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ACADEMIC POLICY

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1.0 Interpretation of Operational Terms of the Policy

This Academic policy uses a number of terminologies which need clarification before it is read further.

a) Assessment

In the context of quality assurance, assessment is the process of identifying, and ensuring that appropriate internal procedures are in place and operational, and that outcomes of academic programmes and activities are in accordance with established standards.

b) Audit

Audit is a process of identifying and ensuring that appropriate internal quality assurance processes are in place and operational. Auditing, in academic quality assurance, is supposed to tap into processes that enhance quality provision of services and objective evidence provided and adhered to.

c) Programme Review

Programme review is a process of holistic appraisal of a course/programme and resources, with a view to its further evolution and improvement.

d) Quality

In this document, the term quality refers to fitness for purpose (i.e., whether the institution and its components of activities have quality, and if they conform to the quality assurance purpose).

e) Quality Assurance

This is the process of ensuring that measures are established which ensure that outcomes of university activities (academics and management) are of a prescribed standard.

f) Quality control

This is the process whereby outcomes are shaped in line with whether they are of the prescribed standard.

g) Quality Management

This refers to all the processes that are in place to facilitate the achievement of quality in an institution. These include implementation of quality benchmarks policy and monitoring and evaluation of quality.

h) Stakeholders

This includes agencies (government and private) that control tertiary institutions. They may also include parents, the business sector, society and donors (Local and International) that participate in or have responsibilities towards tertiary education in Uganda.

i) Intended Student Learning Outcomes

This is about knowledge, understanding and skills, which the university curriculum intends to impart to students through its programmes. The learning outcomes are developed to reflect national and international academic quality standards. These shall be measured through student assessment using external and internal Quality Assurance benchmarks.

j) Curriculum

This is an aggregation of all academic programmes in a specific academic unit (e.g. Faculty), espousing the intended student learning outcomes, modes of delivery, assessment criteria, course content, and the description of the courses or programmes therein, including the motivation to offer particular courses putting into consideration the external environmental demands.

k) Student Assessment

Student Assessment comprises of a set of processes, including examinations and other activities conducted by the university to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Student Assessments provide the means by which students are ranked according to their academic achievements or competencies. It needs to be confirmed that students are well informed of the criteria by which they are assessed and given appropriate structured feedback that supports their continued learning. Student feedback is helpful in revising the current standards to a certain level of improvement.

1.1 Background of MRU

Muteesa I Royal University (MRU) was offered an operational license by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2005 and started its operations in 2007. The founding Chancellor of the University, who is also its Visitor, is His Majesty the Kabaka, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. The genesis of modern education in Uganda is historically associated with the Kingdom of Buganda owing to the role that Sekabaka Muteesa I played in inviting the missionaries who introduced education in Uganda. Owing to this history, it is only befitting that the University was named after this visionary leader. Hence, the University was named after the 31st King of Buganda who was a monarch of great vision, Kabaka Muteesa I (1856-1884). MRU is a skills training, academic and research-oriented institution of higher learning that was established as a private institution. The initiative was promoted by the Executive Committee (EC) of the Buganda Kingdom, headed by the *Katikekiro* (i.e. Prime Minister).

1.2 Strategic Goals of MRU

The Strategic Goals of MRU are as follows:

- (i) To produce graduates with all-round competencies and skills to be able to initiate self-employment activities or compete for jobs in the global market;
- (ii) To promote research and encourage students and staff to publish;
- (iii) To build and expand collaboration and engagement with the community, the alumni, and industry and business, and to equip students with practical skills while empowering the community, industry & business to develop local solutions;
- (iv) To strengthen MRU's human resource capacity;
- (v) To achieve a sustainable financial resource base;
- (vi) To improve the administrative and organizational arrangements of MRU with a view to achieving efficiency and effectiveness in all sections of MRU; and
- (vii) To construct or acquire, rehabilitate and maintain buildings, equipment, implements, ICT facilities and land particularly for the growth and development of its niche.

1.3 Vision of MRU

The Vision of MRU is to be “a leading university responding to contemporary challenges through teaching and learning, research and technical guidance”.

1.4 Mission of MRU

The Mission of MRU is “to provide training, research and technical guidance responsive to national socio-economic needs”.

