Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses

Offered by Universities

University Grants Commission

July 2014

Manual for Quality Assurance
Of External Degree Programmes *and* Extension Courses
Offered by Universities

Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses (QA-EDP Manual) offered by Universities has been approved by the University Grants Commission and is adopted for use as the Manual for Assuring Quality of Programmes and Courses offered by EDP Centres of conventional universities.

University Grants Commission

July 2014

The Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses Offered by Universities was developed for the University Grants Commission by the following authors.

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

DE	Distance education
EC	Extension courses
EDP	External degree programmes
EDP-ODL	External degree programmes-Open and distance learning
EQA	External Quality Assurance
HETC	Higher Education for the Twenty first Century
HR	Human resource
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IQAC	Internal Quality Assurance Cell
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Unit
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OUSL	Open University of Sri Lanka
QA	Quality Assurance
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council
SBS	Subject Benchmark Statements
SDC	Staff Development Centres
SER	Self Evaluation Report
SLQF	Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
UGC	University Grants Commission
UGC-QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the University Grants Commission

Acknowledgements

Foreword

The External Degree Programmes (EDP) by conventional universities, has been recognized nationally as a key avenue in higher education and it is widely regarded as a way of expanding access to higher education. Through EDP-ODL system, the conventional universities which will be the degree awarding universities (DAU) are expected to offer selected academic study programmes leading to degrees that have high market demand, through a separate window called External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses (EDP & EC) Division/Centre/Unit. In this arrangement, the EDP & EC Division/Centre/Unit of the DAU is required to provide the students registered for EDPs with curricula of the chosen degree programme, curricula or specifications of prescribed courses including course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs), contents, assessment methods, and essential and recommended readings and the conditions to be fulfilled for successful completion of a degree and award. The students registered are required to engage in self-study using learning material provided by the university in print and/or electronic forms (blended learning) on the prescribed courses of the chosen study programme. If the students wish they could also seek instructional training for prescribed courses from an external training institution (ETI) of their choice to complement their learning.

The EDP system which commenced in Sri Lanka in early 1970s has become a popular avenue for many high school qualifiers and those who pursue careers following completion of secondary education. As a result it has undergone unprecedented expansion over the years. By 2008/09 as many as 11 universities out of 14 were engaged in   EDPs, providing enrollment to four times than that of the internal compartment with a relatively large output. This system continued unabated up until middle of last decade (2005/06). Graduate unemployment had become a key social issue during the last two decades, and most graduates seeking state employment were found to be from external compartment (EDP graduates). Further, it revealed that most of them lacked minimum competencies for employment, and even if they were employed, failed to perform.

Recognizing the need to bring reforms into the sector, the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2008/09 initiated a comprehensive study, and based on the findings and recommendations of the report of the study, decided to introduce far-reaching reforms into the EDP-EC system operated by Universities/Higher Education Institutions. The UGC issued an administrative circular (UGC Circular 932 of 15th October 2010) for compliance by all Universities/Higher Education Institutions/Institutes. Further, the UGC published a comprehensive guidebook, titled "Handbook on External Degrees and Extension Courses - Qualification Framework, Quality Assurance and Codes of Practice for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by Universities/Higher Education Institutions/Institutes", as a comprehensive guide in managing EDP-EC system in order to ensure continuity of the reforms recommended and standards stipulated by the UGC.(UGC, 2010)

The UGC reforms encompass 08 key areas, namely i) Policy Framework, ii) Institutional Organizational Arrangement, iii) Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration, iv) Academic Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree

Programmes, and curricula of study programmes and Courses, v) Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services, vi) Student Assessment and Evaluation, vii) Quality Assurance Procedure of EDPs and viii) Collaboration with partner Institutions. As a means of internalizing the reforms initiated, the UGC sought assistance through the World Bank-Higher Education for the 21st Century (WB-HETC) Project. The UGC and HETC jointly launched a grant scheme (UDG-EDP Grant Scheme) and as a part of this initiative, a quality assurance system (QA) as envisaged under the UGC policy reforms package has been developed and being implemented.

The quality assurance system for EDPs approved and implemented by the UGC-QAAC covers two institutions, namely the EDP Centres of conventional universities, and external training institutions (ETI) (state and non-state). ETIs provide instructional training for registered students. Corresponding to the two institutions, two manuals have been developed by the HETC for adoption by respective institutions and approved by the UGC for distribution to universities and ETIs. The two Manuals are titled:

i)   Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by Universities (QA-EDP Manual)

ii) Manual of Good Practices, Standards and Guidelines for External Training Institutions (State and Non State) (QA-ETI Manual)

These two manuals aim to provide guidance for the universities and ETIs to promote institutionalization of good practices and standards as a means of improving quality and relevance of EDPs. The manuals will be used by UGC-QAAC from 2014 for review and accreditation of EDP programmes of the universities and ETIs offering instructional training for students registered for EDPs offered by the universities.

The UGC wishes to place on record the contribution made by the World Bank-Higher Education for the Twenty first Century (WB-HETC) in implementing UGC reforms on external degree programmes, Prof. Harischandra Abeygunawardena as the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Degrees and Extension Courses and Prof. Uma Coomaraswamy as the HETC Consultant on Quality Assurance and Dr. Gayathri Jayatilake, Senior Lecturer in Educational Technology, The Open University of Sri Lanka in designing a quality assurance system for external degree programmes and extension courses and producing the above mentioned manuals.

The UGC-QAAC in liaison with HETC will commence reviewing EDP Centres as a part of quality assurance system, initially as a pilot run, commencing latter part of 2014. All academics and other staff of EDP Centres concerned with external degree programmes and extension courses of conventional universities while aiming to enhance the quality of their programmes through continuous improvement   submit themselves to the Quality assurance and Accreditation Council of the UGC (UGC - QAAC) for quality assurance review and accreditation.

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Chairperson
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3, July 2014

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Overview

What is the purpose of this Manual?

The Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes (EDPs) and Extension Courses (ECs) has been developed to provide guidance to conventional universities/higher educational institutions/institutes offering external degree programmes and Extension Courses through Open and Distance Learning (ODL).

Quality assurance (QA) refers to the systems through which institutions demonstrate that conditions are in place for students to achieve standards set in educational programmes. The manual also includes all those planned and systematic activities which provide confidence that a product or service in higher education will satisfy given requirements for quality.

The manual recognizes that with limited knowledge and expertise in ODL the conventional universities have an expanding role in increasing access to higher education and thereby respond to social demands for equality of opportunity to participate in higher education through ODL.

> *"No quality assurance system can be transplanted from one institution to another across organizational, social and cultural boundaries. The development must be home grown, and recognizing its context"* (Daniel, 2006:vii).

The system described here is thus 'home grown' recognizing the context. It is prepared in response to the introduction of far reaching reforms by the University Grants Commission (UGC)into the EDPs-ECs system operated by the state universities/higher education institutions/institutes which recommends the development of necessary tools and implementing procedures for QA(UGC, 2010).

To put this manual into practice requires management of change in the institutions together with leadership and commitment.

Who will find the Manual useful?

The Manual addresses as its primary audience the faculty members and administrators in the EDP units of state universities and higher education policy makers. Its content may also prove useful to other faculty members who are called upon from time to time to undertake responsibilities in EDPs. The material may also be useful as a resource base for intensive training programmes and workshops organized periodically at institutional level for enhancing the efficiency of the institutions.

Thus the utility of the quality standards in this Manual is multifold. It can be used for quality management, strategic planning and for continuous improvement.

How the Manual is organized?

The Manual consists of four chapters and an Appendix:
- Chapter 1 deals with Theoretical Perspectives of Open and Distance Learning and Quality Assurance
- Chapter 2 discusses Criteria and Criterion-wise Best Practices for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses
- Chapter 3 gives Accreditation Standards for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses.
- Chapter 4 deals with Performance Evaluation and accreditation of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses
- Appendix includes: Format for preparation of Self-evaluation Report (SER); Guidelines for writing SER; Sample questionnaires for obtaining feedback from stakeholders ; Policy Framework and Guidelines for offering External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses by Universities /Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes(UGC, 2010), and Glossary of terms used.

Chapter 1 – Theoretical Perspectives of Open and Distance Learning and Quality Assurance.

This chapter gives the changing paradigm of higher education, need for higher education institutions to adopt alternate modes of teaching learning, distance education as an alternative delivery strategy and presents a background perspective to quality in external degree programmes through ODL. It deals with conceptual issues relating to quality and quality assurance, and the importance of regulating quality assurance in EDP-ODL through a clear and well defined policy. The chapter highlights some of the common approaches used in assuring quality in higher educational provision in general. It emphasizes continuous improvement via internal quality assurance mechanisms and the need for inculcating quality culture in the institutions.

Chapter 2 – Criteria and Best Practices for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses.

This chapter focuses on the Criteria which reflect the key areas of a particular component, or operation or salient features of the programmes offered through ODL It has aimed at introducing best quality assurance practices in higher education through ODL drawing on experiences of other institutions which add commendable value to a programme and considered as reliable benchmarks.

Chapter 3 –Accreditation Standards for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses

This chapter contains the proposed set of 'Standards' which constitute the basic document of the accreditation process forming the base of essentials against which an institution studies and evaluates itself. They are a set of guidelines that define exactly how a task should be carried out and completed. Standards are based on both quantitative data and qualitative data reflecting certain conditions and trends. Standards will be used by QAAC of UGC for accrediting the programmes/courses.

Chapter 4 – Performance Evaluation and Accreditation of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses.

This chapter deals with policy and procedures involved in both internal and external quality assurance. The Standards and accreditation process emphasize educational quality by focusing on outcomes. The questions the process asks for eg. What actually happens as a consequence of the teaching learning process and what is the evidence of these results? Does the accreditation process help the institution to evaluate and improve its outcomes and hence its quality? Outcomes are specific skills, knowledge and behaviours achieved by students as a direct result of participation in the degree programmes. In order to minimize subjectivity in peer assessment and to facilitate the use of the standards in assessments examples of sources of evidence and score guide are provided.

Appendix

There is always a risk in overlooking important nuances when trying to present complicated information in a concise manner. Therefore further information is given as Annexes in the Appendix.

To facilitate the institutions in providing adequate information in the SER in an organized and systematic way a suggested format for collection of basic data about the institution, programmes, learning material, learner support services, assessments and key indicators of criteria are given as **Annex 1.**

Guidelines for writing SER are given in **Annex 2.**

Sample questionnaires for obtaining feedback from stakeholders are given in **Annex 3.** These questionnaires are only suggestive and may be adapted to the institution's needs. The data collected will form an important feedback for quality enhancement of the institution/programme.

Policy Framework and Guidelines for Offering External Degrees Programmes and Extension Programmes - **Annex 4.**

Terms relating to quality assurance are used in a variety of ways in different countries with different meanings. In order to avoid ambiguity the key terms used in this manual are defined/explained and compiled as a Glossary in **Annex5**.

Chapter 1

Theoretical Perspectives of Open and Distance Learning System and Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

1.1 Introduction

Traditional universities with their classroom teaching are struggling to find resources to sustain their existing resources and facilities and they are challenged by demand for access to and participation in higher education, changing student profile, and increase in emphasis in lifelong learning. ODL has been widely hailed as the way of the future for higher education with its cost-effectiveness, economies of scale, technology mediated delivery methods and ability to reach out for a wider clientele.

This chapter addresses the adoption of ODL as a practical and constructivist way to meet these challenges while pursuing quality concerns through appropriate and reliable accreditation and evaluation practices that are needed to assure the public and the students that courses, programmes and degrees offered using ODL meet acceptable academic and professional standards. The chapter also examines the policies and processes that institutions need to put in place to deliver higher education at a distance and how to establish quality culture within the institution.

1.2 Changing Paradigm of Higher Education

Knowledge societies cannot be constructed without building strong and dynamic high quality higher educational institutions. Creation and expansion of the frontiers of knowledge and dissemination of knowledge are core functions of universities and other higher education institutions, whether state or non-state. Moreover, higher education is regarded as the engine of development in the new world economy. Though it is accepted as a basic individual right, up until recent past, higher education has long been regarded as a privilege of the few. The shackles have gradually been broken, and the higher education in today's 'world of work' is considered as an indispensable way of imparting knowledge and skills in diverse disciplines and professions while contributing to individual's personality development; that is,

- learning how to make critical judgment,
- learning how to communicate effectively and intelligently,
- learning to be flexible and adaptable, and
- Other meta- skills such as numerical and analytical skills, ICT skills, initiative, interpersonal skills, etc.

Therefore, higher education institutions are expected to deliver graduates with these attributes and in order to do so they have to,

- reorient their organizational structures, procedures and processes,
- re-tool their functions,
- revise and update their curricula, syllabi, and
- adopt modern teaching and training methods, and most importantly remain accountable to the society.

These dynamic changes continuously challenge the higher education institutions as well as students.

From the learners' perspective, we have seen on an international basis the arrival of more and more adult learners, many of them part-time, in higher education institutions. Policy initiatives in the field of lifelong learning promoted by the governments in a number of countries, and by international agencies, have also seen imperatives that learning opportunities for adults be offered on a flexible basis. Pressure on resources within institutions has seen an increasing emphasis on teaching and learning methods that demand less teacher contact and thus pave the way for more independent learning methods. The financial pressures have also been accompanied by progressive views about learning which see independence as a positive aspiration in its own right and part of a learner rather than a teacher-centred approach.

Inability of expansion of education and training to suit the new demands by the traditional classroom-based conventional mode of education sparked an interest in finding more versatile and cost-effective ways of meeting these needs. Although distance education has been in existence for over a century, ODL emerged formally as an extremely effective option in the 1960s. Many countries, both developing and developed, are looking at ODL as a major strategy because of its openness, potential ability for resolving problems of access, quality, equity, cost-effectiveness, and its suitability for lifelong learning (UNESCO, 2002).The terms conventional and distance education often used independently of each other are now blending. Thus, a new learning paradigm has generated the concept of 'seamless' education, meaning education that is not confined to rigid structures: the technology is seamless, learning is seamless, learning environment is seamless; economy is seamless.

It is in this context that we need to view the recent reforms brought in by the UGC into the EDP-EC system operated by the conventional universities (UGC, 2010). The UGC policy directive requires the universities to offer their external degree programmes using open and distance learning methods.

1.3 Open and Distance Learning (ODL)

1.3.1 General concepts and trends

Open and distance learning is an amalgam of two approaches of education that focus on expanding access to learning. It is characterized by two factors: **distance education** as a delivery strategy through a variety of media and **open learning** as a

philosophy in which particular value is attached to certain underlying principles. The major ones are:

- 'learner centredness',
- 'flexibility in learning',
- 'removal of unnecessary barriers to access',
- 'and 'recognition of prior learning'.

Most ODL systems have a philosophy that aims to remove barriers to education and allow students to study **what** they want, **when** they want and **where** they want. Open and Distance Learning systems typically use technology to mediate learning for e.g. print materials, audio/video cassettes, radio/TV, computer, web etc. There is no single method for providing ODL. It is most effective with a combination of appropriate methods.

Open and distance learning may be available through an institution exclusively created for that purpose such as Open Universities. Institutions may offer distance learning programmes to off-campus students alongside on-campus teaching. These institutions are referred to as dual mode institutions. Recently the dual mode approach has expanded exponentially worldwide as more single mode conventional institutions recognize the need to realize returns on existing investments (Raza and Allsop 2006).In the 21st century, lessons learned from earlier ODL experiences are being applied across educational sectors at all levels. Meanwhile ODL is continuing to evolve using ICTs to enhance learning resources, improve communication and delivery.

Conditions for success in ODL teaching and learning depend on several factors. The chief factors are:
- characteristics of learners
- course design including organization of the design process,
- choice of pedagogical approach,
- choice and use of technology;
- course delivery including tutorial support,
- faculty development in all aspects such as instructional design, teaching and learning ,assessment etc.

An issue that used to be raised quite regularly in discussions about distance education was what could be and what could not be taught by distance means. For many years there was an assumption that distance education was only suitable for imparting knowledge in the cognitive domain and could not be used either to teach complex and manipulative skills or to inculcate values and attitudes, both of which require human interactions. There is clear evidence that with appropriate use of technologies and teaching and learning strategies distance education can be as effective as face-to-face across a wide variety of subjects and target groups. It is limited only by resources and infrastructure capability (Moore and Thompson, 1997). The evolution of distance education has been creating a paradigm shift in the way educators have begun to view

teaching and learning. Administrators, faculty, staff and students have begun to realize that in order to successfully implement ODL they had to reassess their teaching methods, approaches, structures and resources. In the 21st century lessons learned from earlier ODL experience are being applied across educational sectors at all levels. Meanwhile ODL is continuing to evolve using ICT to enhance learning resources, and improve communication and delivery.

Organization and management of ODL is necessarily more complicated than running a conventional system. Open and distance learning has brought a new division of labour into education and within it a set of options for stakeholders about the location of the separate function of enrolling and registering students, of developing, producing, reproducing and distribution of teaching material of tutoring and supporting students, of assessing, evaluating and awarding credits. Many of these functions may be undertaken by a single agency as in the case of Open Universities which have the autonomy and authority with wide powers. But most often ODL rests on a partnership between different institutions. This would be more so with dual mode institutions. Various organizational models are possible for partnerships in dual mode universities.

1.3.2 History and status of ODL in Sri Lanka

Distance Education (DE) has been in existence in Sri Lanka for over seven decades. However, the government formally gave serious consideration to the role of DE as a viable alternative in trying to meet the growing public aspirations for qualifications, improve teacher education and growing pressure to incorporate marginalized communities to enjoy educational opportunities. DE was introduced in the 1970s in the Distance Education Branch of the Ministry of Education, External Service Agency of the University of Sri Lanka at the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education.

A milestone was reached with the establishment of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) in 1980 as a national university dedicated for ODL to provide university education to qualified secondary school graduates who could not enter conventional universities due to lack of space and provide for life long education to all citizens (MoE, 1980).The Distance Education Branch of the Ministry of Education and Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education were amalgamated to the OUSL.

As a means of relieving pressure on conventional universities, as a way of widening access to higher education leading to degrees that have high market demand and as a way of improving the quality of external degrees conventional universities offer selected study programmes through a separate window to their external students through open and distance modes of learning (EDP-ODL), commencing 2010(UGC 2010) , thus paving the way for dual – mode universities in Sri Lanka..

Distance education is also used in Sri Lanka for non-university learning.ie. for non-formal education, general education, vocational and technical training, continuing education and in a number of professions through a range of specialist organizations, professional institutes and corporate bodies.

1.4 Quality Assurance in Higher Education

1.4.1 What is quality?

Everyone agrees the desirability of quality. There is less agreement, however, as to what is quality. This is because quality does not exist in isolation from its context of use. It is a difficult concept to define and one that is impossible to define with any degree of universal agreement. It is multidimensional in that many factors contribute to its being acceptable or not. Various concepts have evolved to suit different contexts ranging from quality as a measure for excellence to 'quality' as perfection, 'quality' as value for money, 'quality' for customer satisfaction, 'quality' as fitness for purpose and 'quality' as transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). Depending on the definitions selected, quality implies a relative measure of inputs, processes, outputs or learning outcomes.

