malpractices Reports, up-to-date Approved Results of the University and other related correspondences and documentations on the Quality Assurance of the University;
- (xvi) The facilitation of the External Examination process;
- (xvii) The provision of a liaison office of the University on the Quality-related issues;
- (xviii) The abidance by the standards that make the University disability friendly;
- (xix) The preservation of a balanced staff profile, and the provision of expert advice to the management on staffing issues bothering on gender, retention and turnover and its implications on quality;
- (xx) The conduct of periodic tracer studies and other issues referred to it by the Academic Board and or the Vice-Chancellor;
- (xxi) The conduct of the periodic appraisal of the quality of the University's publications;
- (xxii) The conduct of the periodic appraisal of the quality of community outreach programmes;
- (xxiii) The submission of at least an Annual Status Report on the Quality of the University's Programmes to the Academic Board; and

- (xxiv) The provision of relevant information for the periodic revision of the Quality Assurance Policy of the University and the monitoring of the implementation of the strategic plan of the University.

### **5.1.3 Role of the Director of DAPQA**

The Director of DAPQA shall be the Chief Executive of the Directorate and shall, in his capacity:

- (i) Oversee the functions and responsibilities of the DAPQA;
- (ii) Be accountable to the VC;
- (iii) Maintain a working contact with the VC on the QA matters touching on their respective jurisdictions;
- (iv) Forward to the VC the QA matters requiring the attention of the Academic Board and the Council;
- (v) Provide technical support on the QA matters at the Academic Board and other meetings of the Council committees on behalf of the VC, as the case may be;
- (vi) Represent the UDS at national, regional and other international fora on higher education QA matters;
- (vii) Be the ex-officio member of, and a technical advisor on the QA matters deliberated upon by the Council;
- (viii) Constantly update the University on new global developments on Quality Assurance.

### **5.1.4 Responsibilities of the Deputy Registrar of DAPQA**

The Deputy Registrar of the DAPQA shall support the Director in all the day to day activities and responsibilities including:

- (i) Implementing the action plans and carrying out the routine activities of the DAPQA;
- (ii) Working hand in hand with respective Unit Heads;
- (iii) Carrying out all the duties assigned by the Director.

## **5.2 DAPQA's Linkage with Other Units**

In the evolving era of increased external monitoring and harmonization of quality standards in higher education provision, the DAPQA shall be a link organ between the University and external QA agencies. The Directorate shall also link UDS with professional bodies whose concerns and interests have bearing on the University's curricula development and implementations.

In specific terms, the Director shall ensure that DAPQA:

- (i) provides technical advice on the QA issues;
- (ii) reports to the VC and serve as the VC's secretariat on the QA matters;
- (iii) maintains close working relationships with all units and the various campuses by keeping them informed about new trends on QA;
- (iv) briefs, on regular basis, the Academic Board and Council on QA issues;
- (v) provides updates on the QA issues including evaluation schedules and instruments;
- (vi) evaluates units, sections, centres, departments, faculties/schools, institutes and directorates, and programmes based on the QA procedures and standards;
- (vii) provides feedback on internal and external evaluations;
- (viii) prepares and submits UDS' portfolios to the NCTE, NAB and other external bodies.
- (ix) ensures proper implementation of recommendations by review teams.

## **5.3 QA Roles of the Implementing Units**

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. The role of the implementing units in the UDS QA system shall include:

- (i) Implementing their mandated roles effectively and in the most cost-effective manner so as to contribute to achieve goals and objectives of UDS;
- (ii) Preparing unit-specific QA procedures, operational manuals and measurement instruments, and providing the DAPQA with copies of such documents;
- (iii) Developing, periodically revising and implementing unit-specific performance standards;

- (iv) Conducting regular self-evaluations to determine the extent to which they meet the set performance standards;
- (v) Providing the DAPQA with self-assessment reports in readiness for University-level and external evaluations;
- (vi) Implementing the recommendations resulting from internal and external evaluations and providing the Director with timely reports on the status of such implementation;
- (vii) Disseminating evaluation outcomes to all stakeholders.