1.5 Core Values of MRU

The core values of MRU are as follows:

- (i) Professionalism; Professionalism is a trait that is highly valued in the human resource of any organization. It has many attributes, including: (a) Specialized knowledge, (b) Competency, (c) Honesty and integrity, (d) Respect, (e) Accountability, (f) Self-regulation, and (g) Image.
- (ii) Respect for Diversity;
- (iii) Cultural Sensitivity;
- (iv) Tenacity; and
- (v) Team spirit.

2.0 Introduction of the Policy

This Academic (Quality Assurance) policy uses internal and external measures in order to provide guidelines to aid academic staff and management gauge and ensure quality in the academic function of MRU. Internal Quality Assurance measures include: moderation of examination papers by peers, monitoring academic staff teaching using attendance forms, and conducting annual staff evaluation based on clearly laid out processes.

External Quality Assurance measures include: vetting examinations by External Examiners, and engaging external institutions such as the NCHE to perform routinized monitoring sessions. All MRU's core functions such as teaching, research and publications, community service, and consultancy as well as capacity building and academic collaborations are to be subjected to internal and external quality assurance measures

3.0 Objectives of the Policy

- a) To enhance the effectiveness of core University academic functions of teaching, learning, research performance, community service, academic staff development, capacity building, and collaborations;
- b) To align all academic functions/areas of MRU to the University's Strategic Philosophy, Vision, Mission and Objectives;
- c) To provide a comprehensive set of guidelines to aid the realisation of academic quality and proper management of all MRU's programmes. This will be mainly through; monitoring and supervising academic quality standards as the University seeks to achieve its Vision and Mission; and
- d) To provide an overall academic philosophy of MRU as well as the guidelines to safeguard it as management seeks to ensure sustainable development of the University's academic function.

4.0 Application of the Policy

This policy shall be applicable to all persons charged with checking, ensuring and supervising quality assurance in academic programmes as well as other complementary units of the university. These may include all academic and management units.

5.0 Section One: Academic Quality Functions

In order to ensure continued academic quality, this policy provides the functions of any unit or person charged with the duty to carry out academic quality refinement in MRU, and these are:

- a) To supervise and monitor academic quality in the university;
- b) To set up policies and minimum standards for checking quality in academics;

- c) To carry out regular performance audits as means of improving the academic quality of programmes in the university;
- d) To link institutional activities, outcomes and processes to the highest external academic standards;
- e) To encourage, organize and engage in academic staff development initiatives such as staff mentoring so as to improve their professional outputs and career advancement;
- f) To design and implement academic quality proposals and programmes as a menu for tapping opportunities that will elevate the university to world-class status;
- g) To nurture academic staff through encouraging academic staff growth, monitoring, and encouraging academic staff promotions;
- h) To develop the research and publications component of the University by putting in place conditions favourable to research competitiveness among members of the academic staff; and
- ix. To promote and encourage community outreach services through identifying capacity building opportunities for MRU.

6.0 Section Two: Academic Quality Principles, Mechanisms and Organs

6.1 Introduction

This policy seeks to foster a creative, dynamic and supportive quality assurance culture in order to ensure academic excellence in MRU. It is anchored on the following overarching principles:

- a) Focus on Customer-driven Needs: To ensure that academic quality standards are pegged on the customer (client) needs of the students, society, and the labour market;
- b) Quality Teaching, Learning, and Student Assessment: To ensure that the university environment meets students and staff needs through good academic planning and evaluation. The need to focus on results, performance and outcomes of both students and academic staff, and provide leadership and motivation, to support staff development, career progression, and high completion rates;
- c) Quality Research, Publications and Consultancy: To set-up and maintain strong and quality-driven research and publication based on a strong foundation of Quality Assurance principles in this sector;
- d) Benchmarking Best Practice or Professional Standards: To identify and disseminate best practices and professional standards from the external partners of the university in order to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, practical skills transfer, experiential learning and integrity in order to make MRU a unique academic institution;
- e) Collaborations and Partnerships: To build and maintain productive partnerships with world-class universities, the government, regional bodies, and research consortia, as the basis of quality enhancement in the academic sector; and

- f) Commitment to Practicum for Innovative Excellence: To Integrate and promote a practicum-based curriculum as an innovative way of improving quality University teaching and learning. This requires engaging in teaching that is based on experiential and student-centred learning for the promotion of creativity among staff and students within the university (see item d above).