However, a long established principle relating to the matter of 'quality' is **'fitness for purpose'** which recognizes the diversity of contexts; stakeholders, students, academic and professional interest groups, funders, practitioners, governments, employers and society at large, purposes and needs that tertiary education spans. As fitness for purpose, 'quality' is conceived in relation to institutional goals. It allows an institution to demonstrate the achievement of its objectives according to the purpose of its mission. The OUUK expanded this definition to **'fitness for purpose at minimum cost to society'** (Daniel, 2010), which fits the context of developing countries.

The concept of 'quality' is often linked with words such as 'assurance', 'enhancement', 'assessment', 'audit', 'accreditation', 'academic quality' and 'excellence'. These terms are used in a variety of ways in different parts of the world. In order to avoid ambiguity, the terms used in this Manual are defined in Annex 4.

1.4.2 Quality concerns for whom and why?

Quality is subjective and is a contextual matter. It may be examined from different analytical perspectives varying as per the needs of different stakeholders in the system (Trindade *et al,* 2000).

- **For the learners**, as the primary stakeholders quality covers the entire gamut of an higher educational institution. In the present national and global market of higher education, the students look for recognition of the award or qualification gained, transferability of courses nationally and internationally, and getting value for their money, time and effort.

- **For Governments,** if the country is to benefit from the huge investment made in education, it must be committed to the most cost-effective and the all-round development of students, for efficiency and effectiveness in providing quality education appropriate for the socio-economic development of the country. Countries need reforms in higher education to address new challenges, particularly ensuring quality and relevance of higher education in order to produce the required skilled human capital and also to retain the trained human resources of the country.

- **For Public and potential employers, i**t gives assurance that the institution/programme under review is performing in conformity with public expectations, increased transparency and accountability.

- **For Institutions,** it enhances the reputation as a quality higher education institution. It also strengthen its case for financial support, the rapid growth of tertiary enrolment, increasing competition and shorter knowledge cycles requiring continuous improvement, increasing regional collaboration, and harmonization, trans-boundary acceptance and recognition of the qualifications and awards.

1.4.3 Quality Assurance Policy Framework for Higher Education

For a higher education institution to function, perform and deliver quality products and services to the society it requires a clearly defined policy statement on assuring quality. Quality assurance policy defines the provider's purpose, set out the standards to be met, outlines how the policy is to be put in place and monitored. Regular evaluation determines the extent to which defined procedures are being followed and policy targets are being achieved and whether policy and procedures are appropriate as time moves on.

A quality assurance system is built on two main elements, namely;

a) **National Policy Framework and Guidelines** - on governance, establishment management procedures, good practices, standards and benchmarks, and quality policy and plan and regulatory enactments to enforce quality culture and assessments and funds to support implementation of quality policy and programmes, and

b) **Institutional arrangements for quality assessment and certification** - for regular monitoring of higher education institutions for compliance with national policy framework and guidelines on governance, establishment management procedures, best practices, standards and benchmarks, and for granting certification and/or accreditation

1.4.3.1 National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines on governance, establishment and management procedures, good practices, standards and benchmarks and quality policy and plan and regulatory enactments and funds to support implementation of quality policy

There are several authorities and agencies dealing with higher education and the key players are Legislature, Ministry of Finance and Planning, Ministry of Higher Education, National Education Commission, University Grants Commission, Quality Assurance Accreditation Council of the UGC (UGC-QAAC). In addition, Institutional policy frameworks, by-laws and guidelines are prepared and implemented by Governing Councils and Senates of as regard to academic development and planning, examinations, disciplinary procedures, etc. Therefore, the National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines may include the following:

- Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and as amended subsequently
- UGC Establishments Code and circulars and establishment letters issued by the UGC.

- In the case of EDPs, the policy framework and guidelines prescribed by the UGC through the UGC circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010.
- Good Practices and standards issued for internal study programmes and also for EDPs through ODL by the regulatory agencies (such as Ministry of Higher Education, UGC, UGC – QAAC, etc.).
- By-laws, guidelines and good practices and standards issued by governing Councils and Senates of higher educational institutions and professional bodies
- Sri Lanka Qualification Framework - issued by the Ministry of Higher Education (2013)

In addition, to support the implementation of quality policy and programmes, the higher authorities and regulatory agencies (such as Ministry of Higher Education and UGC) must put in place the following:

i)   progressive legislation or circular instruction to ensure the compliance by the universities and higher educational institutions

ii) Provision of adequate funding to implement quality assurance systems and procedures.

1.4.3.2 Institutional arrangements for regular monitoring for compliance by higher educational institutions and granting certification and/or accreditation

The UGC-QAAC is currently functioning as the centralized QA agency and its core functions are as follows;

- Identifying critical functions for achieving the standards and specification of standards for the critical functions,
- Defining criteria that explain the scope and confidence levels that the system is designed to achieve in relation to academic quality and academic standards.
- Designing and prescribing review mechanisms such as internal and external quality assurance mechanisms,
- Provision of systematic monitoring mechanisms to provide effective feedback loops
- Provision of training to academic staff on quality assurance and good practices and standards.

1.4.4 Purpose of quality assurance in ODL

Quality assurance in ODL serves several purposes, including to:

- demonstrate good practice;
- improve quality and standards in programme and course provision, service delivery, operations, student learning, and institutional performance;
- ensure that necessary skills are acquired for programme success , lifelong learning, and self-directed management;
- foster customer satisfaction with all programme elements;
- gain public confidence;

- ensure that learners receive the programme and services as promised in programme information and at registration;
- ensure that defined standards will be reliably achieved and that awards have credibility, and credentials that are recognized by accreditation bodies, employers and other institutions; and
- be accountable for funds used.

<div align="right">(adapted from Robinson , 2004).</div>

As argued in Dabbagh (2007) the quality of DE depends not only on the providers, but also on the capabilities or competencies of learners and the level and extent of their participation in the learning process. It is crucial that DE providers help their learners develop these competencies for the provision of quality distance education.

As the governments, employers, the general public and students demand strong evidence for quality in ODL, institutions need to pay more attention to the following:

- improving retention and graduation rates;
- supporting employability and career enhancement;
- improving satisfaction of learners, employers and the public with their learning processes and outcomes; and
- increasing the value and reputation of the ODL institutions in the society.

1.4.5 Need for Quality Assurance tools and systems for Open and Distance Learning

A frequently cited challenge by ODL practitioners is that many quality assurance agencies and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities to assess and review ODL institutions/programmes. International best practices recognize that arising from the physical separation of learner from the teacher, the separation of programme design delivery, learner support and assessment, and the use of media and technologies to bridge the gap between the learner and the teacher the functions and the processes in ODL are radically different from those found in traditional face-to-face education and training. Accommodating these differences in Quality Assurance systems has been essential in establishing the credibility of ODL (World Bank, 2002, Damme, 2002, ADB 2012)).Thus a number of Open Universities have developed QA tools and systems in the institutional context.

1.4.6 QA tools and systems developed for ODL in Sri Lanka

The Open University of Sri Lanka developed a QA framework for ODL in 2005 (OUSL 2006)in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) by customization of the generic guidelines in the QA framework for DE institutions developed by the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU-COL 2002).

National quality assurance tools and systems with accreditation standards, performance indicators and evaluation criteria for ODL institutions and programmes have been developed through the Distance Education modernization project in 2007.This was subsequently made generic in collaboration with the COL and, UNESCO in 2008 for use by all member states of the Commonwealth

(Coomaraswamy et al, 2009). The performance indicators specified for each quality standard are used to conduct a self-assessment for continuous quality improvement. These indicators, along with measurable evidence, make it possible for an institution to evaluate the success of its particular QA activity as it determines the role of DE within the larger context of performance improvement (Coomaraswamy, 2013, Kanwar, 2013).

In response to the introduction of recent reforms brought by the UGC into EDP system operated by the conventional universities and the proposal to develop the necessary tools and implementation procedure for QA of EDPs and ECs a framework for QA of EDPs has been developed in collaboration with Higher Education for the Twentieth Century (HETC) Project.

1.5   Institutional Framework for Quality Assurance

It is accepted that, regardless of the mode of delivery, in a quality assurance system it is necessary to first assess the functioning, performance and current standards of the institution and that it has to be done against its mission, goals and objectives. Evaluation of the operations of an institution is referred to as Institutional Review and that of its study programmes is referred to as Programme Review or Subject Review. Assessment can be conducted through internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms (self-assessment) or by external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms.

1.5.1 Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

It is being increasingly recognized that an external review can at best be periodical and cannot eliminate a certain extent of 'compliance' and 'made up' element for the sake of external assessments. It does not ensure a continual concern for quality assurance as an integral aspect of the institution. While external review is relevant and even necessary it is also essential for each institution to evolve internal processes, within each institution, for self analysis and assessment enabling self-monitoring all aspects of the functioning of the institution for quality improvement and documenting as a report. Self-review depends on an approach to problem solving that goes beyond fixing symptoms and gets down to addressing the causes of problems

Traditionally, QA is an integral part of the overall functioning of a higher educational institution to ensure that the institution/programme fulfills its purpose as well as the standards set. The traditional regulatory methods to ensure quality of higher education are internal. They are carried out in State Universities through internal 'Authorities' and 'Bodies 'such as the Council, Senate, the Campus Boards, Faculty Boards, Standing Committees of the authorities and bodies and ad hoc Committees established from time to time as prescribed by the Act and the Enactments, with inbuilt checks and balances to oversee the system. Necessary guidelines and regulations are given by the Regulatory Bodies. In actual practice these provisions have led to a system of administration through 'Committees' (Figure 1.1) for whose effective and efficient functioning an awareness of the powers and functions of each of them and the built-in checks and balances become essential pre-requisites.

A key objective of HEIs should be to develop and maintain each of the following items which are regarded as central elements (standards) for IQA:

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- Institution should have a policy and associated procedures of QA of their programs and awards. It should commit itself explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of quality, quality assurance in their work. To achieve this institution should develop and implement a strategy for self-assessment and continuous enhancement of quality with transparent and engagement of multiple stakeholders in self-assessment;

- Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards, academic standards expected and achieved by students, experience of students as learners and enhancement of their learning opportunities; linking programmes with learning outcomes and procedures to measure the achievement of learning outcomes.

- Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently;

- Institution should have ways of satisfying itself that staff involved with the teaching of students is qualified and competent to do so and ways in which teaching effectiveness is appraised, improved and rewarded; They should be available to those undertaking external reviews and commented in reports.

- Institution should ensure that the resources available for the support of students' learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered; there should be continuous identification and responses to learner needs and openness to feedback;

- Institution should ensure that it collects, analyses and use relevant information for effective management of its study programmes and other activities and makes fact based decision making;

- Institution should regularly publish impartial, objective, up-to-date information, both quantitative and qualitative, on the programmes and awards it offers.

(adapted from ENQA Report on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2009)

To facilitate internal review processes, including those stated above, to ensure that the high quality of academic provision is maintained or improved and that any problems are identified and addressed quickly, an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) should be established within the Administrative Entity handling EDPs and ECs. The work of IQAC is the first step towards the internalization and institutionalization of quality enhancement. Its success depends upon the sense of belongingness and participation it can inculcate in all the constituents of the administrative entity

A model of such IQAC for EDPs is given in Box 1.The primary function of the IQAC is to review and monitor the quality of the core functions of the EDP Centres and report to the Senate and Council for information and implementation of recommendations. Another important function of the IQAC is to follow up on the recommendations of the Review Team Report.

Guidelines provided in Box 1 will facilitate the institution in the creation and operation of the IQAC.

Box 1 - Guidelines for the establishment and operation of internal QA Cell (IQAC)

Objectives

- To develop a system for conscious, consistent, and catalytic action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the EDP unit towards quality enhancement
- To assure all the stakeholders connected with EDPs about the quality of education provided by the institution.
- To facilitate internalisation of quality culture
- To enhance and integrate various activities of the institution and institutionalize all the best practices of the units/departments/faculties
- To act as a change agent in the institution

Functions

- Act as the nodal agency of the administrative entity handling EDPs for quality related activities
- Hold monthly meetings to review the quality aspects of EDPs and address any issues
- Prepare annual work plan
- Devise procedure and instruments for assuring quality
- Internal review of programmes/courses/awards through
    - monitoring of student recruitment, retention, performance and progress
    - monitoring of student satisfaction with awards, programmes and services
    - facilitating programme co-ordinators to conduct programme/course level reviews annually.
- Facilitate self-assessment by collecting data relating to the six criteria, prescribed by the UGC-QAA analyzing and using the information for reviewing policies and improvements in teaching-learning.
- Document the various programmes/activities leading to quality improvement and dissemination of information to all concerned
- Disseminate information on the various quality parameters of EDPs to all concerned
- Organise induction/orientation programmes, workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circle in partnership with SDC of the respective institution
- Prepare a self-reviewed progress report to be submitted annually to the QAAgency through the head of the institution, detailing tangible results achieved in key areas which are specifically identified by IQAC in the beginning of the academic year.

    Ps: to facilitate obtaining feedback data sample questionnaires have been provided in Appendices 3
    IQAC may derive further support from faculties/departments offering EDPs and mechanisms that contribute to the functions listed above.

Composition
    IQAC may be constituted under the chairmanship under the Director of the Administrative Entity that handles EDPs and ECs with heads of important academic departments and administrative units and a few other teachers. Composition may be as follows:
    Chairperson Director/EDP Unit
    Member - Representing the Council
    Member - Senior Administrator
    Member - Senior Academic
    Member - Senior Academic as the secretary/ co-ordinator

    The role of the co-ordinator is crucial in ensuing the effective functioning of all the members.

Intended outcomes
- Timely efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks
- Academic programmes relevant and of quality
- Modern methods of teaching and learning optimized and integrated
- Reviewed and appropriately amended evaluation procedures.
- Many good practices have become institutionalized

1.5.2 External Quality Assurance (EQA)

When the system of higher education was relatively small, catering to a few, and not much of competition nationally or internationally internal quality assessment methods were sufficient to ensure quality. The regulatory methods, which are by and large in-built checks and balances are internal, non-comparable with other institutions. With the world becoming global village, imparting higher education of nationally comparable and internationally accepted 'Standards' for external review has become essential. In line with this international trend quality is also assured through a reliable national quality assurance mechanism. These changes have resulted in the evolution and worldwide acceptance of the External Quality Assurance (EQA) mechanism as an effective method to safeguard standards of awards and quality of delivery in higher education and to facilitate quality improvement. External quality assessment is conducted periodically in 3-5 year cycles.

The positive and negative aspects of Internal Quality Assurance and External Quality Assurance are given in Table 1.1

The process of EQA and certification/accreditation involves four stages .The four stages are briefly outlined below. The details are given in Chapter 4.

Stage I: The development of criteria and standards related to each one of the criterion on which to base the assessment process.

Stage II: Self-evaluation and preparation of SER by the institution on the criteria for assessment identified by the UGC-QAAC (Chapter 1, page 12)

Stage III: Validation of the SER by a team of peers who would visit the institution and submit recommendations to UGC-QAAC

Stage IV: The scrutiny and approval of the Peer Team Report by the UGC-QAAC and publication of results.

Stage I: 'Criteria' and 'Standards' for accreditation were formulated and agreed through a series of forums involving all stakeholders. Details of 'Criteria' and 'Standards' for EDPs and ECs are given in Chapter 4.

Stage II: Self-study by the institution and preparation of SER is to be a tool for critical reflection on institutional practices and facilities to identify its own strengths and weaknesses. Self-valuation report submitted to UGC-QAAC by the institution becomes the basic document to initiate the process of assessment. It is this document that enables the UGC-QAAC understand the institution better (ie. during desk evaluation), prior to the on-site visit.

Stage III: The site visit and evaluation is conducted in accordance with the procedures established by the UGC-QAAC. During the site visit of the Peer Team, peers are expected to validate the claims made in the self-study of the institution, and focus on finding an objective answer to the same.

Stage IV: The scrutiny and the approval of the peer team report by UGC-QAAC.

Institutional Management
- Governing Council, Senate, Faculty Boards
- Operations Committee
- Senior Management Committee
- Finance Committee
- Planning and Development Committee
- Progress Review Committee
- Corporate Plan Monitoring Committee
- Effective communication, MIS

Admission Policies
- Senate
- Faculty Boards
- Credit Exemption Committee

Programme, Course and Review
- Programme
- Faculty Boards specification by-laws
- Course Development Committee
- Information Technology Committee
- Educational Technology Committee
- Subject Benchmark Statements
- Codes of Practice

Internal Review
- QA Unit
- Self Evaluation
- Course Development Committee
- Research Committee
- MIS
- Students' Feedback
- Peer Feedback

Institutional Internal Quality Assurance for Maintaining Standards and Quality

Assessment, Awards
- Exam panels and Boards
- By-Laws
- Manuals of Procedure
- Awards Committee
- Faculty Boards
- Senate
- External Examiners

Staff Selection and Development
- Establishment Code
- Selection Committee
- Induction
- Professional Training
- Awards Committee

Student Support and Guidance
- Regional Educational Services Board
- Library Committee
- Canteen Committee
- Student Forum
- Appeals Committee
- Student Societies
- Student Services
- MIS

Research
- CRADE
- Higher Degrees and Research Committee
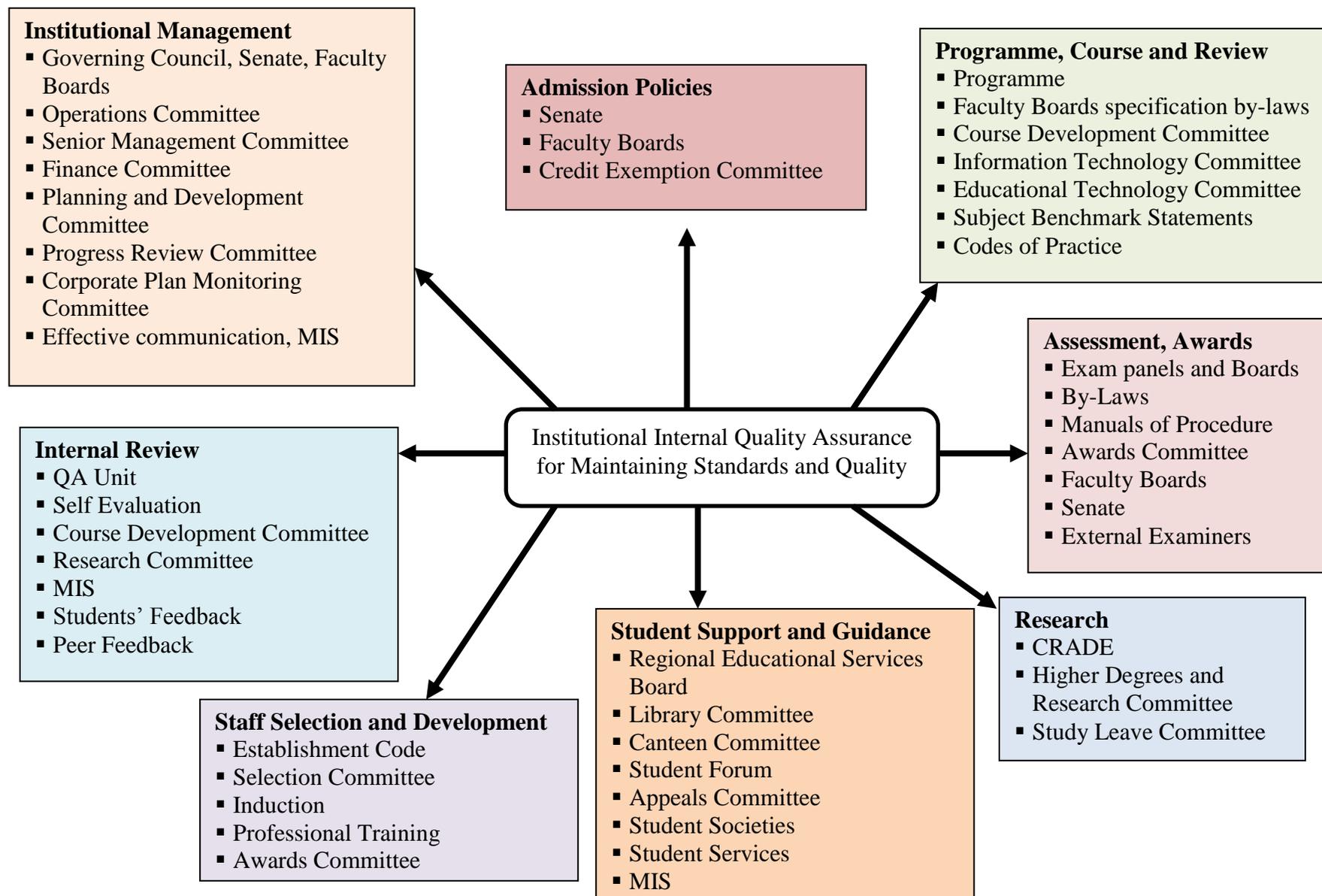- Study Leave Committee

Figure 1.1 – Academic Infrastructure of an ODL Institution for Maintaining Quality and Standards (Coomaraswamy, 2007)

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1.5.3 Link between National Policy Framework and Guidelines and National and Institutional Education Regulations and Standards, and IQA and EQA procedures

The quality assurance system as stated earlier is feedback system that is developed to ensure that the higher educational intuition is committed to comply with national and institutional policies, regulations and guidelines and good practices and standards prescribed by the regulatory body or bodies and by doing so the institution is employing all resources prudently, effectively and efficiently in meeting the benchmark 'fitness for purpose at minimum cost to the society'.

