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QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

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1.0 Interpretation of Operational Terms of the Policy

- (i) Assessment: is a general term that embraces all methods used to judge the performance of an individual, group or organization.
- (ii) Assurance: assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.
- (iii) Audit: in the context of quality in higher education, is a process for checking that procedures are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes.
- (iv) Criteria: are the specification of elements against which a judgment is made.
- (v) Effectiveness: is the extent to which an activity fulfils its intended purpose or function.
- (vi) Efficiency: is the extent to which an activity achieves its goal whilst minimizing resource usage.
- (vii) Enhancement: is a process of augmentation or improvement.
- (viii) Evaluation: of quality or standards is the process of examining and passing a judgment on the appropriateness or level of quality or standards.
- (ix) Excellence: means exhibiting characteristics that are very good and, implicitly, not achievable by all.
- (x) External Evaluation: is (a) a generic term for most forms of quality review, enquiry or exploration and (b) a process that uses people outside the program or institution to evaluate quality or standards.
- (xi) Faculty: is (a) the organizational unit into which cognate disciplines are located in a higher education institution and (b) a shorthand term for the academic (teaching and research) staff in a higher education institution.
- (xii) Focus Area: is thematic representations of related activities.
- (xiii) Governance: refers to the way in which higher educational institutions are organised and operate internally and their relationships with external entities with a view to securing the objectives of higher education as a realm of enquiry and critique.
- (xiv) Grading: is the process of scoring or ranking student academic work as part of assessing student learning.
- (xv) Indicator: is an observable measure that clearly articulates one of the elements of the desired performance standard; one criterion that makes up a performance standard.
- (xvi) Internal Evaluation: is a process of quality review undertaken within an institution for its own ends (with or without the involvement of external peers).
- (xvii) Performance Indicators: are data, usually quantitative in form, that provide a measure of some aspect of an individual's or organisation's performance against which changes in performance or the performance of others can be compared.
- (xviii) Quality: is "fitness for purpose".
- (xix) Quality Assurance: is the process whereby measures are established which ensure that outcomes of academic programs and activities are of prescribed standard.
- (xx) Quality Control: is the process whereby outcomes are assessed to determine whether they are of the prescribed standard.
- (xxi) Self-assessment: is the process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own performance and provision.
- (xxii) Standard: is a goal statement that identifies a desired performance; it represents the essential knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that must be demonstrated in order to be successful with a particular performance.
- (xxiii) Summative Assessment: is the process of evaluating (and grading) the learning of students at a point in time.

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 Katikikiro* (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's 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

- i. MRU is entrusted with the task of producing graduates of high quality for the country. The changing landscape of higher education nationally and internationally has added urgency to the need to improve and transform MRU's core and support processes. Cognizant of this, MRU has entered in to a process of radical transformation gearing all its efforts to assure quality teaching, learning, research, and service delivery through a regular review and improvement process; and
- ii. Unfortunately, MRU has no mechanisms to assure itself in a systematic way that its programs, students, teaching & learning, assessment, research and facilities meet institutional, national or international standards. Considering this, MRU has established a Directorate of Quality Assurance which is responsible for assuring and maintaining the quality of the entire academic and support activities at MRU.

3.0 Objectives of the Policy

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- a. Promote MRU's quality culture within the Central Administration;
- b. Establish and monitor quality standards and practices;
- c. Review and evaluate quality assurance systems and procedures;
- d. Devise ways of improving quality service to be provided for academic;
- e. Report about quality assessment to the Vice Chancellor and the Quality Assurance Directorate;
- f. Account to the Vice Chancellor;
- g. Support MRU's efforts to achieve its vision and mission through the development and implementation of academic programs that meet national and international standards;
- h. Provide guidance in the development and implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices;
- i. Ensure that academic standards of MRU awards and qualifications are maintained and securely managed;
- j. Enable students and other stakeholders to have confidence in the proper management of the quality of learning opportunities offered through the programs of study that lead to those awards;
- k. Enhance the quality of its educational provision, particularly by building on information gained through monitoring, internal and external reviews and feedback from stakeholders;

- l. Ensure that the quality of academic programs at MRU meet standards expected by stakeholders;
- m. Ensure that graduates have attained skills and knowledge valued by stakeholders through MRU's academic programs;
- n. Provide guidance in identifying internal and external standards and criteria consistent with internationally recognized standards;
- o. Assist in maintaining and developing quality of academic programs through enhanced support processes; and
- p. Assure quality in appointment, development and performance of staff contributing to teaching and learning.

4.0 Application of the Policy

This Policy shall be applicable to all persons charged with providing guidance, ensuring academic standards and enabling students and stakeholders to have confidence in MRU's proper management of the quality of learning opportunities offered.

5.0 Guiding Principles of the Quality Assurance Policy

MRU is committed to ensuring that appropriate standards are achieved and maintained in its educational programs and that it offers high quality education consistent with national standards. The standards and performance indicators described in the policy are based on a number of internal and external principles regarding quality assurance in higher education.

The principles include:

- a. MRU has put in place a formal, approved, transparent policy committing it to ensuring quality and continuous improvement of its academic programs;
- b. The policy applies to current and planned programs, research and the support services given to the academic and research processes;
- c. All academic programs are subject to internal and external review on a regular cycle, according to pre-set criteria;
- d. There is procedure for the regular review of MRU's quality assurance policy and related processes;
- e. The quality assessment process involves relevant internal and external stakeholders;
- f. The quality assessment process is based on self-evaluation and independent external review;
- g. The quality assurance policy assumes the active participation of all the members of the academic community and strategic social partners in the process of analysis;
- h. The regular review and updating of the evaluation system of MRU in light of the internationally recognized norms and criteria is an integral part of the quality assurance policy;
- i. The primary purpose of quality assurance is enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience and the maintenance of academic standards

in the context of the student population that is increasingly diverse in background and in aspiration and the particular nature of MRU's academic portfolio;

- j. MRU understands that high quality of academic provision is characterized by a good match to the needs and aspirations of students' attention to the requirements of stakeholders;
- k. MRU understands that enhancement means the deliberate fostering of reflection by staff, with input from students and external advisers and bodies, on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and appropriateness of standards set and achieved; and
- l. Staff should be able to exercise their responsibility within a supportive environment where expectations and standards are defined, continuous improvement and innovation are encouraged, development and training opportunities are provided, and feedback is actively sought from students and other major stakeholders, while avoiding duplication of efforts.

6.0 Quality Assurance Framework

MRU aims at fostering a quality culture where every member of staff assumes responsibility for the quality aspects of their work. In addition to individual responsibilities and accountabilities, MRU has a comprehensive governance structure in place to take ultimate responsibility for the operation of its quality assessment to achieve its mission.

MRU's Quality Assurance Framework:

- a. Seeks to promote consistency of good practice and enhancement of quality across the institution;
- b. Incorporate feedback loops at the levels of Department, Faculty and Management that provide comparative information and stimulate modification and improvement of MRU's educational provision;
- c. Allows academic Departments with specific professional or regulatory requirements, particular modes of delivery or with an unusually diverse range of programs to exercise some latitude to tailor procedures and structures to these requirements;
- d. Is underpinned by concepts of quality and fairness;
- e. Provides for explicit means to ensure that MRU's Senate and Council receive robust accounts of the effectiveness of the Policy and practice in relation to the management of academic quality;
- f. All policies, codes of practice and procedures will be appropriately documented and readily accessible to staff, students and other stakeholders, primarily through the academic quality and standards manual;
- g. MRU will rigorously and continuously monitor the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures to assure itself and others that they are operating in accordance with good practice, in the best interests of students and the maintenance of academic standards; and
- h. MRU will work constructively with external agencies, including professional, statutory and regulatory bodies relevant to academic programs, including but not limited to National Council for Higher Education (NCHE).

7.0 Governance Structure

7.1 Quality Assurance Directorate

There shall be established a Quality Assurance Directorate managed by a Director of Quality Assurance who will oversee its day-to-day activities on behalf of the Vice Chancellor.

7.2 Duties of the Director of Quality Assurance Unit

The main duties of the Director, Quality Assurance are as follows:

- a. Provide leadership for quality assurance and good practice at MRU;
- b. Shall be accountable for implementing the quality assurance initiatives, managing its details and bringing it to successful implementation;
- c. Lead the development and oversee the implementation of MRU-wide quality assurance initiatives;
- d. Lead, co-ordinate and support quality assurance and enhancement management system across MRU;
- e. Contribute to the identification, development and promotion of MRU's quality assurance protocols and mechanisms; and
- f. Contribute to the formulation of MRU's quality assurance and enhancement Policies and Practices and to their implementation and monitoring across the University and, where appropriate, in collaborative partner institutions.

7.3 Responsibilities of Quality Assurance Directorate

Institutional Quality Assurance Directorate has the following responsibilities:

- a. Develop policies and instruments for quality assurance and auditing;
- b. Coordinate total quality management system and oversee the implementation of the different units of quality assurance activities.
- c. Report the audit outcomes to the Vice Chancellor and to the Senate.
- d. Accountable for assuring the quality of all processes of MRU;
- e. Initiate and support courses, programs, institutional self-assessments, peer reviews, and external reviews;
- f. Work in consultation with the Campus communities to establish, coordinate, and monitor MRU's assessment programs;
- g. Provide assistance for assessment conducted by academic Departments as part of academic program review;
- h. Provide assistance for assessment conducted by administrative units as part of the Support Unit Review Processes;
- i. Establish and maintain a set of procedures which allow MRU to respond in a systemic and transparent manner to the external requirements of External Audit Agencies;
- j. Ensure compliance with MRU's quality framework to meet required standards;
- k. Ensure that a robust external examination system is in place;
- l. Work with Colleges/Faculties/Schools/Departments to provide professional advice and guidance on quality assurance and enhancement matters; and

- m. Responsible for any other activities related to institutional quality assurance.

7.4 Quality Model Employed

The quality model employed at MRU consists of four major components: context, input, process and output. These are the major foci of the quality assurance process.

7.4.1 Context

- Vision;
- Mission;
- Strategic Plan;
- Administrative Atmosphere; and
- Environment

7.4.2 Input

- Colleges, Faculties & Departments;
- Students;
- Administrators;
- Finance and Budgeting;
- Facilities;
- Buildings; and
- Land

7.4.3 Process

- Teaching and Learning;
- Quality Assurance;
- Research;
- Administrative;
- Finance and Budgeting; and
- Academic Services.

7.4.4 Output

- Quality and Quantity of Academic Services;
- Quality and Quantity of Graduates;
- Quality and Quantity of Research and Community Services; and
- Quality and Quantity of Administrative Services

7.5 Areas of Quality Assurance Policy

Quality Assurance shall include all the following focus areas:

- i. Quality of Programs and Courses;
- ii. Quality of Academic Staff;
- iii. Quality of Teaching and Learning Experience;
- iv. Quality of Learning Resources and Facilities;
- v. Scholarship, Research, and Community Service;
- vi. Quality of Administration and Support Staff;
- vii. Quality of Student Admission and Support Services;
- viii. Student Complaints and Appeals;
- ix. Student Progression and Outcomes;
- x. Internal Quality Assurance; and
- xi. Institutional Assessment/Audit

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