6.2 Academic Quality Assurance Mechanisms

- a) Both internal and external quality assurance mechanisms shall be generated and shall be coherent with this policy;
- b) The internal mechanisms shall assess the quality of academic programmes and activities such as; teaching and learning processes, student assessment, moderation of examinations, the conduct of quality of research and publications, community service and related capacity building initiatives in the university.
- c) External Academic Quality Assurance mechanisms include use of External Examiners, external professional bodies (for professional programmes started and intended to be started by MRU), use of external accreditation agencies such as NCHE, employers' bodies or the business community, and use of other universities especially those with whom MRU has partnerships or collaborations.

6.3 University Quality Assurance Organs

Academics are the heart of any University. Therefore, ensuring the quality in academics requires concerted efforts of all units of the university such as Faculties and Departments. These units serve as feeders into the academic function of the university. In order to ensure effective supervision of quality assurance related issues in MRU, there shall be the following University Quality Assurance organs:

- a) The University Quality Assurance Committee (QAC): This will be an advisory body whose role will be to advise the University Management on matters regarding the building and maintenance of an effective academic and workable system of quality assurance in the University;
- b) The Quality Assurance Committee: This will be approved by Council and it will operate in an interactive manner with the different units of the university mandated to ensure quality of programmes in the Departments, Schools and Faculties. It will hold regular meetings with various university functionaries (e.g. Departments), and follow-up on policy issues. It will also hold discussions, consultations and seminars on relevant topics to get feedback from all stakeholders; and
- c) The Quality Assurance Committee is also solely responsible for carrying out monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure quality at particular academic levels.

6.4 Membership to the Quality Assurance Committee

- a) Membership to the Quality Assurance Committee shall be as follows:

- i. The Vice Chancellor (Overseer of Quality Assurance Activities);
- ii. Heads of University Management Units e.g. Finance, Procurement, Estates, etc.;
- iii. Faculty Deans;
- iv. One Representative from each Faculty;
- v. A representative from Council;
- vi. One representative from the Ministry of Education and Sports;
- vii. One representative from Senate;
- viii. One student representative;
- ix. The Dean of Students;
- x. The Academic Registrar;
- xi. One representative of the business community appointed by the Council; and
- xii. The Director, Quality Assurance.

b) Terms of Reference of the Quality Assurance Committee

The terms of reference for the Quality Assurance Committee include but are not limited to the following:

- i) To promote a culture of academic quality in the University;
- ii) To establish, monitor and evaluate quality standards and practices in all university organs;
- iii) To design and review quality assurance systems, processes and procedures relating to both academic and management issues throughout the university;
- iv) To supervise particular units charged with the duty of attending to specific recommendations on Quality Assurance issues; and
- v) To identify quality assurance initiatives (academic and management) for the university internally and externally.

6.5 Quality Assurance Directorate

The Quality Assurance Directorate (QAD) shall be managed by a Director of Quality Assurance who will see the day-to-day activities of the Unit on behalf of the Vice Chancellor. The duties of the Director of Quality Assurance are as follows:

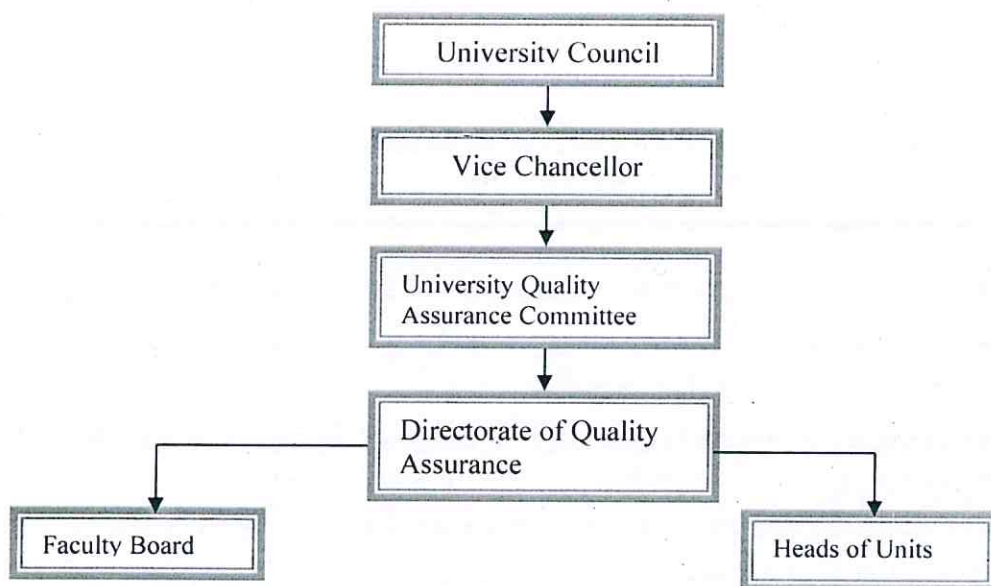
- i. To provide counsel and guidance on quality assurance matters and practices at the University;
- ii. To ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the quality assurance initiatives;
- iii. To lead the identification and development of university-wide Quality Assurance protocols, mechanisms and enterprises;
- iv. To lead, coordinate and support academic quality assurance and enhancement management systems across the university;
- v. To contribute to the formulation of the university's quality assurance and enhancement policies and practices and advice on, as well as, monitor their implementation across the university;