Table 1.1: Comparison between Internal and External Quality Assurance

	Internal Quality Assurance	**External Quality Assurance**
Positive aspects	Fosters a quality culture and tradition of self-regulation if embedded in everyday systems and practices	Engenders public and peer confidence in the institution
	Can heighten ownership of quality and standards by an institution	Provides external reference points or benchmarks for standards and performance
	Provides an institution with self-knowledge if well done and can support organizational learning	Assists change and development when needed
	Can encourage reflective practice	Can provide confirmation of an institution's internal review system and conclusions
	Can act as a vehicle for staff development	Can provide new perspectives and awareness
	Can complement external assessment or form the basis of it	Provides a way for assessing quality across a system or section
	Can be fruitful only in an institution that has a culture in which continuous quality enhancement occupies a central place	Safeguards national standards of higher education
	Creates a positive environment leading to continuous improvement	Improves efficiency and accountability
	Increases cooperation among staff	Public provision of independently verified information about programme and institution
	Facilitates exchange and ensures positive staff development	
Negative aspects	Can lead to insularity without some external reference points	Can prove burdensome, bureaucratic, time consuming to the extent that it interferes with 'real work'
	Can be biased and partial	Can lead to QA becoming an occasional exercise
	Can become a token or mechanical exercise if not well led, responsibly conducted	Can be costly

Adapted from Robinson (2004)

As stated in 1.5.1, for the QA system to operate two pre-requisites must be completed and put in place. These are;

- National and Institutional Policy Framework and Guidelines on governance, establishment and management procedures, good practices, standards and benchmarks as regard to academic activities and quality policy and plan and regulatory enactments and funds to support implementation of quality policy, and.
- Institutional arrangements for regular monitoring for compliance internally by the institution itself (IQA system) as well as by an external agency (i.e. EQA System) established for this purpose for assessment and granting, certification and/or accreditation.

The link between the above two pre-requisites is depicted in Fig. 1.2.

Figure 1.2 – Functional link between National Policies and Rules and Regulations, National and Institutional Standards and Best Practices and the Quality Assurance System
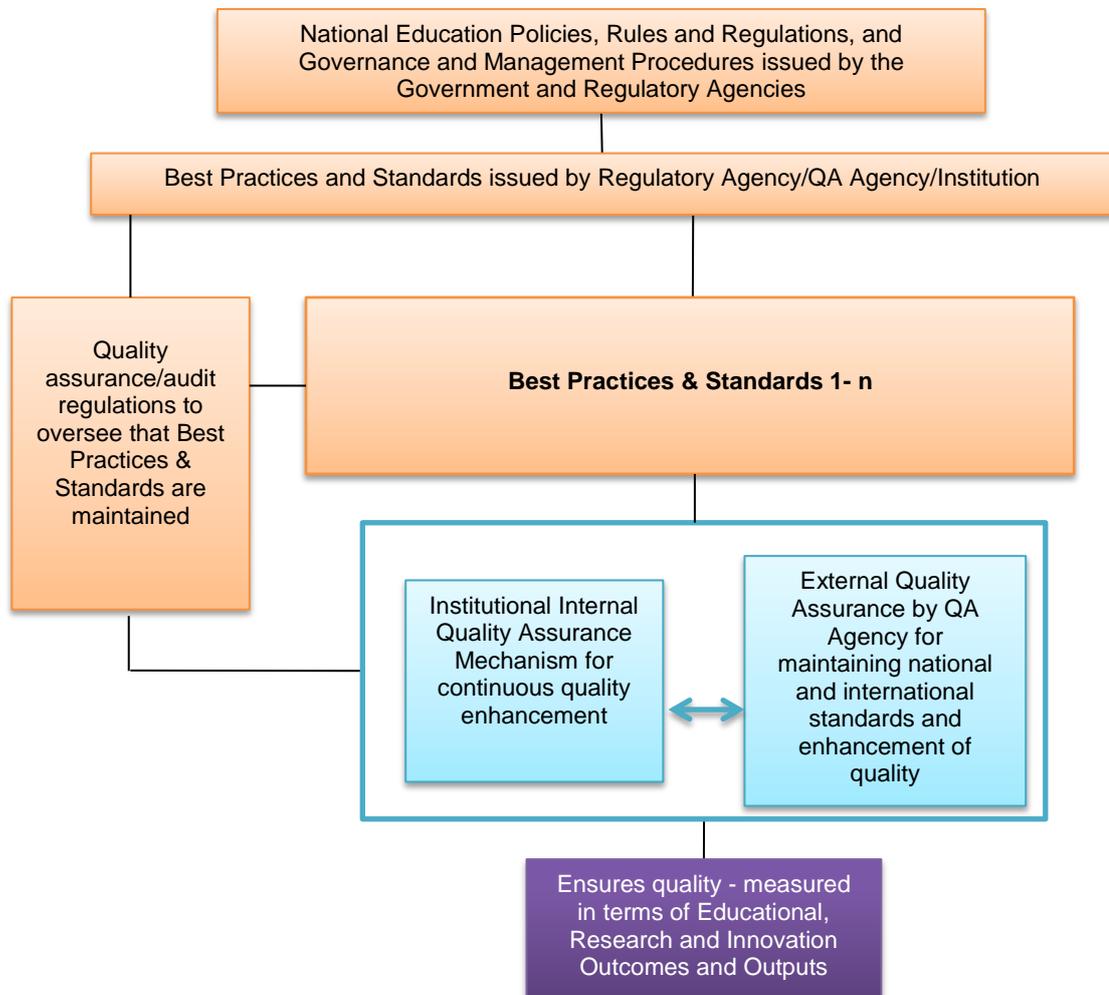
Adapted from "Manual for Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education (2008): Thailand

As depicted, Fig. 1.2, any higher educational institution, whether state or non-sate, has to be established on a legally approved legislative framework or platform such as through an Act passed in the Parliament, or Ordinance approved by the regulatory body empowered through an Act of Parliament or in the case of non-state institution, through registration from Registrar of Companies (*who is authorized by an Act of Parliament*). For example Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 paved the way to establish the regulatory body for the state university system, the UGC for regulating and overseeing state university system. The UGC perform this function by designing and prescribing the establishment and management procedures as conveyed to HEIs and through instruments/directives such as UGC and Universities Establishments Code, Establishment Circulars and Letter.

Further, the QAAC established by the UGC is mandated to prescribe good practices and standards with respect to academic development and planning, teaching, training and assessment, research and innovations and outreach activities. Similarly, many other authorities such as National Education Commission, Ministry of Higher Education, and allied agencies through UGC may time to time prescribe regulations and guidelines, and the Universities and Higher Educational Institutions covering all key aspects of higher educational institution

Therefore, the function of IQA and EQA system depicted in this close circuit system is to check periodically the degree of compliance of the institution with those rules, regulations and guidelines and to what extent the institution has adopted and internalize the good practices and standards prescribe by the UGC-QAAC, and report back to relevant authorities and institutions for adopting corrective measures. The assessment by EQA system will also serve as reporting system to the public on the quality of the institution.

1.5.4 Functional link between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assessment

Total quality improvement system (TQI system), is built on two pillars, namely IQA and EQA components. The functional link between the between the two components, the IQA and EQA systems, is illustrated in Figure 1.3. As depicted and implied through close circuit diagram, the IQA is the main element of quality assurance system where it should undertake regular monitoring and reporting to higher management of the institution for appropriate corrective measures for rectification of shortcomings, if exists. The self-assessments undertaken regularly provides, the foundation to prepare the self-evaluation report(SER) for EQA and the SER forms the basis for EQA review teams to undertake assessment for quality. Thus the SER truly reflects the internal functions of the institution, internally monitored through IQA procedures. In this close circuit, the report coming out from EQA is expected to serve as feedback to IQA, and IQA in turn shall spearhead the follow-up actions on the findings, shortcomings highlighted and recommendations made their in. This is a recursive and iterative process and will ensure that the institution is heading in the right path towards continuing improvements in all aspects, and thus enabling to reach the status of "centre of excellence" as a higher education institution, and also to maintain the status, once it is achieved.

1.6   Promoting Quality Culture and Continuous Improvement

Quality culture in ODL is defined as "… *institutional culture that promotes the introduction of an internal quality assurance system, values capacity building for implementing quality assurance arrangements, stresses the link between the internal quality assurance system and accountability to the public at the national and international level and focuses on learning rather than learning …….*" (Jung, 2005).

Figure 1.3:   Functional link between the Internal Quality Assurance and the External Quality Assurance
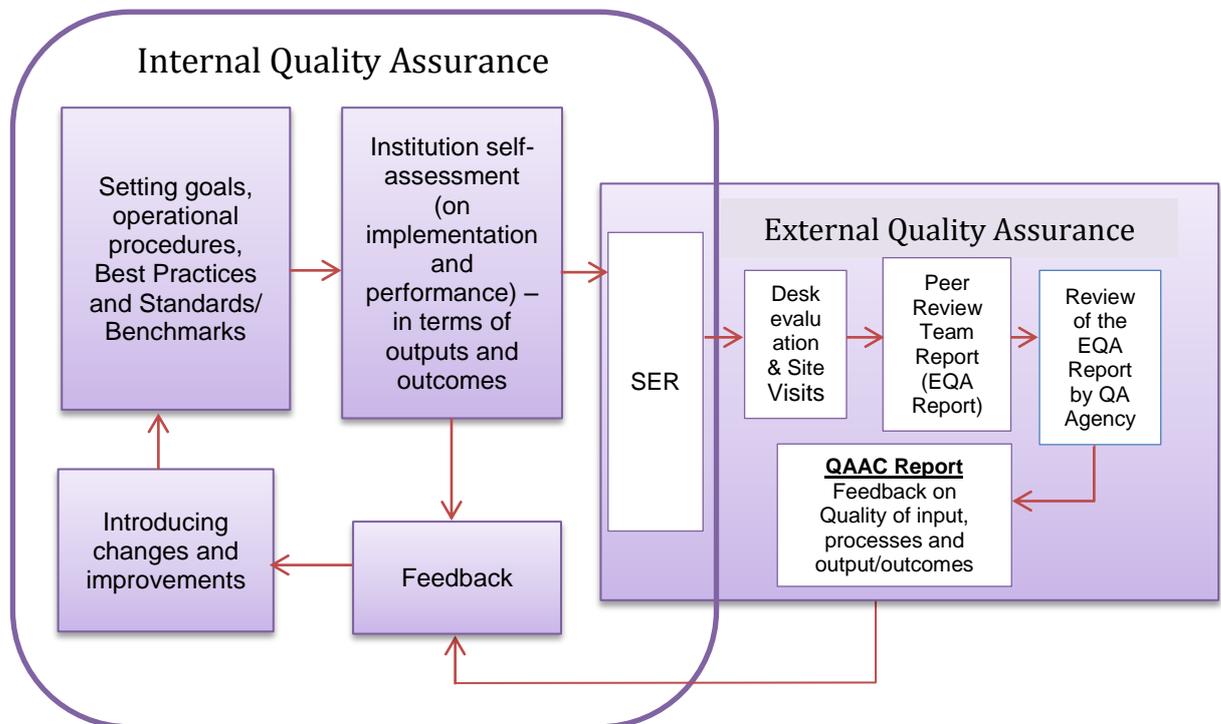
Adapted from "Manual for Internal Quality Assurance for Higher Education Institutions, Ministry of Education (2008): Thailand

Quality assurance does not merely mean a set of procedures to be followed. It is also an attitude or ethos which influences every aspect in an organizational activity. Quality Assurance procedures and the related processes help in attaining the objective of the institution, but the basic question is, how can institution-wide commitment to QA be engendered and how can the staff of the institution be made to imbibe a culture of quality? Leadership at the top level has to act as a change agent to develop a quality culture within a institution. To carry out a balanced, integrated and systemic QA approach a centralized QA unit that oversees an institution's overall QA activities and links these activities to the external QA system should be in place.

Harvey and Green (1993) opine that quality is closely connected to an institution's culture. It is important for a distance education institution to create and strengthen a quality culture within the institution in order to integrate QA and enhancement activities in everyday practices.

Jung et al (2013) in a study of 16 selected Asian HEIs identified important benchmarking points for Asian distance education institutions in developing an internal quality culture for continuous quality improvement. These include:

- The vision, purpose and mission of the institution have to be shared and clear, both within the institution and to external actors, and reflect institutional values for improvement of distance education products and services.
- Leadership and top management should support the quality culture for change and transformation.
- The institution should not focus on inspection or assessment but build quality into its products and services from the start.
- The institution should engage every member in QA activities and in accomplishing the transformation.
- The institution should build a strong and continuous self-improvement system for all the members.
- The institution should encourage collaborative teamwork, benchmarking innovative practices, exploring new ideas as well as quality performance.
- All stakeholder evaluation should be fed into the continuous quality improvement cycle.

<div align="right">(Adapted from Jung, Wong and Belawatti, 2013).</div>

Kanwar in her Foreword to the publication "Quality Assurance in Distance Education and e-learning: challenges and solutions from Asia" (Kanwar 2013: xix) drawing on the experiences of 16 selected Asian distance education institutions summarises the challenges and best practices as:

Challenges institutions currently face:

" ...As universities make a transition from traditional ODL to e-learning , there is a huge gap in the faculty capacity to deal with the new delivery modes. Lack of training for staff in external and internal QA standards and indicators is a major stumbling block in developing "cultures of quality". Many ministries and accreditation bodies use standards and indicators that have been developed for conventional universities that do not serve the purpose of ODL and e-learning well…".

 Best practice lessons drawn from the Asian experience:

" ...It is difficult to create a culture of quality through a top-down imported process. This can only take root when the staff concerned takes ownership of the processes. The more levels of oversight set up for implementing QA, the lower the extent of faculty ownership. The responsibility for quality needs to be situated as close as possible to the operational end of a given process ......In countries where there are QA policies in place at the national level, there is a greater likelihood of a good QA environment down the line at the institutional level as observed in the Open University of Sri Lanka. Further, the top institutional leadership has an important role to play by championing the cause of QA, providing the necessary resources and training for the staff...".

Chapter 2

Criteria and Best Practices

2.1 Introduction

Once the institution has a clear policy on QA it must then identify 'Key Areas' or 'Criteria' which reflect particular component of a university, or operation or salient features of an educational system. For each of the 'Criteria' strategies for quality assurance are stated as 'Best Practices

Criteria for higher education programmes offered through ODL and 'Standards' have been formulated through an extensive stakeholder consultative process and substantial development phase over three years with inputs from a wide range of experts both national and international (Coomaraswamy 2007; Coomaraswamy et al. 2009).At a workshop in 2010, attended by university academics from conventional universities offering external degree programmes,(EDPs) they were customized for use for EDPs.

The following Criteria have been identified in the context of quality assurance of EDPs:

      i. Governance and Management;

      ii. Programme Design and Organization;

      iii. Course Design and Development,

      iv. Infrastructure and Learning Resources,

      v. Learner Support and Progression;

      vi. Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards.

Best Practices

Best practices are ideally the best known methods, techniques or proven process used to achieve an end goal- the 'Standard'. They may be looked upon as sign posts that lead towards the goal of excellence. They contribute to the efficient and effective functioning of the university/programme. They take into account input factors, process factors and output/outcome factors. The Best Practices should become a part of the working culture of everyone in the university. University's excellence is the aggregate of the Best Practices followed in the six Criteria.

The successful application of the best practices depends on the institution's ability to adopt the following four strategies:

- Implementation of best practices-This include planning, resource mobilization, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. It focuses more on performance than on promises.

- Institutionalization of best practices. This is the process of making best practices an integral part of the institution's working. This is an effort to make it more institution centric than leader or individual centric and also to make the best practices as a normal practice.

- Internalization of best practices. This refers to making things a part of one's nature by conscious learning and assimilation. The aggregate of such internalized best practices goes to make what we loosely call the ethos or tradition of an individual institution.

- Dissemination of best practices. Institution has the responsibility of dissemination of these best practices for wider application of the system. It may have to evolve suitable strategies like database of good practices, review forums, recording evidences for success etc. to discuss within and among institutions (NAAC, 2005).

This 4-stage approach will help the institutions to play their role effectively in quality sustenance and enhancement.

The best, as an ideal, should be the vision of every university. To attain that:

o Policy makers in higher education have an important responsibility of creating an enabling policy framework for effective functioning of the university.

o University management should ensure proper infrastructure and effective governance systems

o Teachers have a critical role in building competences of learning through pedagogic practices.

o Finally students for whom the whole system is designed should desire and demand the best. Only then the university will achieve its objectives and standards.

Brief descriptions of best practices and/or processes with respect to the above mentioned six criteria that contribute to the success of attaining quality learning experience are given below: The best practices are not exhaustive. They are only representations of the different 'Criteria' and their 'Standards' given in Chapter 3.

