

Quality Systems for Higher Education: The Case of Faculties of Education and Health Sciences, University of Botswana



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BACKGROUND



- **History of quality assurance in HE in Africa**
 - Affiliation to partner Universities in colonising countries
 - Increase in enrolments vs resources
 - Higher education as an important factor for economic development and knowledge based economies

Purpose of the presentation



- To share ideas for input from colleagues
- To discuss processes and challenges of QA in the faculties of Education and Health sciences

The University of Botswana in brief



- Established 1982 by an act of parliament
- Vision: A leading Centre of academic excellence in Africa and World
- Only public University in the country
- Key to expanding the quantity and improving the quality of human resources

Definition of Quality



- Quality can be defined in various ways based on interpretation (WHO,2008)
 - **Quality** can be defined as **fitness for purpose-** conforming to generally accepted standards as defined by institution, quality assurance bodies and appropriate academic and professional communities (University of Botswana 2003)
 - **Quality in Higher Education:** The degree to which a program meets its requirements: A set of established standards or the necessary competencies of any program (Dohety 2005).

Definition of Quality Assurance



- a planned and systematic review process to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced (Borahan and Ziarati (2002:914))
- A process that brings about reforms to raise quality of edu. and training

Why quality in HE



- Monitoring and assessment of the quality of edu. and training (World Bank Africa Action Plan)
- Higher education supporting other levels of education , the economy and the society as a whole
- Enhancement of internalisation and regionalisation
- Economic Development
- Achievement of EFA and MDGs
- For academic competitiveness locally regionally and globally

Methodology



- **Participant observation :**
 - The researchers are quality assurance overseers in the Faculties.
- **Documentary analysis**
 - Review of the Faculties Quality assurance reports
 - The UB Learning and Teaching Policy
 - The academic quality assurance policy
 - Other relevant documents

Internal QA Processes in the two faculties



- New Programme approval (Dept, Faculty, CAD, APRPC, Senate, Council)
- Programme reviews
- Formative assessment (CA)
- Summative (exams, projects etc).
- Research and Teaching Awards
- Course outline reviews
- Peer reviews

External QA Processes



- 5 Yearly External Programme Reviews
- External Examination of Graduate Research Projects
- Engagement of Regulatory and professional bodies such as Professional Councils and Associations
- Advisory Boards
- Students and Staff exchange programmes
- Research Grants

QA Challenges in the two Faculties



- **Inadequate Human and Material Resources:**
 - Failure to attract and retain senior academics
 - High student : lecturer ratios
 - Academic autonomy versus dependence on government funding
 - ✦ e.g. Special Education and Bachelor of Nursing Science programme Nursing (no satisfactory skills lab).
 - Inadequate equipment in practice settings

Quality Assurance Challenges conti..



- Inexperienced Quality Assurance Staff
 - Overseers and committee members do it out of mere interest with no training
- Limited workshops and seminars on QA
- Work overload on the part of QA members
- Limited meetings by QA committees as they are unsure of what to do (reports confined to CA and exams, moderation and registration).
- Poor culture of reading

Challenges continued



- Lack of grading descriptors
- Low level of formal collaboration among faculties and departments
- Academic management procedures(late allocation of courses, leading to late commencement of classes, poor preparation, .
- Timetabling issues (omissions and clashes)

Challenges continued..



- Poor advisement of students
- Unprofessional conduct of some staff (failure to mark and provide feedback)
- Manual registration and timetabling

Recommendations



- The Faculties to adopt system of generic assessment descriptors.
- Intensive workshops and seminars to be mounted for quality assurance staff
- The University to provide better incentives to attract professors who should provide academic leadership for quality

Recommendations



- Clear guidelines be developed to assist quality assurance committees.
- Interfaculty quality assurance collaboration be strengthened
- Course allocation to be done before the end of the semester for the next one.
- On-line Registration and time-tabling be expedited