- vi. To contribute to identifying quality assurance best practices from collaborating and partnering institutions and society; and
- vii. To guide the office of the Academic Registrar on matters concerning quality teaching, student assessment, research and publications, and other key performance indicators expected of MRU.

6.6 Roles of Faculties in Quality Assurance

- (a) Under the guidance of the Faculty Dean, Faculties shall play a significant role in ensuring the quality of their academic units;
- (b) Faculty quality assurance issues shall be handled by the Faculty Committee whose membership shall comprise of the following:
 - i) Chairperson, who is the Dean of the Faculty;
 - ii) One representative from each Department; and
 - iii) The Faculty Registrar
- (c) Terms of Reference of the Faculty Committee of Quality Assurance are as follows:
 - i. To promote an academic quality assurance culture within the Faculty;
 - ii. To establish and monitor all quality standards and practices in the Faculty;
 - iii. To attend to specific recommendations from the University Quality Assurance Committee on Academic Quality Assurance issues; and
 - iv. To handle academic irregularity issues of Faculty staff and students.

6.7 Quality Assurance Organogram



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7.0 Section Three: The Structure of Academic Units

7.1 Academic Units

The running of academic programmes at MRU is the responsibility of academic units, i.e., Faculties, Departments and Campuses.

7.2 Roles of Students

- a) Students may make a significant contribution to the quality of their own learning and that of their fellow students;
- b) They can also contribute to the improvement of the learning opportunities of future students on similar programmes. In principle, the roles of the students in Quality Assurance and Enhancement in MRU shall be:
 - i. To maintain and enhance the quality of their own learning and that of other students through a 75% attendance towards academic work;
 - ii. To attend classes regularly to promote a culture of quality lecture room environment;
 - iii. To prepare for classes and taught sessions (e.g. seminars and workshop sessions);
 - iv. To spend the recommended time in student managed learning through emphasis on experiential learning and student-centred learning using discovery methods;
 - v. To utilize and respect the academic guidance provided by their respective Faculty and Departmental staff;
 - vi. To endeavour to receive academic advice and feedback on their work;
 - vii. To participate in academic quality monitoring and evaluation surveys and processes through completing course evaluations; and
 - viii. To maximally use the system of academic boards and course representatives to ensure quality teaching and learning.

7.3 Roles of Academic staff

- a) MRU's confidence in the quality of its academic programmes, teaching, and student assessment shall highly rest upon its teaching and research staff aggregated in programmes and course teams, organized and managed at Departmental and Faculty levels;
- b) Although the guidelines and principles of maintaining quality performance are laid-down in the Senate Provisions, Admissions Policy, Examinations Policy, and Academic Quality Assurance Policy guidelines their actualisation depends on the professionalism, zeal and integrity of individual staff members;
- c) Departmental and Faculty structures should provide academic staff with responsibilities, duties and processes of ensuring quality teaching, assessment, and research in a given unit (Department or Faculty). This is because they are supposed to ensure the coherence and quality of programmes that students consume;
- d) It is therefore the duty and responsibility of the academic staff to:

- i. Undertake scholarly activities, which underpin teaching and research;
 - ii. Provide students with clear information and academic guidance in accordance with university regulations in all appropriate forms by making themselves accessible to students;
 - iii. Maintain contact with professional organisations and institutions in order to appropriately place students during internship to enable them to acquire quality work experience;
 - iv. Pursue professional development whether in the subject area or in pedagogic techniques which supports teaching; and
 - v. Carry out research and publish for professional growth purposes.
- d) It is the responsibility of lecturers/academic staff to develop academic systems, which ensure that:
- i. The scope, content, learning outcomes, recommended readings, and other sources for units in the subject remain current;
 - ii. Courses and programmes are developed and enhanced to serve the needs of all programmes to which they contribute;
 - iii. Programmes, course content and learning strategies are appropriately matched with students' knowledge, and needs;
 - iv. Programmes are in line with the university and NCHE guidelines; and
 - v. Programmes and contents are in line with the subject area as well as the External Examiner's comments and advise.
- e) Academic staff contributing to a programme or course content need to:
- i. Liaise with colleagues in the unit to ensure the coherence of the programme and the consistency and quality of support for students enrolled on the programme;
 - ii. Attend academic meetings and engage in discussions with academic colleagues and student representatives, with a view to improve, specify, implement and review the appropriateness of a programme's entry requirements and its relevance; and
 - iii. Participate in putting up an annual academic programme progress report to the Academic Registrar and the Quality Assurance Committee.

7.4 Roles of Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments

- a) Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments have the primary responsibility of ensuring that the academic programme portfolio and almanac is developed and enhanced;
- b) Faculty Deans and Heads of Departments shall ensure that programme, course, and subject specific resources and operational systems appropriately support the quality of the learning experience;
- c) Allocating individual roles and ensuring that academic staff are prepared for those roles;
- d) Ensuring that the teaching and learning environment meets students' and staff's needs as fully as possible;
- e) Promoting contact with employers and with the wider academic community;

- f) Putting in place supervision and monitoring policies and procedures for strengthening prior student learning;
- g) Ensuring that there is an effective liaison with other academic partners in offering collaborative academic programmes;
- h) Identifying and disseminating good practices within and from outside the Faculty or Department;
- i) Ensuring that course planning committees and review teams are adequately supported by senior staff experienced in programme evaluation and development, and that new and revised programmes receive thorough internal scrutiny before progressing to validation or review intricacies; and
- j) Attend to specific directives from the Quality Assurance Directorate on Academic Quality Assurance matters.

8.0 Section Four: Effective Learning at MRU

8.1 Indicators of Effective Learning at MRU

The quality of learning at MRU shall be evaluated against clear indicators. These are designed in such a way that they meet global higher education standards. The indicators are as follows:

- a) Ensuring effective teaching and learning informed by a shared, strategic view of learning that involves experiential, innovative and student-centred learning;
- b) Providing academic and general support to facilitate students in dealing with possible academic problems such that they can make progress satisfactorily through their programme and are informed about their progress;
- c) Ensuring that university learning resources are appropriately, adequately, and effectively used;
- d) Ensuring that university staff (academic, support, technical and Administrative) are adequate and meet the requirements of academic standards and strategies for learning and teaching; and
- e) Ensuring that the university staff is competent enough to effectively teach, facilitate learning, and maintain a scholarly approach to teaching and to academic discipline.

8.2 The Learning Model at MRU

- a) Given the emphasis that MRU has placed on the quality of student learning, it is essential that academic standards of staff and students are maintained and enhanced through an emphasis on experiential learning;
- b) The term “*experiential*” learning as used in this policy refers to a learner-centred approach to teaching and learning, which involves acquisition of experience followed by a process of reviewing, reflecting, and applying what has been learned. Participatory methods keep learners active in the learning process. They are involving and interactive, and they encourage communication and group work. They are action-oriented and experience based;

- c) This experiential and participatory approach has been chosen to enhance effective skills transfer, to facilitate conceptual and attitudinal development, and to encourage appropriate changes in participants' behaviour. The experiential learning cycle is especially useful for skill training because most of its techniques are designed to involve participants in practicing the acquired or learnt skill;
- d) The experiential model helps students to assume responsibility for their own learning because it asks them to reflect upon their experience, draw conclusions, and identify applications. Students ground the lessons in their actual work environment by considering the question of what can or should be done differently as a result of this training experience; and
- e) Experiential training lets students participate in presentations, having question and answer sessions after a lecture, or a role-play, project assignment, or case study.

8.3 Aims of Experiential Learning at MRU

- a) To enhance students' core and employability skills through emphasis on industrial training/practicum model of teaching/learning;
- b) To develop a profiling system for students to monitor their skills development;
- c) To develop further support systems to enhance students' achievement;
- d) To enhance learning competencies through student-centred learning and discovery methods; and
- e) To foster student's job-market competitiveness through emphasis on practical skills as MRU's unique niche.

8.4 Industrial Training

Industrial training is one portion of the sort of experiential-learning modes used in MRU. Industrial training is student placement in industry or any form of temporary employment with a purpose of equipping them with practical or hands-on skills. It usually occurs at the end of a course/programme (usually at the end of Semester II).

9.0 Section Five: Academic Collaborations and Partnerships

9.1 Introduction

- a) This section is intended to provide an overview of the University's Precepts, Principles and Guidelines on collaboration with other organizations or institutions of higher learning in offering academic programmes and the process for approving such partnerships such as joint awards, affiliations, and the regulations on collaboration followed by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); and
- b) The principal purpose in developing such links with other educational bodies in Uganda and elsewhere in the world is the enrichment of educational opportunities and experiences, increasing global competitiveness, and provision of education at an international landscape.

9.2 Models of Collaboration at MRU

a) Cooperation/Partnership

Cooperation/Partnership presupposes collaboration and/or cooperation, which exist between friendly institutions to create an enabling environment in which students and academic staff are willing to participate. Therefore, collaboration/partnership with a purpose has to be backed up by cooperative understanding between institutions. An example of cooperation/partnership is a *Joint Award* of a qualification in a university system. A *Joint Award* presupposes that collaboration/cooperation exists between the partner institutions to create an enabling environment in which students, academic staff and other stakeholders are willing to participate. The purpose of cooperation/partnership is two-fold:

- i. To utilize related any relevant expertise towards a course, degree award or closely related specialties; and
- ii. To establish partnerships between different Universities/Higher Institutions of Learning for their mutual benefits in terms of human resource utilization, technological advantage, comparative resource advantage, research cooperation, inter-disciplinary knowledge, and attracting funding.

b) Affiliated Institutions

- i) An Affiliated Tertiary Institution means the Tertiary Institution or College established under Section 71 and/or 111 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 (as amended); and
- ii) The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 under Section 71 empowers a Tertiary Institution as defined under that Act to affiliate with a higher institution of learning upon satisfaction of basically four conditions:
 - a) An institution is in position to administer in the like manner as the internal award, the external award or awards of the University for which Affiliation are sought;
 - b) The institution is recognized by NCHE under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 as amended by Act No. 7 of 2003;
 - c) The institution is established on a permanent basis under the laws of the country in which it is situated and is recognized by the accrediting body for Higher Education in that country; and
 - d) The members of staff who are designated to teach courses for awards of the institution have the academic stature and qualifications, which are acceptable to the University/institution and have reached such a standard as would be required for lecturers of MRU.

9.3 General Principles Governing Partnerships

- a) The partner university/organization should ensure that whenever programmes are taught and/or assessed contributes to credit for MRU award;

- b) The learning experience of students at the partner university/organization, and the learning support given, is broadly equivalent to that available at MRU;
- c) Managing equivalence plays a vital part in ensuring the quality and standard of collaborative programmes; and
- d) The members of staff who are designated to teach courses for awards of MRU have the academic qualifications which are acceptable to the partnering university/organization and have reached such a standard as would be required for academic staff of the university.

10.0 Section Six: External Examination

10.1 External Examining

- a) External examining is one of the ways of ensuring academic excellence in universities. Under this arrangement, External Examiners are engaged to evaluate the programme content and the process of student assessment; and
- b) External Examiners' Reports act as reference points against which the university may be evaluated and accredited. It is an assessment tool used to measure the academic standard of staff and graduates of a particular university.

10.2 General Principles for External Examining

- a) In general, External Examiners are expected to comment on the validity of the assessment instruments, the quality of student performance and the standard of student attainment, the reliability of the marking process and any concerns or irregularities with respect to observation of the university regulations. Therefore, the conduct of external examinations at MRU is governed by Senate regulations such as the Examinations Policy;
- b) The following are the general principles that should guide the external examination process:
 - i) To provide external and unbiased evaluation of the fairness and suitability of MRU's student assessment process in line with Senate regulations;
 - ii) To verify that standards of student performance are appropriate for the award for which the External Examiner has been appointed;
 - iii) To verify that the student assessment methods are reliable or precise (will produce similar results if repeated with students of comparable standard and comparable circumstances and similar assessors); valid (measures the competence it is intended to measure); has educational impact (it promotes appropriate student learning behaviour; is acceptable to all assessors and students; and is feasible within the resources available);
 - iv) To work with the university to uphold the high academic standards of its programmes and awards;
 - v) To compare the academic standard of the university with those of similar institutions;
 - vi) External Examiners should be identified for each academic programme by the respective Faculties/Departments and nominations forwarded to the Faculty

- Board for consideration and recommend appointment to Senate. Senate should appoint External Examiners; and
- vii) The university should create audit mechanisms to ensure that External Examiners are invited annually for each academic programme.

10.3 Roles and Responsibilities of External Examiners

The principle roles of External Examiners shall include:

- i) Verifying that standards are appropriate for each unit of study and to provide independent/impartial comment on standards set and student achievement of those standards. The capacity to fulfil this is based on knowledge of standards set and achieved in other higher education institutions, and where applicable, of the expectations of Professional and Statutory Bodies or co-awarding bodies;
- ii) Verifying that the process of deciding assessment outcomes for individual students is fair, fairly operated, and in line with the university's regulations arising out of the principal roles of External Examiners;
- iii) Make judgments independent of the Internal Examiners;
- iv) Have powers to recommend to the Faculty Board the adjustment of marks for individual or all students examined;
- v) Have access to the assessed parts of the programme (student scripts and coursework);
- vi) Determine the method and extent of sampling of students' work prior to scrutiny of examination scripts;
- vii) Recommend to the Faculty Board for the remarking of a student's script;
- viii) Check cases of suspected cheating; and
- ix) Endorse mark and pass lists before they are published.

10.4 Criteria for Nomination and Appointment of external examiners

- i) An External Examiner should have appropriate experience as an Internal/External Examiner. This is to assure the Faculty Board and Senate of his/her competence to provide high quality assessment;
- ii) The External Examiner should be a critical friend to offer constructive comments, criticisms and suggestions for enhancement in the area of assessment practice. For MRU, the External Examiner should be at a level of a Senior Lecturer or a practicing professional at the rank of Consultant or the equivalent; and
- iii) The process of nomination and appointment of External Examiners should be as follows:
 - a) The Head of the relevant academic Department, through informal contacts, establishes willingness and availability of a nominee to serve as External Examiner and solicits his/her Curriculum Vitae;
 - b) The Faculty staff study the Curriculum Vitae to satisfy themselves that the nominee has the necessary expertise, experience, and seniority to serve as External Examiner;

- c) External Examiners are appointed by the University Senate on the recommendation of the respective Faculty Board;
- d) External Examiners should be appointed for a period of three years with a possible *one year extension*. This will permit arrangements to be made well in advance and avoid delays and last minute rash;
- e) Thereafter, the same External Examiner cannot be re-appointed until a period of one year has elapsed;
- f) A former member of the teaching staff of the university will not be eligible for appointment until a period of three years has elapsed;
- g) An External Examiner will not be appointed from a Department in which he/she serves as an academic staff;
- h) The host Department/Faculty will send to the newly appointed External Examiner the following information:

- (1) Programme and course aims, objectives, and syllabuses;
- (2) Copies of past examination papers;
- (3) Methods of assessment/marking scheme;
- (4) Ways in which marks of individual parts of the examination are aggregated, averaged to produce the final result;
- (5) The method by which the pass mark (cut-off point) at (and above) which students are pronounced passed and below;
- (6) Proposed dates of Departmental and Faculty Examiners' Board meetings where the External Examiner should be given a face-to-face briefing; and
- (7) The route by which External Examiners can raise matters that are important and of a sensitive nature is by making a confidential report to the Academic Registrar.

10.5 Facilitating and Hosting External Examiners

The following should be done to facilitate and streamline the work of External Examiners:

- i) In-country transportation arrangements should be made well in advance;
- ii) The External Examiners should be met by the Quality Assurance Director, Academic Registrar and Faculty Deans whose role is to collect and deliver External Examiners to their prearranged accommodation;
- iii) *Per Diem* or out-of-pocket allowance should be paid to External Examiners on arrival;
- iv) External Examiners should be given the scripts to look at upon arrival; and
- v) Payment of External Examiners' fees is authorized once the reports are received.

10.6 Moderation of Examination Papers by External Examiners

The External Examiner should review, moderate, and approve all examination papers. Therefore:

- (i) Draft examination papers should be sent to the External Examiners well in advance allowing enough time for them to propose any modifications they feel necessary;
- (ii) Draft examination papers should be sent with marking schemes or model answers;
- (iii) External Examiners may be invited to propose one or more questions to be included in the examination papers;
- (iv) Care must be taken to safeguard the examination against leakage;
- (v) Departments should always carry out internal moderation of examination question;
- (vi) Access to written scripts and coursework that contribute to the final assessment; and
- (vii) External Examiners will be given unfettered access to all marked examination scripts, marking guides and assessment schedules.

11.0 Section Seven: Quality of Academic Staff

11.1 Introduction

- a) One of the important resources for the learning and teaching environment at any university is its staff. The availability of good quality staff promotes academic standards and the quality of learning; and
- b) University staff, as a strategic resource, should be carefully identified, effectively deployed, developed, and managed through set standards. These set standards are comparable to the international quality standards and those set out by the NCHE.

11.2 Staff Workload

- a) The maximum workload for teaching members of staff is stipulated in the curriculum requirements for each academic unit. However, academic staff curriculum requirements shall be based on lecture preparation, class delivery, tutorial/seminar sessions, marking and examining, practicum, supervision, and research; and
- b) The mandatory contact hours are based on minimum workload that is visible and that can be monitored for each member of staff

11.3 Staff Values

- a) A university is a community of scholars, students and staff. A community implies the shared acceptance, by its members, of common values. The concept of values implies not only rights but also obligations for the community itself and for its individual members. These values, when adhered to, should result in quality assurance. These values should be the guiding principles in the Academic Quality Assurance framework; and
- b) Staff values should underpin the University Philosophy, Mission, Vision and Core principles of quality assurance.

11.4 Quality of Academic Staff

- a) The staff of a university is appointed on the basis of their academic qualities. It is the University Appointments Committee that is charged with the duty of appointing academic staff. However, the Faculty Dean, in consultation with the Head(s) of Department(s), can recommend someone to be appointed as an academic staff;
- b) Although it is not the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Unit to appoint staff, the unit can provide a few guiding principles in this matter;
- c) In order to ensure a strong professional academic staff, the candidate for appointment as academic staff should hold and preserve the following minimum requirements:
 - i) Be eligible to teach;
 - ii) Hold adequate qualification/certification in the disciplines they teach;
 - iii) Show evidence of professional growth that is scholarly and academic growth;
 - iv) Maintain high expectations for student achievement that is evident in every aspect of class work;
 - v) Provide students with ample time and opportunities to practice skills taught in order to grasp concepts;
 - vi) Create consistency in learning methods that include problem-solving, thinking, and creative activities;
 - vii) Maintain discipline in the lecture room to foster an optimal learning environment; and
 - viii) Use testing, project assignments, and evaluation as tools to measure student progress as well as determine curriculum changes and teaching strategies in order to accommodate the diverse needs of student groups.

11.5 Academic Staff Promotion Criteria

- a) For any university or institution of higher learning, academic staff promotions are part of the Quality Assurance mechanism that preserves the growth and development of the university;
- b) Without academic staff promotions, a university cannot experience quality standards. Promotions help create a group of mentors and motivate staff to ensure professionalism and quality delivery; and
- c) MRU's Academic staff promotion criteria is indicated in the *Human Resource Management Policy Manual (Section 11)*, and it is a right of any serving staff, if he/she feels he/she has the required attributes, to apply for promotion. Academic staff should apply for promotions through the Faculty to the University Appointments and Promotions Board of the University. Administrative staff should apply through their Head of Department to the promotions board.

11.6 Students' Career Guidance

- a) It is also the responsibility of Quality Assurance units to ensure that students' expectations, in respect of their preparedness for their future career, are met so that

MRU can produce graduates equipped to meet the demands of the employment market of today and tomorrow;

- b) The university's academic staff are charged with the duty of ensuring student career guidance in the area of academics;
- c) The university should have a clearly documented and accessible policy for career guidance and information, including statements of the University Quality Assurance objectives, and of students' entitlements and responsibilities;
- d) Career education, information and guidance provision should be impartial, client-focused, confidential, collaborative, and in accordance with MRU's equal opportunities policy;
- e) The university should seek to identify and cater for the special needs of students who may be disadvantaged in the labour market;
- f) Students should be provided with information on the services available to them once they are registered at the University and those which will continue to be available to them when they have left; and
- g) MRU should be clear in its information to prospective and present students on how the skills and knowledge acquired during their study are intended to be of use to them in the development of their careers.

END