2.2 Criteria-wise Best Practices

Criterion 1 – Governance and Management

- Universities /Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes comply with all prescribed guidelines in the "Handbook on External degree Programmes and Extension Courses" (UGC, 2010) under the following topics:

  - Policy Framework

  - Institutional Organisational Arrangement

  - Admission Criteria

  - Programme Structure

  - Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services

  - Student Assessment and Evaluation

- Quality Assurance
- Collaboration.

- Institutional commitment to ODL manifests itself in the form of

    - Objects - institutional mission statements, aims and objectives, importance of learning not teaching as a quality measure, QA policies and procedures which provide a direction and a path for the staff

    - practices - adherence to state legislation through institutional procedures and their meticulous implementation, careful staff selection, staff sensitization and capacity building programmes, delegation of powers, and efficient monitoring systems

    - attitudes - zero tolerance for inertia, indifference and inefficiency

    - Values-commitment to satisfy the learners expectations, assist learners towards satisfactory progress in the courses and programmes, fairness in setting student fees and zero tolerance to unethical conduct and behavior, learner-centrednesss, removal of unnecessary barriers to learning.in teaching and learning

- Institutional management and administration effectively oversee the EDP-ODL programmes and ensure that they meet the objectives and mission of the Institution.

- Institution has adequate management, administrative, academic and financial capacity in place and a mechanism for reappraisal of plans and budgets in the light of performance and change in circumstances. The officers and the departments of the institution are governed on principles of participation and transparency. To translate top decision making into daily routine institution need an effective administrative structure and internal and external communiocation strategy.

- An appropriately designed, developed and well maintained student record system in place. Institution provides adequately for the reliability, privacy, safety and security of student information and student financial transactions.

- Institution has a user-friendly, Management Information System (MIS) in place for effective and efficient management of ODL operations. The system allows information to be cost-effectively, easily and logically stored and retrieved and provides the type of information that the administrative entity handling EDP's actually need and when needed.

- .Institutional Publications (handbooks/prospectus/guidebooks etc.) clearly describe ODL programmes and courses including the delivery system used, pre-requisites for participation, expected learning outcomes, completion requirements, student services and any other requirement both in print and electronic form.. These publications are disseminated and communicated to students prior to registration. Each applicant for

enrollment is fully informed as to the nature of the training provided and understands the responsibilities and demands of the programme.

- Institution has a realistic academic calendar that is followed meticulously.

- Formal collaborative relationships are established with governmental and non governmental education providers or technology providers to share knowledge and expertise, infrastructure, human resources, services and institutional culture.

- Institution awarding the credentials retain responsibility for the quality of courses offered through ODL methods and the achievement of expected and acceptable outcome irrespective of any partnership entered into with third parties for the provision of components of ODL system.

- Institution has an adequate and a transparent mechanism for creation and appointment of relevant academic, administrative, technical and support staff and concern for their continued professional advancement. Performance appraisal system is in place for staff with the aim of identifying training needs in ODL, improving their performance and motivating them.

- Institution has an established system to monitor, evaluate and report performance against policies and plans, cost-effectiveness, quality assessment of teaching and these activities inform the next cycle of the planning process and includes initiating/amending policies where necessary. Institution has an assessment and evaluation system which is reliable and ensures integrity.

- Institution has fair expeditious grievance, redressal mechanisms at all levels.

- Institution promotes institution specific research to inform institutional policies, practices and products.

- Institution has a policy on acceptable student achievement and satisfaction.

- Institution has a clear QA framework supported by clear QA action plans. Internal processes are articulated with external processes. There is a clear cycle of planning, development, documentation, reporting action, and review of policies and procedures within the institution. A quality culture is nurtured within the institution. QA policies are integrated with the general institutional policy framework.

- Institution should carry out annual student surveys, entry, exit and cohort surveys. These measures will provide important information for the management of programmes and institution.

- In order to ensure employability of graduates and to build trust in the quality and relevance of its activities institution needs to strengthen the dialogue with its external stakeholders. The dialogue can be in various forms such as participation in formal decision making, participation in evaluation and assessment of students,

curriculum design. External stakeholders include national regional government and legislative bodies, professional and statutory bodies, employers and industry, future students, alumni, collaboration and partner institutions.

- As far as possible ICT should be integrated into the system for teaching learning, administration, research and community engagement. User friendly management information system (MIS) should be in place for effective and efficient management of operations. This system allows information to be cost-effectively, easily, and logically stored and retrieved and provides for swift execution of tasks and for instant availability of the information needed by the academics and administrators. LMS should be in place for encouraging technology enabled teaching learning process.

- Different elements affecting faculty workload eg. teaching, student assessment, student advising, project monitoring, administrative work, professional development, partnerships, membership in committees within institution, should be quantified and matched against work norms to enable the institution to allocate workload fairly and equitably.

Criterion 2 - Programme Design and Organisation

- Programme types, structure, design and curriculum is in compliance with the UGC handbook on external degree programs and extension courses. Programme design is compatible with the mission statement of the institution, has a wide range of programme offerings that provide adequate, academic flexibility, and are relevant to regional and national needs, and aligned with emerging trends. Reference points such as National Qualifications Framework, Benchmark Statements, and Codes of Practice are used in specifying academic standards and quality of programmes.

- Programmes are developed based on the need analysis exercise including market research, liaison with industry, review of national priorities, and professional bodies, and reflect the latesr development and practices in the field of study.

- The process of curriculum design should take into account the core curriculum elements of the educational process namely: intended learning outcomes, which describes what students are expected to know and understand at the end of the learning process; the content in alignment with reference points such as subject benchmark statements, Sri Lanka qualifications framework, that need to be delivered using teaching learning activities congruent with student centred learning methods as identified by the curriculum; and appropriate assessment methods to measure the attainment of ILOs and to ensure that students have mastered all the material that was delivered. Finally a continuous quality improvement process required to monitor and infuse continuous improvement. Student learning outcomes support a "student

centred" approach to instructional activity. The whole policy thus has a clear outcomes based approach.

- Each programme should have a programme team and organizer/co-ordinator to co-ordinate the design, content and the organization of the programme.

- Programme approval is sought according to institutional procedures for initiating programmes and for proposed changes to programme

- Process of curriculum design should take into account core curriculum elements of the educational process

- Institution's guidelines for new programme proposal include aims, learning outcomes, how achievement of these aims and outcomes are to be measured, statement of the criteria, and modes of assessments for determining at each level, the awarding of credit points, progression and the final classification of awards.

  The institution demonstrates that learners achieve learning outcomes that are appropriate to its mission and to the rigour and depth of the degrees.

- Collaboration and consultation with other academics internally or externally to share good practices in the subject, and develop inter or multidisciplinary programmes.

- Resources necessary for the satisfactory delivery of programmes should be identified in advance of approval and it should include staff, teaching learning space, computers and library facilities.

- Curricula designed to enable students to acquire subject-specific and transferable skills and offer students the opportunity for continued personnel development, progression to employment or postgraduate studies.

- Continuous appraisal of programmes and courses at departmental level through external examiners, teachers, students alumni, employers or arising from research, and the feedback used for initiation, review and redesign of programmes to ensure their effectiveness in achieving programme objectives.

- Opportunities provided for innovation in design, content and organization of curricula.

- Programme advisory/coordinating committee reviews periodically (cycle of 3-5 years) using a variety of data: the established curriculum, content, length the delivery facilities and equipment, progress of learners and takes appropriate measures for improvement.

- Identified programme of staff development directed towards course material design and development.

- Curriculum and awards strategy, programme design and approvals, programme specification, credit currency, credit accumulation and transfer policy, evaluation/review of programmes and awards.

Criterion 3 – Course Design and Development and Delivery

- Substantive content in a programme is organized into short and focused courses. Courses are designed according to the stated programme objectives.

- Courses are designed based on learner-centred principles with teaching learning strategies, teaching methods, learner activities, use of appropriate ICTs, and contact sessions determined as part of the course design process and are clearly stated in the course book, and communicated and discussed with learners.

- Course has ample scope for encouraging and developing creative and critical thinking, independent and life-long learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork skills.

- Course should have appropriate breadth and depth of learning activities to challenge each student intellectually.

- Standard formats/templates for instructional design and development are in place and are used by the course team for effective instructional design and efficient course development.

- Curricular process includes selection and organization of relevant courses to meet national needs and international context, providing flexibility in order to accommodate student interests, commitment to enhance employability of graduates curriculum structuring and assigning number of credits based on SLQF and enriching common curriculum with quasi professional/professional courses, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses. Choice of media and technology should be integrated into the course design .The course should have ample scope for encouraging and developing creative and critical thinking, independent and lifelong learning , and interpersonal and communication skills and independent learning skills.

- The instructional package is comprehensive and contains learner friendly description of the syllabus course plans , learning outcomes at the programme level, course level and lesson level , assessment and evaluation details , credit hours, teaching learning strategies, academic calendar etc. and should be made available both off-line and online.

- 'Course Team' approach is followed in design, development and delivery. Team includes faculty who play an important role in developing the content and overseeing the programme, instructional designers, graphic designers, content editors, language editors, media developers, tutorial and technical staff whose roles and responsibilities

are clearly specified before commencement of the tasks. Quality of course materials is achieved through the contributions of course teams and rigorous procedures for all aspects of content design and development, contribution of specialists in editing, copyrights, illustrations, photography, audio-visual, multimedia and software design.

- Institution should distinguish between regular/ routine (annual) monitoring of programmes/courses and periodic review .Regular routine monitoring is to ensure that programmes remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application, to evaluate the extent to which the ILOs are being attained by the students to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the curriculum and of assessment strategy in relation to the ILOs. In contrast periodic reviews at intervals not exceeding 5 years , enables programme teams to stand back and reflect on broader aspects of the programme ILOs , scope and depth of learning , market/employer requirements, review of the continuing validity and relevance of programmes offered.

- information and reports collected by such monitoring should be considered by IQAC of the EDP centre and ensure that appropriate actions are taken to remedy any identified shortcomings.

- Institution's policy on programme/course design approval, monitoring and review should be contained in By-laws, Rules, Regulations and schedules. The requirement for approval by the academic authority of the institution of a new proposal should take into account of external reference points such as SBS, SLQF, Codes of Practice and requirements of professional bodies, academic grounds for new course, anticipated demand, programme specification and academic content, assessment methods, teaching learning strategies, availability of teaching learning resources, library implications, IT skills,.

- The institution provides prior training and necessary inputs to the staff involved in instructional design and development.

- Availability of institutional guides to course material design and development (both print and online) to be made available to all the academics concerned in the ODL.

- Course design meets the criteria of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating, self-evaluative and self-learning.

- Each individual course has a designated number of study hours which includes reading, activities, assignments, tutorials, lab work, project work, use of other media, use of library, revision and examinations.

- Course materials are pilot tested and quality assured prior to release.

- The institution has assigned the responsibility for assuring the quality of the course materials at various levels, stages of production and delivery to appropriate committee of the senate.

- Course package includes course description, syllabus, course plans, learning outcomes, assessment strategies, teaching and learning strategies, credit hours, completion requirements and annual calendar of activities. This is made available both off-line and online to all registered learners prior to commencement of the programme.

- Clear policies on ownership of instructional materials and protection of copyright are established.

- Course design integrates assessment methods to teaching and learning strategy to enable students to achieve stated learning outcomes and encourages innovation.

- Course materials are reviewed periodically to assure that they meet programme standards.

- Courses are subject to annual monitoring up to three stages during their lives; after first presentation, mid-life, before revision.

- Teaching learning process should be congruent with student centred learning methods. This is a process where students learn, actively engaging in and interacting with the study material, guided by a teacher so that students will construct a long lasting and deep understanding of the study material .Student centred teaching methods include student presentations, self-learning assignments, project work, role plays, field visits, case studies, debates, surveys, seminars, focus group discussions, brain storming sessions, games, problem based learning, inquiry based learning, group work, laboratory practical classes, industrial training .Self- directed learning by students through books and journals, Internet, CD ROMs and computer assisted learning should be encouraged.

- Student engagement and interaction with teachers and peers is a powerful driver for quality teaching.

- Induction programmes should be provided to students on outcome based education, student centred learning, technology based learning and rules and regulations of the institution.

Criterion 4 - Infrastructure and Learning Resources

- Institution provides and maintains sufficient and appropriate facilities (physical, equipment, financial and human resources) to support distance learning and these are reflected in the long term plans and budget of the university.

- Provision of adequate learning resources which includes library, equipment, ICT facility, teaching accommodation (classroom, laboratories, computer lab etc.), technical and support staff, all materials that support learners' educational experience such as relevant and current texts, multimedia and/or electronic resources and made readily accessible to learners and faculty to facilitate positive learning outcomes for learners.

- Procedures and mechanisms in place to ensure optimum use, maintenance and development of infrastructure facilities of the institution.

- Effective mechanism in place for maintenance and optimizing use of resources for effective teaching learning process.

- Adequate and sufficiently qualified and skilled academic, administrative, technical staff are employed to meet the institution's objectives for learners.

- Institution possesses the structure, staff, financial resources and knowledge to implement and manage effective online programmes, consistent with the institutions missions and desired learning outcomes.

- An effective human resource development system is in place to train, re-train and motivate faculty and staff for the roles and tasks they perform particularly with respect to the application of appropriate new technologies on teaching and learning.

- Institution provides learner with information and training needed for self-learning in an ODL environment and to function in an online environment.

- Institution demonstrates through survey results that online programmes interactivity features are effective and that they help the learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

- Institution has and implements policies addressing workload of faculty, class size, time needed for courses development and sharing of instructional responsibilities to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of faculty.

- Institution's budget includes adequate provision for maintaining and continuous updating of appropriate technology used in an online environment. Budget includes sufficient resources to maintain a high level of support staffing, appropriate number of faculty and smoothly operating learning systems.

- Institution evaluates the adequacy and accessibility of the resources and services for learners on an on-going basis to make improvement.

- Institution should have an effective and efficient MIS to securely maintain and update permanent records of all currently enrolled students consisting of all admission , academic and demographic , educational background records, assessment and examination results, ensuring confidentiality and security and made accessible only to authorized persons.

Criterion 5 - Learner Support and Progression

- Learner support is the gamut of all activities that help in the progression of studies, acquisition of skills for employability, inculcation of values and overall development of personality. Best practices related to this criterion embrace all activities that take place from the pre-entry contact, with the institution to the point of exit and beyond. In general students are not aware of the available student support and guidance. Arrangements that are likely to increase awareness and understanding of students and promote mutual respect and confidence amongst students and teachers are: attractive induction programmes of all new students, use of student mentoring, personal tutoring, counselling, publication of student calendar of events for each semester/academic year, use of student handbooks to convey key information to all students, provision for facilities for support.

- Learner support (comprehensive information package, contact sessions, peer support, academic and personnel counseling, online help) using a range of media is considered during programme development and is built into design of the programme/course materials.

- Potential delivery strategies (print, audio-video tapes, radio and TV, teleconferencing, computer-based instruction, computer conferencing, online learning) are identified based upon nature of learners, learning objectives and instructional methods in the context of the economic and logistical feasibility of different options.

- Instructors are given orientation, training and support in their role as distance educators and or online mentoring and tutoring.

- University handbook, course guides and other publications clearly describe ODL courses and programmes, including entry requirements, prior knowledge and skills required for pursuing the programme/course, expected learning outcomes, learner support services, assessment information, completion requirements, resource implications, time schedules and access to media and technology clearly specified prior to entry, to enable prospective students to make an informed choice regarding programmes/courses.

- Institution securely maintains updates and ensures confidentiality of a permanent record (physical and electronic) of all currently enrolled learners that consist of all admission, academic, and financial records and information on demographics, language, gender, socio-economic and educational background.

- Systems to enable interactions between instructors and learners, and between learners through the use of various forms of technology are developed and maintained.

- When student mentors or tutors/instructors are used in online learning they are well-qualified and experienced for their roles in the online learning environment.

- Policy, procedures and timeliness are in place for student assignment submission and return.

- Turn around of assignments ensures timely feedback.

- Procedures established for scheduling, notification, administration and conduct of examinations.

- Institution has established criteria which provide an objective evaluation of the learner's progress towards attaining the programme's specific educational objective and consistently applies it to evaluate learner's progress.

- The institution documents through formal institution surveys that learners are satisfied with the instructional and educational courses and services provided (whether course materials were current and comprehensive, whether grading services were prompt and fair, and if faculty members have performed adequately).

- Progression and completion rates are monitored in relation to institutional or national targets.

- Institution establishes and publishes acceptable student progress retention, graduation and employment rates.

- Institution has formal and informal mechanisms to obtain feedback from learners on efficiency and effectiveness of its processes, results feeding into the decision making and planning of its programmes.

- Learner support system targets retention and provides preventative support.

Criterion 6 – Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

- Institution pays due recognition to assessment as the key motivator to learning and as an integral part of the teaching and learning process, with continuous formative

assessment and summative assessments with timely good quality constructive feedback contributing to a supportive environment throughout the course of study.

- Institutional policy on examinations should be set out in examination By-laws, Rules, Regulations, and Manual of Examination Procedures. EDP centre should ensure that faculties/departments ensure that their processes comply with all relevant regulations, policy and guidelines in particular with reference to appointment of examiners, examination conventions (setting, marking, classification etc.) and examination reports.

- Assessment should include diagnostic, formative as well as summative methods and specific guidance on the amount and weighting of assessment, taking into account of level of study, intended learning outcomes and credit requirements of the programme/course. The amount of student time contributing to the assessment should be considered in relation to the total amount of student input required for the credit obtained. Formative assessments should be treated as learning tools and students should receive constructive feedback in a way that promotes learning and facilitates improvement. Students should be informed about the different types of assessments for the specific programme/course, the intended learning outcomes related to them, and timelines for assessment and publication of results and distribution of transcripts before the commencement of the programme/course. Students are also made aware of ethical practices, and code of conduct, for submission of assignments and project work and for sitting examinations.

- Institution regulates by clear policy, weightage of examination and continuous assessment that takes into account the rigour of each of these assessment process.

- Sound rules and regulations are in place to guarantee security procedures, disciplinary and appeal procedures, marking procedures, and for repeating assessments and examinations.

- Teaching, learning and assessment activities are integrated in order that student learning outcomes are achievable.

- Involvement of external examiners is essential as part of the process of quality control and maintaining standards.

- A procedure is in place for selection and orientation of marking examiners on an approved marking scheme to ensure consistency of marking.

- Mechanisms are in place for monitoring assessment practices and their impact on student learning experiences and outcomes.

- Assessment/examination results are documented and communicated without delay to all learners adhering to the scheduled timelines.

- Accurate record keeping of learner's attainments, which includes results, marks of individual courses, progress decisions, and final award marks, is maintained and procedures are in place to ensure the confidentiality and security of records.

- Institution has a policy and mechanism to regularly monitor student progress through a course to provide managers with data on which to decide whether they need to intervene with the running of a course and avert problems.

- Ensure all courses within a given award adopt standards of performance which are broadly similar.

- There is a clearly stated disciplinary procedure for handling malpractices and violation of code of conduct and ethical standards relating to copying, plagiarism and intellectual property rights.

- Institution has clear mechanism and procedure for collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of study, particular courses within a programme, as part of a recognized process of judging the outcomes of the programme including its effectiveness.

Chapter 3

Standards for Accreditation of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses

3.1 Introduction

It has been well recognized and documented by several educationists that ODL has conceptual, methodological, pedagogical and organizational differences from traditional teacher-centred face-to-face mode which need to be addressed in the quality assurance practices /processes. Thus although ODL is treated the same as face-to-face mode in principles and level of rigour in the quality review processes, its unique characteristics are recognized in the methods used for reviews.

In this chapter 'Standards' for programmes in the ODL context as they relate to the six 'Criteria' listed in Chapter 2have been given.

The 'Standards of Accreditation 'constitute the basic document of the accreditation process forming the base of essentials against which an institution studies and evaluates itself. Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council emphasizes educational quality by focusing on outcomes through standards and accreditation process. It also concerns itself with inputs (kinds of students in the institution , and the recruiting, admission, and testing procedures,); resources (infrastructure, equipment, library) and processes (how the institution actually operates).However all these conditions are or should be evaluated within the context of the institution's stated mission and its demonstrated achievement. Some of the 'Standards' are based on quantitative data which can be measured or counted statistically counted. Majority are soft qualitative indicators of the existence of certain conditions or trends.

'Standards' are usually established by an authority (rule or principle) or by general consent as a basis of comparison and formally adopted. Best Practices are a good gateway to Standards. We can teach best practices and encourage them to be used but in the end we require 'Standards' for comparison or assessment. Standards are a rigid set of guidelines that define exactly how a task should be carried out and completed. Generally there is not much, if any, room for variance. .

In general, Standards in education are subject to continued reinterpretation and renegotiation between stakeholders. This means that the review of the Standards themselves at regular intervals needs to be part of the plan for assuring quality.

3.2 Criteria-wise Standards

Criterion 1- Governance and Management

Scope - National policy framework is integrated within the governance of the institution. Progressive legislation, provision of adequate funding and monitoring are provided by the state. The principles which underpin the governance of EDPs are explicit and reflected in the mechanisms and activities which regulate EDPs and ensure its quality. The university has administrative policies, procedures, appropriately qualified personnel, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities, financial stability and resources adequate for the proper operation of the administrative unit and conduct academic programmes and administrative functions of the EDPs.

The focus of this Criterion is captured in the following 'Standards':

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.1 Compliance with the National Policy Framework as per the handbook on EDP and ECs.	UGC Handbook on EDPs and ECs, Corporate Plan	**0 1 2 3** 〇 〇 〇 〇
1.2 The institution has vision and mission statements that are relevant to its operational context of external degree programmes. This to be supported by clearly stated goals and objectives; clearly defined policy documents and plans which are periodically reviewed and communicated systematically to all its constituents.	Corporate Plan, Institution's Handbook, Policy framework, minutes of relevant committees (eg. Council, Senate, Faculty, Finance Committee), interaction with stakeholders	**0 1 2 3** 〇 〇 〇 〇
1.3 The organizational structure and operational units of the Administrative Entity that handles all matters relating to EDPs and ECs, are appropriate for its operations and are governed on the principle of participation and transparency.	Organisational chart, Institution's Handbook, Corporate Plan, interaction with stakeholders	**0 1 2 3** 〇 〇 〇 〇
1.4 Director/Administrative Entity coordinates development of policy regarding and ECs implementation of initiatives and practices, and facilitates the flow of information between departments offering EDPs and senior management.	Corporate Plan, policy documents, corresponding internal circulars, interaction with staff/EDP unit	**0 1 2 3** 〇 〇 〇 〇

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.5 Clearly stated and documented procedures are in place reflecting institution's commitment to learners (viz. By-laws, rules and regulations, academic calendar, orientation, counseling and other services) and made known to all concerned in a timely manner.	By-laws, Rules & Regulations, academic calendar, handbook, prospectus, minutes of relevant committees, internal circulars	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.6 The institution has clearly identified policy and selection procedures for collaborative relationships and partnerships between state and non-state institutions or organizations for academic and extension purposes with clearly defined responsibilities and accountability.	Policy documents, MoUs, approved selection criteria, TORs	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.7 There are specified criteria for regular monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of the services of the collaborative partners and reviewing their status.	Responsible committee documents, M and E instrument, annual reports	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.8 The institution ensures that information is available to all staff and learners regarding services in the institution, its outreach centres and outsourced centres.	Student handbook, prospectus, website. path for information flow, interaction with learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.9 Sufficiently qualified and competent academic , administrative, academic support staff are employed, as per approved selection criteria,to meet the institution's objectives of EDPs and ECs.	HR policy docs, staff recruitment, promotion circulars of UGC and university, cadre provision documents of UGC	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.10 Institution provides regular on-going staff training programmes which respond to identified needs of all categories of staff involved in enhancing knowledge and skills of distance learners.	HR policy documents, SDC plans, training schedules, and training manuals, feedback on training programmes, training budget	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.11 There is an effective performance management and appraisal system for all categories of staff engaged in EDPs and ECs which promotes accountability and effectiveness of staff in performing their activities.	Annual performance evaluation reports, and recommendations, increment forms, minutes of selection boards for promotion	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.12 The institution has an effective transparent financial management system in respect of EDPs and ECs and ensures that finances are judiciously allocated and effectively utilized to make the programme and functioning cost-effective.	Minutes of finance committee meetings indicating allocations, annual reports, audit reports, cash flow and balance sheets	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.13 The institution makes adequate financial allocation from the self generated funds, for procurement, maintenance, replacement and upgrading of media/technology, and infrastructure required for effective teaching learning for distance learners.	Minutes of finance committee meetings indicating allocations, annual reports, audit reports, cash flow and balance sheets; minutes of Management Committee	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.14 The institution (Centre for ODL or its equivalent) provides a clear, accurate and comprehensive information package at the commencement of the academic year for potential learners regarding all aspects of EDPs on offer through ODL to enable students to make informed choices of their study.	Handbook/ prospectus, Programme/course information brochures, website, advertisements	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.15 Admission and selection criteria are consistent with regulations laid down by the UGC and number of students selected takes into account its capacity to offer good quality learning, modes of delivery and market needs.	UGC documents, selection criteria and numbers approved by senate	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
1.16 The institution ensures maintenance of an up-to-date and comprehensive database on learners of EDPs.	MIS,LMS, student profile, minutes of relevant committees	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.17 Institution has effective channels of communication and coordination between management, faculty, staff, current and past learners to ensure timely information flow across them.	Documented feedback mechanisms and plans, evidence of systems which achieve integration of feedback data from all stakeholders, surveys of stakeholders awareness and opinions	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.18 Institution has transparent mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies for improvement.	Feedback instruments, data analysis, policy change documentations, interaction with staff and students	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.19 There is transparent, fair, effective and expeditious grievance redressal mechanisms for learners.	Examination By-laws, general discipline by-laws, minutes of grievance committee or its equivalent structure, interaction with learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.20 The institution has formal and informal mechanisms and instruments in place for regular monitoring and feedback processes to obtain data from current and past learners, all categories of staff and employers with respect to administration, curriculum, technology and examination matters and feedback results fed into improvement of policies and programmes.	Survey instruments and reports, minutes of the relevant committees, evidence of use of data for improvement, feedback from learners/staff/employers	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.21 Mechanism is in place for external consultants to critically study the quality of graduates periodically and make appropriate recommendations.	Policy document, consultant's report	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.22 The QA policy and procedures for EDPs have a formal status and publicly available through the institution's Corporate Plan.	Policy documents on quality, QA framework, Corporate Plan	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
1.23 An internal mechanism is in place to ensure that appropriate changes in policies/systems/processes in relation to EDPs operations identified through monitoring and evaluation are communicated to all relevant stakeholders and acted upon.	Policy documents, minutes of IQA unit, Corporate Plan, feedback from stakeholders	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.24 Policy and procedures are in place for continuous improvement of all aspects of programmes and QA system through introspection and self assessment practices and move towards excellence.	Policy documents, QA framework of institution; Corporate plan, EDP minutes	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
1.25 Institution has a stated policy of QA of EDPs towards objective appraisal of institutional practices by external agencies(eg QAA) and satisfy the requirements of external quality reviews.	Policy documents, Corporate plan; QA external review reports	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 2 – Programme Design and Organisation

Scope - Programmes reflect institution's mission, goals and objectives. They are designed and developed in terms of need analysis based on an audit of existing courses and programmes, market research, liaison with industry, national and regional priorities and according to approved procedures for programme development. The programme complies with level descriptors that apply to the relevant NQF level and Benchmark Statements of the respective subjects/disciplines (where available), relating to subject knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes, teaching learning strategies, assessment strategies, standards, student attainment and benchmark levels, and the needs of distance learners.

Focus of this criterion is captured in the following 'Standards':

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
2.1 Programmes are consistent with the mission, goals and objectives of the institution, national and market needs and reflect global trends.	Corporate Plan, programme design and development plans, minutes of programme development committee, market survey.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
2.2 The institution establishes policies, rules and regulations, clearly communicated to all stakeholders on curriculum development, programme design and approvals, programme specification, credit currency, credit accumulation and transfer, evaluation and review of programmes and awards.	Curriculum and course development and evaluation policies, and procedures; credit accumulation and transfer policy and procedures; evidence of adopting them	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
2.3 Curriculum is developed through a survey of learning needs of the target group and relevant stakeholders and relevance to the national needs.	Reports of need survey analysis, minutes of planning/course planning meetings and development plans/schedules	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
2.4 All decisions pertaining to the curriculum are based on the programme level learning outcomes and aligned with teaching and learning and assessment (constructive alignment) to ensure all graduates possess the full complement of the graduate profile.	Evidence of adopting SBS, SLQF, standards of professional bodies in programme/course development. Senate approved programme/course offerings; curriculum development committee minutes.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
2.5 The programme objectives are clearly defined in the Programme document and aligned to Subject Benchmark Statements (where available) and focus on the development of knowledge, attitudes, values and skills and their application in work environment.	Corporate Plan, Strategic plan, Action Plan, programme design and development documents, handbook, programme evaluation documents, employer survey documents.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.6 The academic standard of each programme is appropriate to the level and nature of the award and aligned to the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS).	Benchmark statements, programme/course information package, learning materials, SLQF,SBS	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.7 The Programme design maintains an appropriate balance of theoretical, practical and experiential knowledge and skills and has sufficient disciplinary content and theoretical depth at the appropriate level of study as per SLQF & SBS.	Curriculum development documents, course development plans, learning materials., SLQF,SBS	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.8 The programme planning and budgeting takes into account potential generated income, learning infrastructure, human resources and related matters affecting the feasibility and sustainability of the programme(s).	Senior management committee and finance committee documents, annual report, interaction with EDP unit.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.9 Mechanism and procedures are in place for the programme coordinator to undertake co-ordination of design, development and delivery of the programme/course, regular monitoring and evaluation of the programme /course through a regular and structured feedback mechanism.	Job description of programme coordinator, programme/course design and development schedules, survey instruments and feedback data.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide
		0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
2.10 Institution provides an accurate academic calendar prepared at the beginning of every year that gives details such as dates for enrollment, commencement and completion of programme, contact sessions, assignments, examinations, release of results, awards etc. and meticulously follow it.	Year planner/academic calendar, operational schedules, prospectus and brochures, course plans, interaction with learners and tutors (interviews, feedback surveys).	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.11 Structured mechanism in place for reviewing a programme after 3-4 years of the first offer, at mid-life to assess the effectiveness of the programme achieving its objectives.	Monitoring instruments and feedback data, restructuring committee documents, senate approval for changes,	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.12 Programmme is made up of courses to maintain coherence in course content within a given programme and allow for learner mobility.	Curriculum and course development policies, programme/course design and development documents and schedules., interaction with students on opportunities for mobility)	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
2.13 The institution enforces external participation at key stages of the approval and review of programmes for ensuring standards and quality.	Evidence of participation of external experts in curriculum planning, design and development of materials; in assessment; in programme/course reviews and evaluation	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 3 – Course Design and Development

Scope -   Courses are components of a programme of study and are designed according to the stated programme objectives following a standard format for instructional design and development. Adequate emphasis is given in the course design for the development of self-directed independent and lifelong learning.

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
3.1 The courses are designed according to the stated programme objectives and reflect current developments and knowledge in relevant field of study.	Programme/course development plans and schedules, subject editor's reports, employer survey reports, interaction with stakeholders and experts in the relevant field)	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.2 Instructional design and course development is through a course team approach and based on a course plan that describes processes, timelines, resources, delegation of responsibility of those who are involved thus ensuring quality.	Curriculum and course development and accreditation policies, academic review policies, approved guidelines, minutes of the relevant committees	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.3 Standard format/templates for instructional design and development are in place and complied with during the instructional design and development.	Senate approved guidelines for QA, course development plans and schedules, templates for design and development, interaction with course developers/ documents relating to it.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.4 Courses are designed based on learner-centered principles.	Course materials (online/ Print, handbook, Continuous assessment feedback.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○
3.5 Learning strategies for the development of self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork are integrated into the course.	Curriculum programme/course development plans, instructional package, types of assessments and evaluation, interaction with learners, course developers, tutors.	0 1 2 3 ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
3.6 Course design integrates assessment methods to teaching and learning strategy to enable learners to achieve stated learning outcomes.	Student guide book/hand book, course materials, By-laws governing programmes/courses., assessment instruments with feedback	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.7 Learner support strategies are integrated into the course design.	Student guidebooks, prospectus, course material, LMS for students	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.8 Relevant copyright procedures have been followed when reproducing diagrams , photographs etc.	Programme/course design and development plans, instructional package, communications on copy rights, minutes of the relevant committees	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.9 The course materials developed are pilot-tested and quality assured before release.	Instruments for pilot testing, reports of the survey, amended course materials, senate approved guidelines for QA	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.10 Appropriate personnel and procedures are in place to ensure timely production and distribution of instructional package to learners.	Year planner, Operations planner, interactions with learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.11 Evaluation mechanism is in place to evaluate the instructional package at the end of each course and its mid-life for its content, user friendliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of teaching, measuring learning outcomes of learners and to assure that they meet programme standards. Feedback is utilized in improving the course materials.	M and E instruments, evidence of using data, interaction with learners, staff, tutors survey reports	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.12 Mechanisms for adoption and adaptation are established to encourage linkages with national and international institutions for course design, development and delivery.	MOUs, products of linkages	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
3.13 The institution has a policy to encourage the adoption/adaptation of Open Educational Resources (OER).	Policy documents, adopted/adapted OERs	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.14 Institution provides training and continuous training to all staff engaged in the design and delivery of programmes/courses.	Year planner of the Staff Development Centre (SDC), Need surveys carried out with the SDC, feedback from trained staff	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.15 Institution provides opportunities for students to develop creative, critical thinking, independent and lifelong learning, interpersonal communication and team work skills through appropriate teaching learning strategies integrated into the design of courses.	Evidence of curriculum of the programme/course on offer reflecting teaching learning methods to promote the development of higher order skills ; student achievement survey data; student satisfaction survey data; interaction with students; programme evaluation data.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
3.16 The institution provides a pathway to students to acquire credit for prior certificated/non-certificated learning to meet the needs of student diversity and context of lifelong learning.	Policy and procedures for recognition and excemption of prior learning; policies and procedures for evaluation of such prior learning and awarding credit; evidence of students obtaining excemptions	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 4 – Infrastructure and Learning Resources

Scope - The institution has adequate and appropriate infrastructure facilities to conduct quality academic programmes through distance education. Institution's strategic, operational and financial plans recognise and support adequacy, appropriateness and optimal use of facilities including new technologies, for teaching-learning, management and administration of ODL programmes.

The focus of this criterion captures the following 'Standards'.

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
4.1 The institution has adequate infrastructure facilities including ICT facilities and human resources for effective and efficient administration functioning of the administrative Entity handling EDPs programmes.	Institution planning and human resource (HR) documents, UGC cadre book; staff profile	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.2 The institution provides appropriate ICT facilities to staff to support ODL.	Reports of need analysis and survey, resource allocation document, interaction with learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.3 Learning resources such as library, laboratory and ICT facilities necessary for effective production and delivery of EDPs are made accessible for learners.	Information pack, schedules, course materials, MIS, interaction with staff and learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.4 The institution ensures that accountable mechanism and adequate financial resources are in place for procurement, repair, and sustained maintenance and upkeep of infrastructure and learning resources for distance learners.	Minutes of finance committee & maintenance and procurement committees, expenditure statements, service agreements	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.5 The institution ensures recruitment of qualified, competent and adequate staffas per institution approved selection criteria for effective implementation of EDPs.	Recruitment, retention and promotion criteria, policy documents, documents of selection boards	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
4.6 The institution has policies and procedures for recruiting and defining the roles and responsibilities of visiting /contract staff assessing their performance periodically and taking remedial actions.	Recruitment, appointment and promotion criteria, policy documents, documentation of performance review systems, work norms, job description and organizational chart	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.7 The institution has an effective policy for human resource development to orient, train, re-train and motivate academic and tutorial staff and a mechanism for impact assessment of the training undertaken.	SDC policy and plans, budget allocations, training schedules of staff, questionnaire/schedules to collect information on the impact of staff training and use of data	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.8 The institution has an effective performance management and appraisal system of staff for identification training needs in order to improve staff performance.	SDC policy and plans, Work norms, performance and appraisal committee structure, TOR and minutes of meetings, appraisal forms and feedback university documents on student methods, policies of self appraisal	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.9 The institution has adequate staff: learner ratio to ensure learning conditions /environment conducive to teaching learning for distance learners.	UGC staff ratio, minutes of the course coordinator's meetings, student feedback	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
4.10 The institution has mechanisms to monitor (regularly) and evaluate periodically(annually) the quality, adequacy and accessibility of infrastructure facilities including those of outreach centres/collaborating external institutions, data analysed and appropriate remedial measures taken.	Monitoring and Evaluation instruments, feedback reports, minutes of relevant committees.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 5 – Learner Support and Progression

Scope -   Physical, technical, academic and professional support systems to which learners have access are critical aspects of quality assurance. Interactive instructional techniques that engage learners in self-directed learning are important considerations. Learners are supported adequately throughout the duration of their study by the provision of a range of opportunities for tutoring at a distance through the use of various forms of appropriate technology. Learners are aware of and have access to effective and well resourced support for teaching and learning. Support structures facilitate learner's holistic progression.

Focus of this criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
5.1 The institution maintains a permanent record (manual and digital) of all currently enrolled students of admission, academic, financial and examination records in an up-to-date comprehensive database of learners to make informed decisions on appropriate learner support.	MIS, up-to-date student profiles, minutes of programme/course development plans, financial and examination records of students.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
5.2 Clear channels of communication are established between current learners, tutors, staff and policy making bodies and timely information flow is ensured amongst them.	Information package, feedback reports on communication, minutes of relevant meetings, important notices by post, email etc.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
5.3 The institution provides orientation sessions on ODL for new learners immediately after admission procedure is completed, and effectiveness of the sessions is improved through regular learner feedback.	Brief on orientation sessions, Information package, student handbook, schedules on time & venue, M&E instruments and data collected	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
5.4 The production, development and dispatch of learner-centred instructional package and delivery of courses are timely and quality assured.	Course development plans, instructional package, year planner, operational schedules, interaction with learners	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.5. There is appropriate guidance and support structures and instructional processes empowering learners to acquire skills for introspection, critical thinking, independent learning, interactive learning, collaborative learning and development of learning communities.	Curriculum/course development plans, Information package/ handbook, instructional package, evaluation and assessment schemes, interaction with learners and tutors,	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.6. Learners have access to tutors through a variety of media including ICT and at outreach centres.	Information package, student handbook schedules, LMS, interaction with learners and tutors	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.7 Learners are supported through a combination of a variety of learning resources such as self-learning study material, audio visual aids, CD-ROM, on-line learning, face-to-face contact sessions laboratory sessions, library and outreach centres(blended learning) and a variety of learning strategies.	Student handbook, instructional package, interaction with learners, tutors	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.8 Institution ensures sufficient academic support to learners who may be under-prepared for learning at a distance through the provision of bridging courses, additional units within existing courses or increasing face-to-face support.	Bridge courses, optional units, Information package, student handbook, schedules, feedback from tutors, records of face-to-face support.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
5.9 The institution has a transparent mechanism in place to regularly obtain (formal & informal; qualitative and quantitative), feedback from multiple sources on aspects such as extent to which the intended learning outcomes of the programme have been achieved, learner satisfaction, teaching learning process, adequacy and accessibility of support services, learner achievement etc.	Monitoring and Evaluation instruments and feedback reports.	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.10 Collated andanalysed data of the feedback used for improvement.	Analysed data and documents on incorporation of feedback data, amended programmes/courses	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.11 The institution ensures that the learner support system in place targets retention (reduce drop out %) and facilitates progression of learners from one level of education to the next higher level, successfully completes courses /programme and towards gainful employment.	Survey reports on progression, survey reports with employers, minutes of relevant council/senate on decisions, documents on learner support	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
5.12 The institution ensures that the retention rate, progression rate, course completion rate and graduation rate are monitored on a continuous basis in relation to institutional/national targets and documented with a view to improve teaching learning process and resource management.	Periodic survey reports on progression of learners, employer's reports response of EDP and Senate	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Criterion 6 – Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

Scope - Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and the analysis of assessment outcomes used to inform curricular improvements. The institution has effective evaluation and assessment systems that reflect institutional, national and international standards and measure the accomplishment of the stated learning outcomes for individual programme/course through the use of diagnostic, formative and summative types of assessments. The institution ensures that principle, procedures and processes of all assessments are explicit, fair, transparent, valid, consistent and ensure integrity. There is an open and participative mechanism for periodic evaluation of teaching and learning.

The focus of this criterion is captured in the following 'Standards'.

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
6.1 Different forms of assessment strategies appropriate to achieving the stated learning outcomes of the individual programme/course are decided at the programme/course development stage and stated in the course material.	Institution's rules and regulations, constitution, student handbook, course development plans, instructional package, By-laws of programmes and examinations	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
6.2 Assessment procedures and processes are in place through By-laws, Regulations and Rules; security, confidentiality and integrity of assessment systems and processes related to setting, marking and record keeping are ensured; Criteria regulations and procedures are communicated to all students and staff and applied consistently.	Manual of examination procedure, examination By-laws, rules and regulations, boards of examiners meeting minutes; evidence of staff and students being aware of them	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○
6.3 institution ensures that the amount of timing of assessment, and weightage of different types of assessments take into account the level of study, credit requirements and intended outcomes of the programme/course.	Institution's rules and regulations, constitution, student handbook, course development plans, instructional package, By-laws of programmes and examinations	**0 1 2 3** ○ ○ ○ ○

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
6.4 At the beginning of each academic year, institution communicates to the learners through course information/sheets/schedulescomplete information on the different types of assessment and assessment techniques, for programme/course, grading criteria, timelines for assessments and publication of results.	Handbook, rules and regulations of programmes, course schedules, interaction with learners, university website.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.5 The institution ensures learners receive timely constructive feedback on assessments in a way that promotes learning and facilitates academic improvement.	Academic calendar, programme/course schedules, learner's feedback (print/online), tutor's feedback, university website,	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.6 Assessment results are documented and communicated without delay to all learners.	Manual of examination procedure, examination By-laws, Board of Examiners, result sheets; learners feedback	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.7 Institution ensures transparency, fairness and consistency in the assessment system.	Institution's rules and regulations, course materials, minutes of the examination, minutes of evaluation and moderation committees	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.8 Assessment strategy of institution has provision for external examiners for setting, moderating and marking.	Institution's rules and regulations, manual of examination procedure, examination By-laws, examiners profile	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.9 Detailed and standardized marking schemes be provided to all examiners and examiners be orientated on the marking schemes to ensure consistency in marking.	Institution's rules and regulations, policy documents, documents on orientation sessions for marking examiners	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Standards	Sources of Evidence	Score guide 0 - Inadequate 1 - Barely Adequate 2 - Adequate 3 - Good
6.10 The intuition has a mechanism through evaluation of programmes, courses and awards for reviewing the effectiveness of the teaching learning processes and the overall performance of learners.	Minutes of examiners board/panel, documents relating to selection and appointment of examiners, examiners profile, manual of procedure for exams, interaction with staff& students, students feedback data.	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.11 There is a clearly stated disciplinary procedure for handling malpractices and violation of code of conduct and ethical standards relating to copying, plagiarism and reproduction of open source materials.	Institution's rules and regulations, code of conduct and ethical practices, examination By-laws, rules and regulations	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.12 The institution adheres to the disciplinary procedure and initiates timely and justifiable disciplinary action wherever applicable.	Institution's rules and regulations, code of conduct and ethical practices, examination By-laws, rules and regulations	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.13 There is a mechanism to ensure that complaints from the learners about the fairness of the assessment and formal appeal against assessment results are dealt with fairly and in a timely manner.	Grievance redressal committee documents, meetings held and proceedings, evidence of any incidents addressed	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯
6.14 Assessment standards are benchmarked against the practices in the national university system.	Documents relating to alignment of assessment standards to QAAC standards	**0 1 2 3** ◯ ◯ ◯ ◯

Chapter 4

Performance Evaluation and Accreditation of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses

4.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with methods of quality assessments (performance evaluation of an institution or programme) and accreditation (certification given on the basis of such assessment). The process of assessment is designed towards holistic, objective, systematic, data-based and transparent method which can contribute to institutional improvement. Accreditation is a means of assisting institutions to become better by setting standards against which all institutions can be measured. Accreditation serves as an indication of institutional quality. Terms of reference for assessment and accreditation by UGC-QAAC are excellence in education and not minimal standards. The outcome of the process would include whether an accredited programme is very good, good or satisfactory.

For each of the six criteria peers look for evidence/s to validate the claims and to judge the standing of the institution. The chapter also includes evaluation scheme for calculating both standard-wise score and criteria-wise score and determination of overall grade.

The report on the quality of education offered will be significant to the institution in making its plans for the future and for mid-course corrections.

The purpose of quality assessment is to validate the governance and management systems. It includes all the processes, activities, feedback systems, monitoring mechanisms and inform future improvement strategies to ensure that institution is doing what it says it is doing, and in the way it has specified in its mission, goals and objectives. It is essentially about establishing and managing operational and academic standards and ensuring regular reviews with the following questions in mind:

- What do we do? (What products and services are offered?)
- Whether what we do is in agreement with the national policy framework and guidelines as prescribed in the UGC Handbook on External Degree and Extension Courses (2010)
- How well we do it? (What are the standards?)
- How do we know? (What monitoring techniques are used?)

- What do we do to improve it and demonstrate the improvements? (What is the response to the problem?)

As stated in Chapter 1 the two common quality assurance approaches used are:

i. External Quality Assurance t (EQA), mechanism conducted by an external agency and based both on self-analysis and external assessment by peers.

ii. Internal quality assurance (IQA) which is established within the university as a continuous internal mechanism that promotes the growth and sustenance of a culture of quality within institutions (for further details refer 1.5.1 of Chapter 1).

4.2 Procedures for External Quality Assurance (EQA) and Accreditation

While the UGC-QAAC employs its own fact finding methods to determine an institution's compliance with accrediting standards the burden rests with the institution to establish it is meeting the standards. In line with the international trend the process of external assurance is carried out through four stages (figure 4.1): The stages are outlined below:

Stage I: The development of nationally formulated criteria and standards through stakeholder participation on which to base the assessment process.

Stage II: The preparation of a SER, by the institution on the pre-determined criteria for assessment.

Stage III: Validation of the SER by a Team of Peers who would visit the institution, and submission of recommendations of assessment outcome to the UGC-QAAC.

Stage IV: The scrutiny and approval of the peer team Review Report by UGC-QAAC.

Stage I: Development of Criteria and Standards

As described in Chapter 3, for quality assurance, the following criteria have been identified through national consultations and consensus involving all the relevant stakeholders.

1. Governance and Management

2. Programme Design and Organisation

3. Course Design and Development

4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

5. Learner Support and Progression

6. Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

If the inputs from the institution under these criteria are collated, it would give adequate details on all the features of a programme such as its policies, practices, programmes, resources and performance. For each 'Criterion' 'Accreditation Standards' are given in Chapter 3.

Stage II: Preparation of Self-evaluation Report by the institution

The next and most important stage in the process of assessment and accreditation is self-evaluation and the preparation of the SER by the Institution/Administrative Entity of EDPs along the guidelines formulated in this Manual. Self-evaluation is envisaged as the backbone of the process of assessment and accreditation. It is an assessment of the complete institution conducted by the faculty and students as well as by the institution's administration.

Self-evaluation is intended to be a tool for critical reflection on the degree of compliance with National Policy Framework and Guidelines on EDPs and ECs prescribed by the UGC, institutional practices and facilitates to identify its strengths and weaknesses and to measure its effectiveness and efficiency. This will be an internal exercise by the institution that is expected to be done with honest introspection. The institution needs to present the factual details of all the aspects of its functioning, namely, the inputs, processes, and the outputs/outcomes, in a meaningful way. The SER enables the Peer Team to understand the institution and evaluate it prior to its visit.

As the entire process of assessment would be based on this document it should be prepared with utmost care. Thus a format (Annex 1) for collecting data for the Self-evaluation Report has been developed to facilitate institutions in obtaining and providing adequate and relevant information in an organized and systematic manner. This process requires the institution to have an effective data collection and analysis capability, both to conduct the initial assessment and to undertake continuous monitoring. The Administrative Entity that handles EDPs and ECs would have to collect and collate the information for the preparation of the SER. Guidelines for writing SER are given in the Annex 2.

The SER should be presented in two parts. Part Icontains the data about the institution and forms the base for Part II. The Institution is expected to analyse the data collected in Part 1 and present a narrative summative analysis of its functions including its strengths and weaknesses under the six criteria in Part II.

Quality Assurance Agency assesses programmes and grades them on the basis of the six criteria. Under each one of the six criteria in Annex 1, there are key indicators on which the institutions are expected to provide data in the SER.

It is recommended that as many staff as possible get involved in the preparation of the SER. A contact person should be assigned to each criterion in the SER. This would also help the review team to determine who to interview during the on-site visit. Adequate publicity about the site visits should be given to all relevant staff and students.

The SER should be accompanied by supporting documents for all statements made along with the required number of copies. The institution must provide appropriate instruction and passwords as necessary for full access to the institution's website and on-line courses /activities to allow the reviewers to review the appropriate sites before the on-site visits.

The original bulky documents should be arranged criterion-wise as far as possible and placed in the review team meeting room. A staff member appointed to liaise with the UGC-QAAC and Peer Team should facilitate in locating the relevant documents during the peer review.

Institution should incorporate the self-evaluation process as a permanent part of the institutional operations. The process of self-evaluation is expected to be a significant and on-going experience for the staff and faculty of the institution, to examine itself and to draft findings and recommendations for its own action. Improvements within an institution should be due primarily to its internal efforts rather than due to an on-site evaluation by an outside team.

Stage III:

A: Site visit of the Peer Team for validation

The purpose of the on-site evaluation is to verify data in the SER, seek additional data, and in general develop an understanding of how well the institution meets its objective and the 'Standards of Accreditation' .The on-site evaluation is conducted in accordance with the procedures as established by the UGC-QAAC.

As soon as the institution submits its SER, the QA Agency will identify a Team of Peer reviewers in consultation with the institution. The review team visits the institution during the days mutually agreed upon. The team seeks for pattern of evidences to validate the claims made in the SER through checking the institutional reports, records, policy documents, monitoring and review mechanisms, and proof of implementation of feedback outcomes. They also interact with learners, the top management, relevant Deans, relevant heads of departments, teaching and academic support staff, administrative and support staff to find out their opinion on the various processes and practices.

It is the responsibility of the UGC-QAAC to assure and instill confidence among the academia with a reliable and transparent objective and fair assessment process. In addressing this, to minimize the subjectivity in peer assessment, efforts have been made to develop 'Standards' and score guide (Chapter 3).The peers will match the criteria standards and source of evidence with the information provided in the SER, together with additional information received through interaction. Using the score guide they will evaluate the performance in terms of programme score, as described below.

B: Procedure for use of 'Accrediting Standards' for assessment and accreditation of a Programme

The procedure describes how the standards of the six Criteria, the evidence given against each Standard by the institution offering the programme and the score guide are used in arriving at the final assessment of performance of a programme by the external peer team.

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The procedure is described in five steps.

Step 1 - The evidence given against each Standard by the institution are carefully and objectively analysed and assessed.

Step 2 - Based on the evidence, assessment of the extent to which each Standard has been achieved by the institution is recorded by placing a tick in the appropriate circle against each Standard on a 4-point scale from 0-3 (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 – Score Guide for each Standard

Score	Descriptor
0	Inadequate
1	Barely Adequate
2	Adequate
3	Good

Each Standard will receive a score from 0-3 **(Standard-wise score)**

Step 3 -Performance of eachCriterion is derived by totaling the scores gained in all the Standards in respect of the Criterion. The value obtained is the **'raw Criterion-wise score'**.

Differential weightages of Criteria

Recognising the variance in their relative importance in the learning experience, different Criteria have been allotted differential weightages on a thousand scale. The weightages given in Table 4.2 will be used for calculating the **'actual Criterion – wise score'.**

Table 4.2 – Differential weightages of criteria

No.	Assessment/Accreditation Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale
1	Governance and Management	150
2	Programme Design and Organisation	100
3	Course Design and Development	250
4	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	150
5	Learner Support and Progression	200
6	Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards	150
	Total	1000

Step 4 - Based on the weightages listed in Table 4.2 and the formula given in Box1, the 'raw Criterion- wise score' is converted into an 'actual Criterion-wise score'.

Taking Criterion 5 which has 12 Standards as an example, and a value of 30 for the 'raw Criterion-wise score' given by the peer review team , the 'actual Criterion-wise score' for Learner Support and Progression (Criterion 5 in Chapter 3) is 167 (Box 2).

Box 2 - Formula for converting 'raw score' to 'actual score' on the respective weighted scale

<u>Raw criterion-wise score</u>   X weightage in a 1000 point scale = 'actual score'
Maximum score for each criterion
(= total number of standards for
the respective criterion x 3
which is the maximum score for
any standard)

Example: Criterion 5 with weightage of 200(Table 4.2) and12 standards

Raw criterion-wise score (given by the peer review team) = 30

Maximum Score = 36 (12 standards X 3)

Weightage in a 1000 scale = 200 (as in Table 4.2))

Actual criterion-wise score $= \frac{30}{36} \times 200 = 166.6 \approx 167$

Step 5 The **programme – wise score** is derived by totaling all the 'actual criteria-wise scores' of the six criteria and converting the total to a percentage as exemplified in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 – Programme Score Conversion to percentage

No	Criteria	minimum weighted score*	actual criteria-wise score
1	Governance and Management	60	60
2	Programme Design and Organisation	40	75
3	Course Design and Development	100	60
4	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	60	70
5	Learner Support and Progression	80	167
6	Learner Assessment and Awards	60	75
	Total Programme score		**507**
	% Programme score		**51**

*Represents 40% of the values given in Table 4.2

Programme-wise score is graded as shown in Table 4.4:

Table 4.4 – Grading guide for overall programme performance

Programme score%	Grade	Performance descriptor	Interpretation of descriptor
≥ 80	A	Very good	High level of accomplishment as expected of an institution; should move towards excellence.
65-79	B	Good	Adequate level of academic accomplishment expected of an institution; room for improvement.
50-64	C	Satisfactory	Minimum level of academic accomplishment expected of an institution; requires improvement.
≤ 49	D	Poor	Needs significant degree of improvement.

Assessment outcomes based on the programme score

Accreditation cycle is five years. For accreditation of programmes, if the programme score is not less than 50 %, provided that the criterion-wise score for each of the six criteria is not less than 40 %, programme gets **'Accredited'** status for five years. Accredited programme will be graded as in Table 4.5. If the programme score is in the range of 40-49 %, provided that the criterion-wise score for each of the six criteria is not less than 40%, the programme will be given **'Provisional Accreditation'** status.

For a programme to receive an accreditation status, the following conditions are applicable.
  i)   Overall programme Score should be greater than or equal to 50%
         and
  ii)   A score equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for all 6 criteria (Table 4.3).

For a programme to receive a 'Provisional Accreditation', the following conditions are applicable.
  i)   Overall programme Score should be in the Range of 40% to 49%
         and
  ii)   A score equal to or more than the minimum weighted score for all 6 criteria (Table 4.3).

If the Programme score is less than 40% the Programme receives the result **'Not Accredited'**.

Failure to demonstrate compliance with Accrediting Standards throughout the period of accreditation, may result in an Institution/Programme being removed from the accreditation list (i.e. **'Withdrawal of Accreditation'**)

Grade of accredited programme will be A, B or C as in Table 4.5

Table 4.5 – Grading of an accredited programme

Programme score %	Grade	Descriptor
>80	A	Very good
65-79	B	Good
50-64	C	Satisfactory

Summary of outcomes

- Accredited
- Provisional accreditation
- Not accredited
- Withdrawal of accreditation

Accreditation outcome for the example referred to Table 4.3 is given in Box 3.

Box 3 - Outcome of accreditation

Programme Score   is 51 as per table 4.3

Outcome - **'Accredited'**

Grade - C,

Satisfactory

i.e. minimum level of academic accomplishment and expected of an institution and requiring improvements.

An institution with an outcome of 'Provisional Accreditation', 'Not Accredited' and 'Withdrawal of Accreditation' may request for re-accreditation after one year beginning on the date the UGC-QAAC informs an institution of the outcomes of accreditation.

At the end of the visit the Peer Team will discuss issues of concern which find a place in the draft report, with the Head of the institution for his/her observations and response. The report without the confidential part (Steps 1-5) will be shared with the institution and the highlights of the same will be discussed with the representatives of the institution during the exit meeting. The final report signed by the Peer Team and the Head of the Institution will be passed on to UGC-QAAC along with the confidential recommendation of the team by the Chair of the Peer Team. The Peer Team Report on the states of external degree programmes usually highlights the positive aspects, deficiencies and make recommendations to the institution for improvements. Successful evaluation results in a certification commonly referred to as accreditation.

The decision of the UGC-QAAC will be final and it will be communicated to the institution in due course.

Stage IV: The scrutiny and the approval of the Peer Team Report by UGC-QAAC

Quality Assurance Agency having perused the report confirms the status of assessment and forwards it to the respective institution. Since what is really important in this exercise is that post assessment actions should lead to improvement, the institutions are expected to comply with all the recommendations made by the Peer Team in the review report.

The flow chart depicting the steps in the external quality assessment process is given in Figure 4.1

Figure 4.1- Steps in the External Quality Assessment process

Timeline	Action by	Task
9 months prior to the site visit	QAAC/ Institution	Committee to be appointed at a high level to coordinate the collection and analysis of data and appoint a coordinator of the committee to liaise between the institution, QAAgency and the Review Team. QAAgency official visits the institution to meet institutional representatives and brief the review process.
	Institution	Preparation of the SER
Stipulated by QAAgency	Institution	Submission of Submit SER to QAAC Working space arrangement for Peer Team Display supporting documents in the identified room Publicity to all departments/staff and students SER and preparation for on-site visit
Immediately after submission of SER	QAAC/ UGC	Plan for Peer Team visit Set dates of visits Select and appoint Peer Team in consultation with the institution
One month from the submission of the SER	Peer Team	Site visit Conduct on-site visits (3-5 consecutive days) Scrutinizes documents and calls for additional if required Interaction with the various functionaries
One month after the site visit	Peer Team	Preparation of Peer Team's Report Peer Team prepares report Chair of Peer Team hands over the report to Head of Institution Finalization of report after feedback from the institution
	Peer Team	Submission of Report by Chair of Peer Team to QAAgency
Two weeks from the date of receipt of final report	QAAgency	QAAgency decides on status of assessment and informs institution
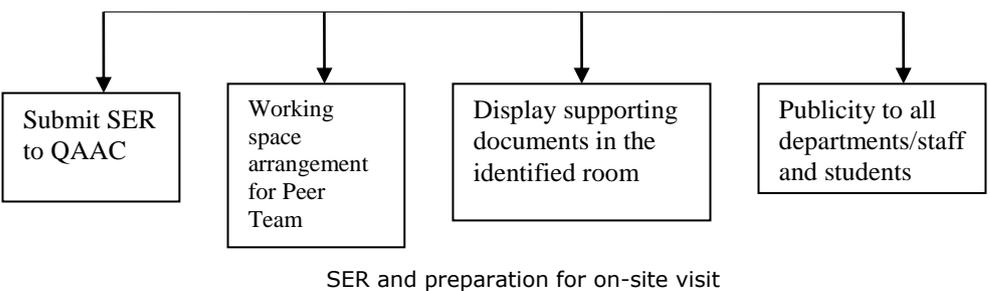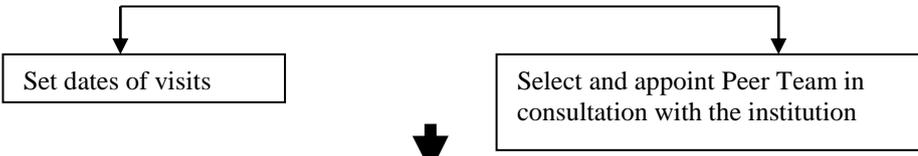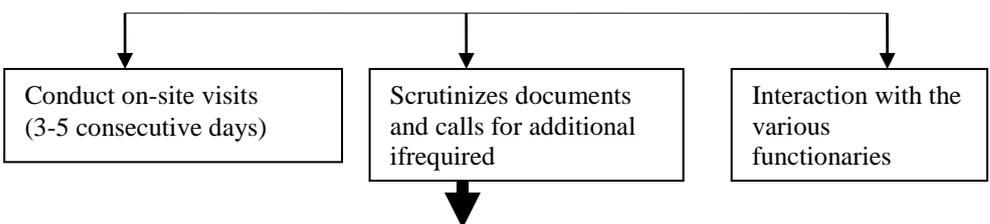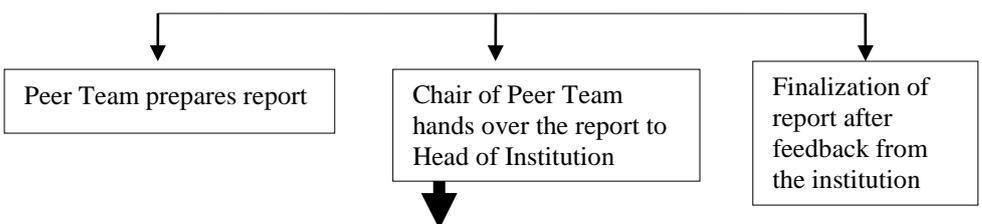
4.3   Using the standards as a tool for self-review for continuous improvement

Self-assessment of a Programme has 3 steps:

1   Standard-wise judgement

2   Criterion-wise judgement

3   Calculation of overall Programme score

1   Standard-wise judgement

i The first step is to collect data and information about the operation/activity under each of the six Criteria to be reviewed. Sources of evidence against each standard in chapter 3 will help in indicating the kinds of data to be collected and recorded. The institution should have an effective data collection and analysis capability both to conduct an initial assessment and to make continuous monitoring of the aspects and processes identified for improvement.

ii   'Accrediting Standards' are applied to the corresponding operation/s of a particular Criterion. Carefully and objectively analyse the evidences (indicated in column 2 of chapter 3) and/or other relevant evidences provided by the institution in respect of that standard.

iii   Performance of each standard of a Criterion, is recorded by ticking the relevant circle on the 4-point scale (Table 4.1) given against each of the Standard (column 3 of chapter 3) and reading the corresponding score (**Standard-wise score**).

2   Criterion-wise judgement

Performance of each Criterion is derived by totaling the scores gained in all of the Standards in respect of that Criterion. The value obtained is the '**Criterion-wise score'**.

3   Calculation of Pragramme Score

The **programme score** is derived by totaling the 'criteria-wise scores' of all of the six criteria.

This will enable the institution to evaluate its performance objectively and identify the areas where improvement is required. Any inaccuracy or inconsistency in the identification and definition of standards or the appropriate sources of evidence will become apparent when they are actually used for assessment of the process.

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Appendix

Annex 01 – Format for the preparation of Self-Evaluation Report

3.1 - Template for Institutional data

A. General Information

1. Name and address of the Institution

2. Name of Administrative entity handling EDPs and ECs

3. Management Committee composition

4. Contact details:

Name	Office			Residence		
	Telephone No.	Fax No.	E mail	Telephone No.	Fax No.	E mail
Vice-Chancellor/ Equivalent position						
Director/ Equivalent position						
Coordinators of Divisions/ Equivalent position						
Chairperson of Boards of Study/Any other						

5. Status of the Institution (national university, state owned institution, etc.

6. Establishment of the Administrative Entity of EDPs

   i. Date of establishment: (Month & Year)

   ii. Act/ Authority/ Regulation/By-laws under which the Institution was established:

   iii. Date of approval by the UGC

7. Physical resources of the Administrative Entity of EDPs

   i. Land area in acres

   ii. Building area in square metres

   iii. Office equipment and ICT equipment

8. Date of UGC recognition of EDPs

Name of Programme	Date of UGC approval

9. Programme Delivery network (University centre, partner institution, hired centre)

Type	Location	No.

10. Statutory bodies of the institution concerned with EDPs and details of their composition (details such as officers may be included).

Statutory Body	Composition

11. Faculties/Units/Departments/Divisions of the institution offering EDPs

Units offering EDPs	No.
Faculties	
Academic units / Departments	
Supporting services units / Divisions	
Administrative units/ Divisions/Centres	
Technical units/ Divisions	
Any other (please specify)	

12. Current numbers of study programmes offered by the Institution.

Level	Name of the Programme	Numbers
UG		
PG		
Diploma		
Certificate		
Any other		

13. Types of staff support services available in the Institution's Headquarters and outreach centres. (Please tick wherever applicable)

Type of Staff Support services	√
Induction/orientation programme	
Training & re-training programmes	
Effective communication	
Access to technology	
Physical facilities	
Any other (specify)	

14. Give details of the student support services for EDPs available at the Institution's Headquarters and outreach centres if any. (Please tick wherever applicable)

Student Support Services	√
Information about programmes and ODL	
Classrooms	
Laboratory	
Computer centre/s	
Study material ready on time	
Face-to-face contact sessions	
Response to queries	
Feedback on assignments	
Counseling	
Any other (specify)	

15. Current number of EDPs offered by the Institution through ODL

Programmes	Name	Medium	Development Strategy			
			Developed In-house	Outsourced	Adopted/ Adapted/ Translated	Other (specify)
Certificate courses						
Diploma						
UG Degree						
PG Degree						
PG Diploma						
Masters						
Any others (specify)						
Total						

16. Current number of Extension Courses offered by the Institution

Courses	Name	Medium	Development Strategy			
			Developed In-house House/out sourced	Outsourced	Adopted/ Adapted/ Translated	Other (specify)

17. Does the Institution/Administration Entity publish its updated prospectus /handbook on EDPs annually?

Yes ☐   No ☐

B. Profile of the Staff concerned in EDPs/ECs

18. Total number of staff -Current status

Location	Staff	Cadre positions	Permanent		Temporary		On Contract		Other (specify)
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
At the institution	Academic								
	Administrative								
	Support staff								
	Technical/ Professional								
	Visiting staff								
	Consultants								
	Any other (specify)								
	Total								
Outreach centres if any	Academic								
	Administrative								
	Support staff								
	Technical / Professional								
	Visiting staff								
	Consultants								
	Any other (specify)								
	Total								

19. Give details of the following:

a. ratio of full-time teaching staff to part-time teaching staff

b. ratio of academic staff to administrative staff.

D. Profile of the Students registered for EDPs/ECs

20. Furnish current data about the number of students in the Institution with the following details (Programme-wise)

Programme Name	Total No. registered		Total No. Active		Mother tongue			Age range	Special needs/ differently-abled	Other (specify)
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Sinhala	Tamil	English			
Total										

E. Profile of Plan of Work

21. What is the temporal plan of Academic work in the Institution?

Plan	Number of Programmes
Semester System	
Annual System	
Choice-Based Credit	
Any other	

22. Outline the academic year for the institution and provide details of average time required for relevant activities such as advertising of programmes, admission/registration, despatch of study material, turn around time for assignments, commencement of examinations, release of results and awards.

23. Is the Credit System of instruction followed?

☐   ☐

Yes   No

If "No" please give details of system of Instruction.

24. What is the current total budget of the institution?

Type	Capital budget	Recurrent budget
Government allocation		
Self generated		
Donor assistance		

25. What was the generated income from EDPs & ECs during the last 3 years?

Year	Programme	Amount (LKR in m)

F. Profile of Major Avenues of Learning

26. What are the major avenues used for learning? (Please tick wherever applicable)

Material	√
Printed material	
AV material	
Electronic	
Online	
Face-to-face component	
Other (specify)	

27. List and state the nature of the collaborations/ linkages / partnerships (if any)
with Local/ State/ National and International level Institutions

Collaborating institution	Nature of collaboration	MOU signed date

28. Are adopting/ adapting open educational resources being used /considered?
If "Yes" give examples. If "No" state why it is not considered.

3.2 Key indicators of criteria to furnish details to reflect the current status

Key indicators identified under the six criteria described in chapter one are listed below under the respective criteria. Furnish details of each of them to reflect the current status with respect to EDPs and ECs.

Criterion 1:   Governance and Management

- Compliance with national policy framework as per the UGC handbook on EDPs and ECs

- Leadership, goal orientation and decision making

- Organisation structure

- Powers and functions of the functionaries

- Manpower planning and recruitment

- Performance appraisal

- Staff development programmes

- Resource mobilisation, management information system and finance management

- Collaboration and partnerships

- Innovations

- Total quality management

Criterion 2:   Programme Design and Organisation

- Goal orientation

- Programme development and review in compliance with academic standards and quality as per reference points

- Programme flexibility

- Feedback mechanisms and programme evaluation. Organisation structure

- Powers and functions of the functionaries

Criterion 3: Course Design and Development

- Mechanisms for ensuring relevance, learner-centredness and quality of course design, development and production, and implementation.

- Varied teaching-learning approaches, catering to diverse learners.

- Course evaluation Programme development and review in compliance with academic standards and quality as per reference points.

Criterion 4: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

- Physical facilities, maintenance of infrastructure and optimization of use

- Human resource development system

- Library as a learning resource

- Computers as learning resource

- Other facilities

Criterion 5: Learner Support and Progression

- Maintenance of student records

- Teaching learning process and use of new technology in teaching

- Student progression vertically /towards career development/gainful employment

- Student support mechanisms and services

- Student activities developing various skills to foster holistic personality development.

Criterion 6: Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

- Integration of teaching learning and assessment

- Evaluation of teaching and teacher quality

- Evaluation of learning and performance of learners

- Record keeping of student attainments

- Assessment strategies, methods and weightages

- Innovative assessment methods.

Annex 02 – Guidelines for writing Self-evaluation Report

Format of the SER

- The report should be printed on A4 size white paper and copied on both sides (duplexed)
- The pages should be numbered consecutively with the institution's name and date of report at the top or bottom of each page as a header or a footer.

The report should contain the following:
i. Cover page should include the name of the institution, address, phone number, URL of the institution's website; with declaration, "the data submitted herewith are certified correct to the best of my knowledge and belief". This sentence should be followed by the name, title, signature of the Vice-Chancellor and the date of submission.

ii. Table of contents

iii. Executive Summary should highlight the potential of the institution and its plans to develop it. It should also reflect the strategy and efforts for the future line of action for achieving greater efficiency, accountability, and quality in all spheres of activity. Constraints that hamper the institution's development may also be included.

iv. Introduction - should describe the distinctive characteristics of the institution and EDPs and ECs, goals of the educational policy of the institution administrative entity handling EDPs, its thrushed areas and other relevant details including the mission statements. It may explain how the report has been prepared, to what extent it has been participatory and also state the individuals and groups who were involved in the process.

v. Part 1 - Profile of the institution to be provided according to the template.

vi. Part 2 - Criteria-wise evaluative report to be prepared around the parameters given under the six criteria provided in **Annex 2.** Length of the report to be in the range of 20-25 pages.

i. Appendix to include copies of all supporting documents. Documents should be properly numbered, labeled and referenced and a Table of supporting documents to be appended.

Annex 03 – Instruments

3.1 - Format for Needs Assessment

A – Needs Assessment Questionnaire for students

1. General Information

    a. Name (optional) / No. ------------------------

    b. District ------------------------------------

    c. AGA Division --------------------------------

    d. Age ---

2. What is your current status?

Unemployed and waiting for employment	
Passed A/L and looking forward to pursuing higher education on full-time basis	
Employed and looking for further education	
Any other *(pl. specify)*	

    ----

3. Do you plan to pursue further studies? (use appropriate option)

    1. Yes 2. No

4. If, "Yes", what would be your area/s of interest in order of preference? (E.g. 1, 2, 3)

Undergraduate degrees/diplomas	
Postgraduate degrees	
Professional courses *(pl. specify)*	
Technical courses	
Vocational courses	

5. Give reasons for your preference.

    ----

6. If you intend to pursue a degree at undergraduate level, how much time do you wish to devote in a month?

Hours	Days

7.   What is your preferred mode of pursuing higher studies?

The Open University of Sri Lanka

External Degree/Diploma Programme (EDP) of a state university

Degree/Diploma Programme from a state or non-state fee-levying university/institute?

Any other *(please specify)*

----

8. If you wish to pursue an External Degree Programme (EDP), what would you expect to gain from enrolling in this study programme? (tick all relevant boxes)

To get an academic qualification

To get training relevant to career

For convenience to study with other commitments

No particular expectations

Any other

----

9. What is your preferred institution which offers EDPs?

----

10. What is the reason for your preference?

----

11. If you wish to pursue an EDP, what is your view on learning? *(tick all that apply)*

Self study using provided learning materials

Enroll in a partner institution as a full-time student

Seek individual tuition

Any other *(please specify)*

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12. What would be the most preferred media formats that you would like as part of your study programme? Rank in order of preference (give **1** to the most preferred and **5** to the least preferred).

Print based material	☐	Computer based material using CD-ROMs	☐
Audio	☐	Computer based material using the Internet (Online)	☐
Video	☐	Face-to-face sessions	☐
TV based material	☐		☐

13. If it is "computer based" or "online" where would you expect to use the computer/computer with internet connection? *(tick all that apply).*

Resources	Place				
	Institution	Partner institution	Home	Office	Other (Please specify)
Computer based material					
Online material					

14. What sort of support would you expect from the institution if you were planning to follow an EDP, and at which stage of your studies?

Support	When

15. Have you followed any study programme delivered through a blended mode before?

    1. Yes   2. No

16. If you are employed, what type of support will you be given by your employer? *(tick all relevant boxes).*

    Pay full tuition fees ☐
    Pay part of tuition fees ☐
    Grant permission to access computers and use work place for studies ☐
    Grant leave to attend any contact sessions including practicals and examinations ☐
    Grant leave only to attend examinations ☐
    Pay increments on completion of the study programme ☐
    Grant promotions on completion of the study programme ☐
    Any other
    ………………………………………………………………………………………..
    Not given by the employer ☐

Thank you very much for providing valuable information. Please return the completed questionnaire to ………………

3.1 - Format for Needs Assessment

B – Needs Assessment Questionnaire for employers

1. Name of the institution: ----------------------------

2. To which of the following categories do you belong? (please tick the most relevant option)

Professional	
Academic member	
Policy maker	
Manager/Administrator	
Researcher	
Any other ----------------------------	

3. What do you think is the most suitable candidate trained at degree level that would be useful to your institution?

Degree	Specify
BA	
BSc	
BBA	
BBM	

4. Give reasons for your preference.

   ----

5. What do you think arethe most important attributes of a graduate that would be useful in your institution?

   ----

6. What is your view ofthe graduates who have obtained their degrees through external mode?

   ----

7. We are interested in starting a new degree/mastersprogramme in ………… (name of the degree) and it will use Open and Distance Learning techniques. We would like your views on the proposed study programme.

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8. We would very much appreciate your views in developing the study programme. Would you like to participate in any of the following activities? *(please tick all the relevant options)*

    Designing and drawing up the syllabus of the programme ☐
    Write course material ☐
    Resource person in conducting lectures ☐
    Resource person in conducting laboratory sessions ☐
    Supervise research projects ☐
    Any other …………………………………………………………… ☐

9. In principle, would you be willing to work as a partner institution in delivering this programme (conducting lectures, conducting laboratory classes, providing infrastructure facilities etc.)

    1. Yes   2. No   3. Cannot comment

10. What type of support will you provide for your staff who will be interested in following this programme? (*please tick all the relevant options)*

    Pay full tuition fees ☐
    Pay part of tuition fees ☐
    Grant permission to access computers and use work place for studies ☐
    Grant leave to attend any contact sessions including practicals and examinations ☐
    Grant leave only to attend examinations ☐
    Pay increments on completion of the study programme ☐
    Grant promotions on completion of the study programme ☐
    Any other ……………………………………………………………………….. ☐
    Not at the moment ☐

11. If you were to sponsor a staff member how much would you be willing to pay?

    Less than Rs.25,000 ☐   Rs. 25,000-50,000 ☐   Rs. 50,000 – 75,000 ☐   Rs. 75,000 – 1,00,000 ☐

12. What benefits would you expect for the institution if your staff completed this study programme?

    An increase in the pool of specialized persons in the relevant subject area ☐
    An increase in the capacity for research and development ☐
    An ability to apply new knowledge and skills ☐
    An ability to make policy decisions ☐
    An ability to work independently and meeting the deadlines efficiently ☐
    An ability to work in teams ☐
    An ability to work under pressure ☐
    Any other ……………………………………………………………………….. ☐

13. Please feel free to make any other comments/suggestions here.

    ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Thank you very much for your kind corporation. Please return the completed questionnaire to ……………………

3.2 – Format for evaluating Partner Institutions

A – Student Evaluation on Partner Institution

A. General Information

    a. Student's name (optional) --

    b. Name of the study programme --

    c. Course/s -----------------------------------

    d. Course code/s ---------------------------

B Partner Institution

    a. Name of the Partner institution:------------------ ------------------

    b. Branch of the Outreach Centre:--

    c. Name of the tutor/s (optional) -------------------------------

    d. Dates of lectures: -------------

C Assessment by the student (*Please tick ('√ ') in the relevant cage*).

1 – Strongly disagree   2 – Disagree   3 – Agree   4 –Strongly agree

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1.	Provided information related to this course, time schedule and learning resources (print) well ahead of time.				
2.	Contact persons for different activities were clearly communicated.				
3.	Lecture room was comfortable.				
4.	Seating arrangement of the lecture room was appropriate.				
5.	Canteen and other facilities are satisfactory.				
6.	Lecturer explained the learning outcomes clearly at the beginning.				
7.	Lecturer organised and sequenced the course topics in a logical manner.				
8.	Lecturer explained the subject matter clearly.				
9.	Lecturer used activities and provided opportunity for us to participate actively in the learning process.				
10.	Lecturer encouraged us to ask questions during lectures.				
11.	Lecturer answered the questions and clarified doubts.				
12.	Lecturer used teaching aids (Black/white boards, videos, slides, etc.) in a very effective and meaningful manner.				

Statement	1	2	3	4
13. Lecturer used relevant examples and /or case studies to facilitate the learning process.				
14. Lecturer managed to keep my attention throughout the lecture/s.				
15. Learning resources used by the lecturer (print/online) was up-to-date.				
16. Learning resources used by the lecturer (print/online) was easy to understand.				
17. Lecturer provided additional handouts at the lectures.				
18. Lecturer managed to project his/her voice clearly and presented the lecture very well.				
19. Lecturer was friendly and approachable.				
20. Lecturer was punctual.				
21. Lecturer gave his/her contact no./email address for us to contact him/her if I have any queries afterwards.				
22. Lecturer provided clear instructions on assessment and evaluation criteria required for the course.				
23. After attending the lecture, I was motivated to study further.				

24. What was your most satisfying experience with the partner institution as a learner?

----

25. What was your most disappointing experience with the partner institution as a learner?

----

26. Any other comments/suggestions.

Thank you very much for providing valuable information. Please return the completed questionnaire to ………………

3.2 – Format for evaluating Partner Institutions

B – Evaluation of Partner Institution by the Centre for Distance Learning

A. Details of the Study Programme

I Name of the Study Programme

ii Course: ---------------------------   iii Course Code: -------------------

iv Name of the evaluator/co-ordinator: ---

v Date of the interview/observation: ----------------------

B. Details of the Partner Institution

i.   Name of the Partner institution ---

ii   Branch of the Outreach Centre: ---

Please tick ('√ ') in the relevant cage.

1 – Strongly disagree   2 – Disagree   3 – Agree   4 –Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4
Communication				
1. Provided information related to this course and time schedule well ahead of time for students and lecturers.				
2. Contact details of students, lecturers of the partner institutions and the co-ordinator of the parent institution were well recorded and maintained.				
3. The co-ordination between the co-ordinator of the partner organisation and the academic co-ordinator of the "Administrative Entity" of the institution was satisfactory.				
Facilities at the partner organisation 4. Lecture room was comfortable.				
5. Seating arrangement of the lecture room was appropriate.				
6. Canteen and other facilities are satisfactory.				
Lecturers 7. Lecturer explained the learning outcomes clearly at the beginning.				
8. Lecturer organised and sequenced the course topics in a logical manner.				
9. Lecturer explained the subject matter clearly.				
10. Lecturer used activities and provided opportunity for students to participate actively in the learning process.				
11. Lecturer encouraged students to ask questions during lectures.				

Statement	1	2	3	4
12. Lecturer answered the questions and clarified doubts.				
13. Lecturer used teaching aids (Black/white boards, videos, slides, etc.) in a very effective and meaningful manner.				
14. Lecturer used relevant examples and /or case studies to facilitate the learning process.				
15. Lecturer managed to keep the attention of students throughout the lecture/s.				
16. Lecturer provided additional handouts at the lectures.				
17. Lecturer managed to project his/her voice clearly and presented the lecture very well.				
18. Lecturer was friendly and approachable.				
19. Lecturer was punctual				
20. Lecturer gave his/her contact no./email address for students to contact him/her if they have any queries afterwards.				

21. Any other comments/suggestions

Thank you very much for providing valuable information. Please return the completed questionnaire to ………………

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3.3–Student Evaluation on the Centre for Distance Learning

Details of the Study Programme

Name of the Study Programme: ----------------- Name of the Partner institution: -----------

Please tick ('√ ') in the relevant cage.

1 – Strongly disagree   2 – Disagree   3 – Agree   4 –Strongly agree

	Statement	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1.	Provided information related to the study programme and time schedule well ahead of time.				
2.	The expectations of the study programme were clearly explained at the orientation session which was held at the beginning.				
3.	The handbook and the time table were very clear.				
4.	Academic and administrative co-ordinators were clearly indicated in the student handbook.				
5.	Academic co-ordinators of the institution were very approachable and gave prompt replies with respect to academic matters.				
6.	Administrative co-ordinators of the parent institution were very approachable and gave prompt replies with respect to administrative matters.				
7.	Learning materials provided by the parent institution was up-to-date (print/online).				
8.	Learning materials provided by the parent institution was adequate (print/online).				
9.	There were adequate activities incorporated in the learning materials to facilitate learning.				
10.	Parent institution provided library facilities.				
11.	Assessment and evaluation criteria were explained clearly.				
12.	Received feedback for assignments within a month.				
13.	Model answers were sent/available well before the final examination.				
14.	Past examination papers were freely available at the parent institution.				
15.	Results of the final examination were notified within two months.				

16. Any other comments/suggestions

Thank you very much for providing valuable information. Please return the completed questionnaire to the   ………………

3.4 Questionnaire on Course Evaluation (at the end of the course)

1. Personal Details

   a. Gender 1. Male   2. Female

   b. Age category: 1. <24   2. 25-29 3. 30-34 4. 35-39 5. 40-44 6. 45-49 7. >50

   c. Employment: 1. Yes 2. No

   d. Civil Status: 1. Single   2. Married

2. Deatailsof your study programme

   a. Name of the study programme (e.g. BA – Arts):…………………….
   b. Year of enrolment: …………………
   c. Course Title: ……………………… d. Course code: ……………..

3. Course components
   a. How helpful did you find the course components you used on this course? (Use the scale; 1 – Very useful, 2 Useful, 3, Not so useful, 4 Not at all useful, 5 Not used, 6 Not available. Circle **one** only in each row.)

Course components	1	2	3	4	5	6
Student Handbook						
User guide for the online course						
Printed self-instructional materials (main teaching text)						
Textbooks						
Handouts						
Videocassettes/DVDs						
Audiocassettes/DVDs						
CD-ROMs						
Computing software						
Orientation session						
Lectures (at centres or partner organisations)						
Workshops						
Laboratory classes						
Revision classes						
Counseling						
Assignments						
Projects						
Model examination paper						
Examination						

4. Contacts with the institution offering the study programme
   a. Did you have any face-to-face contact sessions with the institution while following the study programme?

      1. Yes 2. No

   b. If it is "No" would you like to have any face-to-face sessions and when?

      ----

   c. If it is "Yes" please complete the table below.

Type	No. of face-to-face sessions	Duration
Induction at the beginning		
Seminars		
Revision classes		
Workshops		
Laboratory classes		
Other (please specify) …………………………		

5. Learning materials

   a. What type of learning materials did you receive at the registration from the institution?
      (Please **circle** all the relevant options)
      1. Printed self-instructional materials   2. Student handbook
      3. CD-ROMs/DVDs   4. Handouts
      5. User guide for the online course   6. Online materials
      7. Any other (please specify) …………………………………….

   b. To what extent did you receive lesson materials from all your teachers (institution or partner institutions)?

      1. all teachers   2. some teachers   3. not from any

   c. If your option is "1" or "2" then indicate the type of learning materials/resources you received from the respective teachers when delivering this course. (Circle the most common option)

      1. Self-instructional material (print)   2. Specially designed handouts
      3. Textbooks   4. Powerpoint handouts
      5. Video/CD-ROM/Audio   6. Any other (please specify)

6. Learner support – Administrative Entity of the EDPs and ECs

a. How satisfied were you with following services offered by the institution? (Use the scale; 1 – Very satisfied, 2 Satisfied, 3, Not so satisfied, 4 Not at all satisfied, 5 Not used the service, 6 Not available. Circle **one** only in each row)

Services	1	2	3	4	5	6
Contact with the academic staff of the institution						
Contact with the administrative staff of the institution.						
Contact with online tutors of the institution						
Advice/support you received from the academic co-ordinator						
Advice/support you received from the administrative co-ordinator						
Advice/support you received from the online tutors						
Institution's support related to IT						
Library facilities						

7. Learner Support - Partner institution

a. How satisfied were you with the following services offered by the partner institution? (Use the scale; 1 – Very satisfied, 2 Satisfied, 3, Not so satisfied, 4 Not at all satisfied, 5 Not used the service, 6 Not available. Circle **one** only in each row)

Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
Timing of information about your teacher/s						
Timing of information about the dates of the lectures, workshops etc.						
Accuracy of information about your teacher/s						
Accuracy of information about the dates of the lectures, workshops etc.						
Number of face-to-face teaching offered in the partner institution for this course						
Responses to your queries by your teacher/s through face-to-face/telephone/email						
Quality of teaching/support you received from your teacher/s						
Quality of teaching rooms of the partner institution						
Quality of Canteen and other facilities						

b. How many teaching sessions were allocated for this course?

c. How many teaching sessions did you attend? -----------

d. The following questions are related to teaching and learning.(Use the scale; 1 – Very satisfied, 2 Satisfied, 3, Not so satisfied, 4 Not at all satisfied, 5 Not used the service, 6 Not available. Circle **one** only in each row)

Questions	Very satisfied			Not at all satisfied	Not used	Not available
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Coverage of the topics						
Opportunity to raise questions						
Feedback received for the questions asked						
You participation in discussion classes						
Quality of teaching/support you received from your teacher/s						
Location of the partner organisation						
Administration by the partner organisation						

8. Study time
a. How many hours on an average did you spend each week on this course? ---------

 b. Overall, how many weeks did you spend on this course? ------------

 c. Was the amount of time you spent studying as you expected?

   1. a lot more   2. a little more   3. about as expected   4. less   5. a lot less

9. Evaluation and Learner Assessment

a. The following questions related to assignments and projects. (Use the scale; 1 – Very satisfied, 2 Satisfied, 3, Not so satisfied, 4 Not at all satisfied, 5 Not used the service, 6 Not available. Circle **one** only in each row)

Questions	Very satisfied			Not at all	Not given	Not available
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Instructions of the assignments						
Fairness of assignments in testing the knowledge of the whole course						
Receiving your assignments with the feedback						
Legibility of your teacher's writing						
Usefulness of your teacher's comments in learning						

Questions	Very satisfied			Not at all	Not given	Not available
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Helpfulness of the model answers you received						
Match between the actual grades and the expected grades						
Your preparation for the final examination						
Selection of questions from the final examination paper						
Testing of your knowledge at the final examination						
Time allocation for the final examination						

10. Overall

Statement	Very satisfied			Not at all satisfied
	1	2	3	4
Overall, academic level of the course				
Overall, content of the learning resources				
Overall, teaching support				
Overall, match between stated aims and objectives with the expected outcomes				
Overall, importance of course aims and objectives in achieving my personal goals				

11. Please give details of good or bad practices you have encountered in the institution as an external student. Your feedback is genuinely important to us.

Thank you!

3.5 Format for Student Satisfaction Questionnaire (by students)

1. Personal Details

   Gender 1. Male   2. Female

   Age category: 1. <24   2. 25-29 3.30-34 4. 35-39 5. 40-44 6. 45-49 7. >50

   Employment: 1. Yes   2. No

2. Details of your study programme

   a. What is your study programme (e.g. BA – Arts)? --------------------------
   b. What is the year of enrolment? ---------------
   c. What is the duration of this study programme ----------------------------

3. What were the reasons for enrolling this study programme?

   ----

4. Have you had any contact with the institution before enrolling for the study programme?
         1. Yes 2. No

5. Contacts with the institution offering the study programme
   a) Did you have any face-to-face sessions with the institution while following the study programme?

      1. Yes 2. No

   b) If it is "No" would you like to have any face-to-face sessions, and when?

      ----

   c) If it is "Yes" please complete the table below.

Type	No. of face-to-face sessions	Duration
Induction at the beginning		
Seminars		
Revision classes		
Workshops		
Laboratory classes		
Other (please specify)		

6. To what extent did you receive any lesson material from all your teachers?

      1. from all teachers   2. from some teachers   3. Not from any

7. If your option is "1" or "2" then indicate the type of learning materials/resources you received from the respective teachers when delivering the courses? (Circle the most common option)

      1. Self-instructional material (print) 2. Specially designed handouts
      3.Textbooks   4.Powerpoint handouts
      5.Video/CD-ROM/audio   6. Online course (LMS)

8. How helpful did you find the learning materials you received for this programme to answer the final examination? (Circle only one)

1. Very helpful   **2. Satisfactory**   **3.Not helpful**   **4. Not at all helpful**

9. Other Services

    How would you rate the accessibility of the academic staff of the institution?

      1. Very Poor 2. Poor   3.Satisfactory   4.Good5. Very Good

    How would you rate the institution's Library provision for you as an external student?

      1. Very Poor 2. Poor   3.Satisfactory   4.Good5. Very Good

    How would you rate the institution's support with IT skills for you as an external student?

      1. Very Poor 2. Poor   3.Satisfactory   4.Good5. Very Good

10. Please give details of good or bad practices you have encountered in the institution as an external student. Your feedback is genuinely important to us.

Thank you!

3.6 Format for Programme Evaluation

A. – by graduates

1. Personal Details

   Gender 1. Male   2. Female

   Age category: 1. <24   2. 25-29 3.30-34 4.35-39 5. 40-44 6. 45-49 7. >50

   Employment: 1. Yes   2. No

2. Details about your study programme

   a. Name of the study programme (e.g. BA – Arts) --------------------------

   b. Year of enrolment for the study programme   ---------------

   c. Year of completion of the study programme   ---------------

   1. What were the expectations for enrolling for this study programme?

   ----

3. To what extent, did you manage to fulfill all your expectations?

   1. fully   2.partially   3.some what   4.none at all

4. What were the achievements that you gained **after** completing the above study programme?

   ----

5. What skills did you learn in this study programme that you can use?

   ----

6. How will you apply the skills you have learned in this study programme?

7.Have you had any major difficulties with your study programme, or have your studies been interrupted?

   ----

8. Which of the following factors have caused you difficulties? (Please tick the appropriate box)

Factor	Difficulties encountered
Not having enough background knowledge of the subject area	
Not having studied for a long time	
Getting used to study using learning materials	
Getting used to studying on my own	
Pressure from work means that time was too limited to study	
Family commitments mean that time was too limited to study	
Personal circumstances have changed, making study difficult	
Subject area was very different from expectations	
The level of work was higher than expected	
Attendance at tutorials was difficult at the parent institution/partner institutions	
Not adequate face-to-face support from the parent institution/partner institution	
Other (please specify below)	

9. What has been the most important factor --

10. What were the personal benefits you received **during** your study period?

----

11. What new practice (s) will you implement as a result of following this study programme?

----

12. In what way has decision-making been made easier by following this study programme?

----

13. What did you NOT learn from this study programme that you expected to learn?

100

14. If you have any other comments, please feel free to make them in the space below.

Thank you

3.6 Format for Programme Evaluation

B. – by Course Developers/teachers/decision makers)

1. Details about the study programme

    a. Name of the study programme (e.g. BA – Arts) -------------------------

    b. Year of the academic programme---------------

    c. Your role and the responsibility --

3. How were the goals of the study programme and objectives (ifapplicable) established?

    ----

4. Do you think that it is necessary to change the goals of the study programme? If "yes" then indicate the reasons and the changes that you would like to make.

    ----

5. What is the status of the progress of the study programme towards achieving its goals?

    a. personnel have adequate resources for teaching and learning (equipment, facilities, training, etc.) to achieve the goals?

    b. adequate funding

    c. adequate organisational support

    d. within timelines specified in the program implementation or operations plan? If not, then why?

    e. any changes taken to meet the deadlines

        ----

6. What is your view on the services provided to the learners during the period of study.

    1. Very satisfactory 2. Satisfactory 3.Fair 4. Not satisfactory 5. Not at all satisfactory

7. Give reasons for your opinion, based on the evidence.

    ----

8. In your view what sort of skills have students acquired in this study programme.

----

9. Do you think that the knowledge and skills acquired from this study programme would be adequate for students in their working career? Give your suggestions.

----

10. What do you think are the main factors that cause students to face difficulties during their study period? (please tick the relevant statement)

Factor	Difficulties
Not having enough background knowledge of the subject area	
Not having studied for a long time	
Getting used to study using course materials	
Getting used to studying on my own	
Pressure from work means that time was too limited	
Family commitments mean that time was too limited	
Personal circumstances have changed, making study difficult	
Subject area was very different from expectations	
The level of work was higher than expected	
Attendance at tutorials is difficult at the parent institution/partner institutions	
Not adequate face-to-face support from the parent institution/partner institution	
Other (please specify below)	

11. In your view what is the most crucial factor that you have to address in order to improve the study programme.

----

12. How are you going to change the current practice?

----

13. What typical complaints are made by students?

----

14. What are the strategies that you have taken to address the above complaints?

----

15. In your view what were the personal benefits that students receive **during** their study period?

----

16. If you have any other comments, please feel free to make them in this space below.

Annex 04 – Policy Framework and Guidelines for Offering External Degrees Programmes and Extension Courses by Universities/Higher Educational Institutions/Institutes

1.   Background

i. The External Degree Programmes (EDP), through Open and Distance modes of Learning (EDP-ODL), are considered universally to be a part of higher education and a way of widening access to higher education to the highest number of students possible of all age groups, at an affordable cost and on very flexible conditions. Moreover, the extent of use of provisions of EDP-ODL and the quality and relevance of qualifications acquired through these degree programmes are widely used as criteria for measuring the level of higher education in a country.

ii. In Sri Lanka, EDP-ODL is also considered as a means of relieving the pressure on conventional universities, as their existing capacity cannot cater to the ever-increasing demand for university education. Thus, EDP-ODL provides a popular, affordable and flexible form of access to higher education for many young men and women who could not enter conventional universities. In addition, EDP-ODL also caters to the needs of adult learners who seek higher education for career advancement.

iii. