



University of Venda

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

REVISION HISTORY

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Department : **Institutional Planning & Quality Assurance**

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Date Approved by Council : **23 November 2012**

Signature of the Registrar :

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, positioned to the right of the text 'Signature of the Registrar'.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance is a systematic process of assessing whether a service or product meets the specified and expected requirements. The University of Venda is committed to a proactive planning and quality culture that continuously improves outputs to meet the expectations of its students, staff and society in general. Quality Assurance at the University is concerned with the extent to which goals are met on an ongoing basis.

The quality assurance policy takes into account the following:

- The internal context of UNIVEN, including the vision, mission, values the University Strategic Plan.
- The external context within which UNIVEN operates, that is, national, international, statutory and national higher education policy environments.
- The development and historical context of UNIVEN, and takes into consideration the quality assurance practices institutionalized over time, for example, admission requirements, external moderation and examination, etc.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy at the University of Venda is to ensure excellence in teaching and learning, community engagement and research, supported by excellence in service delivery by academic and administrative support services, with quality infrastructure and physical facilities to ensure the realization of the vision and mission that UNIVEN is committed to.

3. DEFINITION

Quality Assurance is the measure of the value of what we do, and the processes that we use to make sure that we maintain and improve standards on a continual basis. Quality Assurance in higher education is the planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine that acceptable standards of education, scholarship, teaching, administration and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced.

Quality as a concept has been variously recognized to mean:

- *Fitness for purpose* – it equates quality with the fulfillment of a specification or stated outcomes. The purpose is summarized in the university's vision and mission statement.

- *Transformation from one state to another*, that is, on-going improvement through critical self-review and other quality promotion measures.
- *Excellence* – quality is concerned with the extent to which goals are met on an on-going basis and with the effectiveness of processes of planning, monitoring, adapting, innovating and evaluating.
- *Fitness of purpose* – evaluates whether the quality related intentions of an organization are adequate.
- *Improvement* – Quality means reviewing systems in order to improve effectiveness.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Venda is committed to excellence and assuring quality in its activities as it strives to be a quality driven, financially sustainable, rural based comprehensive university which is at the centre of tertiary education for rural and regional development in Southern Africa.

5. OBJECTIVES

Specifically the objectives of the UNIVEN Quality Assurance Policy are to:

- 5.1 Provide a framework for an efficient quality assurance system with enforceable requirements and norms.
- 5.2 Coordinate and monitor the quality assurance actions within sections of the university, that is, schools, administration departments, and support services.
- 5.3 Describe the quality assurance system and strategies in place at UNIVEN in order to achieve high quality activities and to monitor the effectiveness thereof.
- 5.4 Ensure that all members of the university community are aware of, and support the institution's approach to quality.
- 5.5 Put structures in place in order to monitor, evaluate and review processes and procedures in the institution.
- 5.6 Ensure that there is institutional quality assurance accountability required of the university on a national and statutory level.
- 5.7 Ensure that the quality of our core business of teaching, learning, research, and community engagement, as well as that the supporting processes are maintained and improved through critical self-evaluation.
- 5.8 Ensure that academic and administrative departments adhere to the policies that they have developed.

6. THE APPROACH OF UNIVEN TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 6.1 Quality Assurance comprises the policies, procedures and mechanisms according to which the University of Venda, or a specific unit or function, ensures that specified quality specifications and standards are maintained.
- 6.2 Quality Assurance at university is a shared responsibility in that it is both centralized and decentralized. While the IPQA directorate will play a facilitating and coordinating function, it is critical to note that all departments are responsible for quality.
- 6.3 Self-evaluation is accepted as the primary mechanism for quality assurance. It is the responsibility of each functional unit at the university to establish and apply effective procedures for regular self- evaluation.
- 6.4 Quality self-evaluation is complemented by peer and external evaluation.
- 6.5 Quality Assurance at the University of Venda is a combination of compliance, performance and development.
- 6.6 Quality Assurance at this institution seeks to oversee the operations, performance and discharge of services by staff in both academic and non-academic departments in accordance with clearly defined policies, procedures and regulations in pursuance of the mission, vision and goals of the university.
- 6.7 Quality Assurance at University of Venda will monitor and conduct periodic review of performance of departments and sections in the university.
- 6.8 Quality improvement takes place through processes of continuous monitoring and evaluation of academic, administrative, support service and other activities aimed at promoting excellence at the university.

7. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The following documents form part of the regulatory framework of this policy:

- 7.1 The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997
- 7.2 The Higher Education Quality Committee (2004) Criteria for programme accreditation
- 7.3 The Higher Education Quality Committee (2004) Improving Teaching and Learning Resources
- 7.4 Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of Higher Education

8. LINKS TO OTHER UNIVEN POLICIES

- 8.1 The Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning Policy
- 8.2 The Assessment Policy
- 8.3 Termination of Academic Programme Policy

8.4 Human Resources Policies

8.5 Finance Policies

8.6 Plagiarism Policy

8.7 Teaching and Learning Policy

8.8 The University of Venda Statute

8.9 UNIVEN Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016

8.10 Relevant UNIVEN Policies approved by Council

9. SCOPE

The policy applies to all students and staff members at the University of Venda.

10. REVIEW DATE

The policy will be reviewed after every three years or as and when the need arises.

11. APPROVAL

This policy must be approved by:

- a. The Senate
- b. University Council

12. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy will be implemented in accordance with the following procedural guidelines:

12.1 **A Quality Assurance Board** consisting of representatives from academic and support divisions will monitor the quality measures of the university and the implementation thereof.

12.2 **Policies, rules, regulations and procedures.** Different sections in the university have relevant policies, rules, regulations and procedures and the Quality Assurance board will monitor adherence to such policies, rules and regulations through reviews and evaluations.

12.3 **Self-evaluation.** Departments/sections will evaluate themselves by reflecting on their current operations and identify their strengths and weaknesses, and together with a review panel look at the way forward for purposes of improvement and development.

12.4 **Academic Programme reviews and re-curriculation.** Academic programmes will be reviewed periodically according to pre-determined set of criteria and if necessary be re-curriculated.

12.5 **Departmental reviews.** Departments in the university will be reviewed once in a cycle of five years according to pre-stated processes and procedures.

12.6 **Compliance with national and statutory bodies.** The university, being a Public Institution will be required to comply with national policies and requirements of statutory bodies, for example, Policies from the Department of Higher Education and Training, Professional bodies, HEQC, SAQA etc and the Quality Assurance section will ensure compliance.

12.7 **Institutional Research.** Data gathered through Institutional Research will serve as one of the instruments to improve quality.

12.8 **Capacity development.** Workshop will be run to develop the capacity of staff members in quality measures and rules and regulations of the university.

13. REFERENCES

The Higher Education Quality Committee. (2004) *Improving Teaching and Learning Resources*. Pretoria : Council on Higher Education.

The University of Free State. *Quality Assurance Policy*.

Rhodes University. (2008) *Institutional Planning and Review Framework*. Rhodes Institutional Planning.

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997.

Education White Paper 3. *A programme for the transformation of Higher Education*.