#### **5.4 QA Roles of Participatory Organs**

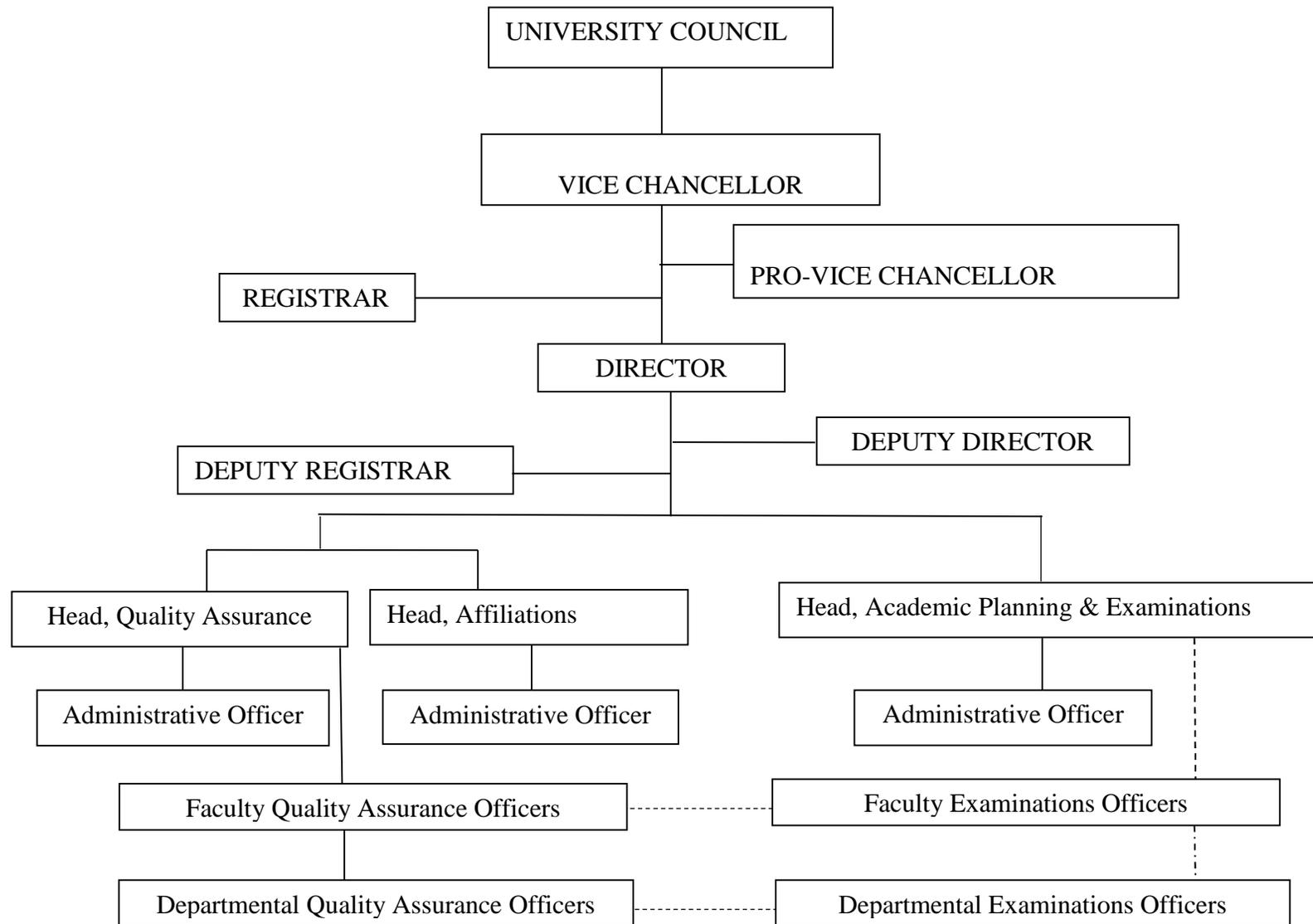
As an independent secretariat of the VC, the DAPQA shall constantly monitor and periodically evaluate the functioning of these participating organs to determine the extent to which they play their roles as per established regulations and schedules. The DAPQA shall also provide technical guidance to the organs wherever the need arises. The core QA role of these organs shall be to oversee quality in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Their specific functions shall include:

- (i) Ensuring that their respective units have in place appropriate quality standards to guide the implementation of their mandated functions for sustained relevance;
- (ii) Assessing regularly the performance of implementers in respective units based on set quality criteria and recommending improvement measures;
- (iii) Appraising regularly the implementation of recommended improvements and corrective measures.

#### **5.5 Organogram/Governance Structure for the UDS QA System**

The UDS QA functional system shall hinge on the DAPQA, which shall have linkage with Faculties/School/Institutes/Centres, and the Management of the University, as shown in the organogram (Figure 1). There shall be a University-wide Quality Assurance Committee (UQAC) made up of the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Registrar, the Director of DAPQA, Faculty QA Officers and Campus Examination Officers. At the Faculty level, there shall be a Faculty/School Quality Assurance Committee (FQAC/SQAC) made up of the Dean, Faculty Officer, Faculty QA Officer, Faculty Examinations Officer and Departmental QA Officers. There shall also be a

Departmental Quality Assurance Committee (DQAC) consisting of the Head of Department, Departmental QA Officer, Departmental Examinations Officer and two other Senior Members.



**Figure 1: Organogram/Governance Structure for the UDS QA System**

NB: Broken lines show that Examination Officers are partners in ensuring quality

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

UDS shall utilize a variety of strategies and instruments to evaluate the implementation of its core mission activities. The main strategies include surveys of alumni, employer and community satisfaction, as well as institutional audits and programme reviews, both internal and external.

### **6.1 Student Satisfaction Surveys**

The Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) shall regularly and systematically organize student satisfaction surveys. These surveys will aim at giving the students an opportunity to provide feedback on their experience of individual modules, courses and teaching programmes as a whole. In carrying out this task, the DAPQA shall design appropriate tools for collecting views; capturing of student experiences and opinions which may be done by use of a questionnaire, a structured interview or any other appropriate method. The DAPQA shall eventually disseminate the survey results to teaching units and staff, and shall coordinate the formulation and implementation of strategies to improve on problem areas revealed by the evaluation results.

### **6.2 Employer Satisfaction Surveys**

The implementing units, in collaboration with the DAPQA, shall conduct employer satisfaction surveys on regular basis. The surveys will provide vital information on the relevance of the teaching programmes on offer and on ways in which they can be made more responsive to the market needs. The University-wide employer satisfaction surveys shall be conducted by the DAPQA every five years, but the units may do their own surveys more frequently, and the DAPQA may ask particular units to carry out employer satisfaction surveys with respect to some particular teaching programmes.

### **6.3 Alumni Satisfaction Surveys**

In addition to the employer satisfaction surveys, the implementing units and the DAPQA shall regularly conduct alumni satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. The purpose of such surveys shall be to know from former students the extent to which their studies at the UDS have been relevant to their post-graduation needs and aspirations. The information from these surveys shall be used in curricula reviews and in improving approaches to teaching. The surveys shall

ordinarily focus on students who have left the University for not more than three years, but older alumni may be surveyed for specific purposes. Alumni satisfaction surveys shall go hand in hand with employer satisfaction surveys to be conducted once every five years. The Faculties and Departments may conduct surveys more regularly, and the DAPQA may ask particular units to carry out alumni satisfaction surveys with respect to some particular programmes.

#### **6.4 Staff/Job Satisfaction Survey**

The DAPQA shall also occasionally conduct staff satisfaction surveys, specifically aimed at assessing the level of staff satisfaction with the current working conditions at the University and collating suggestions on required interventions and possible corrective measures. The DAPQA shall communicate the results of such surveys to implementing units and the University Management, and shall coordinate discussions at both the unit and general University levels. The Directorate shall also monitor the implementation of improvement strategies and report progress to the VC.

#### **6.5 Community Perception Surveys**

The DAPQA shall periodically conduct surveys to determine the perceptions of the communities in the catchment area of the University. The exercise shall aim at assessing the social acceptability of the institution. The resulting data shall be used to improve the University's relationship with the surrounding communities as well as designing appropriate activities that involve communities in the catchment area in a mutually beneficial manner.

#### **6.6 Internal Institutional Audit and Programme Reviews**

Institutional audits shall focus on the structure and functioning of the 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 evaluation strategies employed. The DAPQA shall disseminate the results of institutional audits and programme reviews to the implementing units, each of which shall discuss the report and draw strategies to implement the subsequent recommendations.

The Directorate shall be responsible for the implementation of the UDS policy on self-evaluation of the units in every five years. In each case, the Director shall appoint a team of at least five

people from among the staff of implementing unit to constitute a school or faculty Review Team. The Team shall execute its tasks under the guidance of the Terms of Reference (ToR) and modalities from the DAPQA.

The Review Teams shall generate and submit reports to the Deans/Directors of implementing units who shall in turn communicate them to the DAPQA for scrutiny and further action. In consultation with the VC, the DAPQA shall arrange and conduct a verification visit to the respective units, using a Committee of three people, consisting of the following:

- i. Two people from within UDS but outside the unit concerned, to be identified by the DAPQA in consultation with the VC;
- ii. One person chosen from another institution of comparable status who is an acknowledged authority in the programme in question, to be appointed by the VC in consultation with the Unit Head.

The Committee shall execute its task based on the ToR prepared by the DAPQA and approved by the Academic Board. It shall review pertinent documents and contact staff and students in the unit concerned. The Committee's focal tasks shall be to:

- i. validate the self-assessment document;
- ii. examine and provide recommendations on the structure, organization and contents of the programme and/or unit concerned;
- iii. make any observations on any issue that may affect the present and future prospects of the programme or unit concerned;
- iv. complete its work within a period to be specified by the DAPQA.

The Committee shall submit its report to the DAPQA which, upon consultation with the VC, shall forward it to the respective unit with comments and directives on the improvements recommended by the Committee. Upon receipt of the revised report, the DAPQA shall submit same to the Academic Board through the VC for approval. The DAPQA shall subsequently monitor the implementation of the approved recommendations.

All mandatory external programme reviews by the NAB and NCTE shall be preceded by these internal programme reviews; and shall be coordinated and facilitated by the DAPQA at the institutional level.

### **6.7 External Institutional Audits and Programme Reviews**

The DAPQA shall, in every five years, arrange and coordinate all external institutional audits and programme reviews. In facilitating these external evaluations, the DAPQA shall each time appoint a panel of up to five experts. The panel, which shall draw three of its members from outside Ghana, shall act on the basis of specific Terms of Reference (ToR) prepared by the DAPQA.

### **6.8 Improvement Plan**

The evaluation reports shall first be discussed at the level of the implementing units where strategies for addressing the shortfalls emanating from these reviews are drawn. The Units shall then forward these improvement plans to the appropriate participating organs at the institutional level and direct the implementation of its resultant recommendations and improvement strategies.

The DAPQA shall study the improvement strategies approved by the participating organs at the institutional level. It shall subsequently monitor the implementation of all approved improvement plans and evaluate the outcomes. The DAPQA shall prepare and present implementation status reports to the relevant implementing unit Heads, and the VC. The DAPQA shall execute directives given by the VC in connection with the reports.

### **6.9 Programme Accreditation**

The DAPQA shall ensure that all programmes are duly accredited based on the internal procedures and the guidelines as stipulated by the NCTE and NAB. In this context, the DAPQA shall coordinate and facilitate the preparation of the application documents based on the guidelines given by the accrediting agencies. The DAPQA shall liaise with accrediting agencies in ensuring the accreditation of programmes. It shall provide feedback to the implementing units on the status of their applications.

## **7.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS**

### **7.1 Policy Scope and Implementation**

This policy provides a general guide to the process of monitoring and evaluating quality standards in all aspects of the UDS operations. The detailed procedures for implementing this policy are specified in the Quality Assurance Handbook. The policy assumes that the implementing units and the Directorate shall continually set and review quality standards in all operations of the University.

### **7.2 Validity of the Policy Provisions**

These policy provisions shall become operational immediately upon the recommendation by the Academic Board and the approval of the UDS Council, and shall remain valid until when they are revoked by the same authority. However, given the changing circumstances under which the University operates, this document is subject to periodic reviews and amendments and, whenever such amendments happen, the revised version of the document shall take precedence over the previous one.

### **7.3 Policy Revision Procedure**

In the event that any statement in the policy provision is outdated or in need of amendment as a result of the changing University environment, or market forces, or any other reason, such amendment may be effected based on the recommendation and approval by the Academic Board and the UDS Council, respectively. The policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

First and foremost, this policy document has presented the evolution of the Directorate to its current structure and status within the University. Second, it has outlined the Directorate's core *raison d'être* as addressing the issue of Quality Assurance that relate to the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of the three core activities of the University, namely, teaching and learning, research, and community engagement. Also, it has established that the Directorate's philosophy and *modus operandi* are in perfect compliance with the University's overall vision, mission and objectives. In achieving its core mandate, therefore, this policy document has underscored the need for teamwork, transparency at all levels of governance in the University,

and the continuous commitment of the University's management and the rank and file of the University.

Furthermore, while it calls for strong collaboration with all the implementing units within the University, it seeks compliance with Directorate's oversight authority. It is important to state that this policy document also puts premium on institutional engineering that will constantly put in innovative measures that will meet the exigencies of the time. The last but not the least is that this policy document calls for conscious applications of the foregoing guides in the planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation of the teaching and learning, research and community engagement of the University.

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