



QUALITY POLICY

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QUALITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Quality Policy is intended to guide the actualization of the Vision and Mission of the Botswana Open University (BOU) and its harmonious interaction with stakeholders and partners in providing high quality products and services. The Policy mandates the establishment of the structures, processes, procedures and operational activities that will promote, cultivate and maintain a culture of quality in the institution.
- 1.2 The Botswana Open University through this Policy will ensure the appropriate development and implementation of quality mechanisms, processes and procedures for all University activities to meet national statutory and regulatory requirements and international norms and standards for an open university. BOU guarantees the establishment and maintenance of a Quality Management System (QMS) through quality structures, activities, processes, implementation strategies and evaluation measures. Furthermore, the University aspires to achieve a level of excellence in which defined standards are significantly and consistently exceeded and continuous improvement plans for quality enhancement are functioning effectively.

2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Benchmarking: A process of measuring and monitoring outcomes against predetermined best practice criteria for improvement purposes.

Continuous improvement: The ongoing process of change for the purpose of improvement to practices and processes.

Quality assurance: The programme of activities to ensure products and services are fulfilling the set requirements.

Quality audit: A systematic, independent and documented activity to establish the extent of compliance with set criteria.

Quality management system: The organisational framework within which the institution's quality assurance and continuous improvement processes are carried out. It includes the organization of activities and documentation strategies to achieve quality goals through planning, monitoring, assuring and improving quality.

Quality objectives: The desired outcomes of the implementation and application of the Policy.

Quality principles: the philosophical underpinnings of the Policy.

Quality reviews: The activities that are undertaken to measure the quality of products or services that have already been made or delivered.

Quality: The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that demonstrates its ability to satisfy stated standards.

Self-review and evaluation: Internally based process to facilitate the evaluation, reflection and review of process and practices.

3. PURPOSE

3.1 The Policy provides guidance for the development, implementation and monitoring of sustainable quality assurance processes, procedures and practices in the institution. It acts as a yardstick for evaluating and reviewing the University-wide operations, infrastructure, programmes and services for continuous improvement and customer centric provision. Through this Policy, the University seeks to ensure quality service to stakeholders and continued relevance to the dynamic landscape of open and distance learning. The Quality Policy also provides guidance for meeting and exceeding the national legislative and statutory requirements and benchmarks that will put the institution at a competitive level, nationally and internationally.

3.2 Objectives of the Policy

An effective institutional quality policy assesses quality against the institution's mission and strategic objectives. BOU has adopted the idea of quality as "Fitness for Purpose", a concept that emphasises the need to conform to generally recognised standards for open universities. To achieve this, the Policy has the following specific objectives:

- 3.2.1 To underpin the quality processes and procedures of the institution by identifying the desired outcomes.
- 3.2.2 To promote a quality culture by lowering risks associated with quality provision.
- 3.2.3 To guide the management of quality products and services for national and global competitiveness.
- 3.2.4 To identify and address the needs, understanding and responsibility of stakeholders' in developing quality products and services.

- 3.2.5 To promote the development and implementation of institutional policies, procedures, guidelines, manuals and related documents that are in line with those of benchmarked open universities.
- 3.2.6 To guarantee the achievement and maintenance of compliance with the requirements of regulatory and statutory bodies.

4. SCOPE

The Quality Policy applies to all operations of the institution and includes all University activities that directly or indirectly impact on its products and services. It applies to the entire University community which includes staff, students and partners.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1 The University's Vision is to be recognised internationally as an Open and Distance Learning institution which provides high quality education, research and community engagement. To achieve its Vision, the University commits to:

- 5.1.1 Intensify quality education and maintain the University as an effective human resource development institution.
- 5.1.2 Intensify quality research and maintain the University as an effective source of knowledge creation, scholarship and innovation.
- 5.1.3 Serve society and contribute to social and economic advancement.
- 5.1.4 Uphold the ethical and professional standards that underpin quality.
- 5.1.5 Ensure that processes and practices consistently deliver and are subject to continuous improvement.
- 5.1.6 Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements.
- 5.1.7 Ensure that quality objectives are fulfilled.

5.2 Policy Principles

The Policy is based on the following principles:

- 5.2.1 **Quality Commitment** - The University actively endorses and demonstrates support for the Quality Policy.

- 5.2.2 **Quality Responsibility** - Quality is accepted as the responsibility of all staff and is upheld across the institution, whilst the purpose and direction are set by the University leadership. All staff understand how their individual activities affect the strategic goals of the University.
- 5.2.3 **Quality Staff and Resources** - Staff are trained, supported and resourced appropriately in order to deliver services and products consistent with the institution's requirements.
- 5.2.4 **Quality Data and Information** - Processes are in place to ensure the consistent collection and analysis of data and information to ensure evidence-based decision making.
- 5.2.5 **Quality Practices** - Consistent and effective practices are identified and communicated to the University community through policy, procedures, guidelines, manuals and other documents.
- 5.2.6 **Quality Improvement** - Critical, honest and timely self-review and evaluation linked with reflection and implementation of lessons learnt. Planned internal and external reviews promote constant evolution of practices and processes to ensure their ongoing suitability and adequacy.
- 5.2.7 **Customer Focus** – All the University operations are based on the established customer requirements and stakeholder involvement initiatives are determined and nurtured for continued relevant ODL delivery, quality research output and improved institutional performance.

6. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This Policy has been formulated to guide the on-going development and implementation of an electronic Quality Management System (QMS). Through the QMS the University will ensure ongoing quality enhancement and the fostering of a culture of continuous improvement in teaching, learning, research, student and administrative services. It will ensure the realisation of the University's Vision of "Inspired Excellence and Empowered Learners for Life-long Learning".

7. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Quality Policy will be enhanced through staff, student and stakeholder representation, ensuring consultation and involvement in the quality processes and key activities of the institution. The roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the Quality Policy are as follows:

- 7.1 Council** – Provides governance oversight of the implementation of the Policy through regular reports.
- 7.2 Executive Management** – Ensures accountability and resources for implementation of the Policy.
- 7.3 Senate** – Facilitates and monitors the development of a culture of continuous quality improvement for enhanced academic excellence.
- 7.4 Academic Policy Programmes and Quality Assurance Committee of Senate** – Responsible for the University-wide implementation, management and quality assurance of the Policy.
- 7.5 Boards of Schools, Departments, Institutes and Centres, and Divisional Management Teams** – Ensure implementation of the Policy within their areas of responsibility.
- 7.6 All Staff** - Quality is taken to be everyone's responsibility in the University, hence the intent and application of the Policy is to be embedded in the daily work of all staff.
- 7.7 Centre for Teaching, Learning and Quality Assurance** – Provides the technical support for the comprehensive implementation of the Policy, including the management of audits and all compliance processes. The Centre is also responsible for capacity-building to implement the Policy.

8. REVIEW

The Policy shall be reviewed every three years or earlier as necessary.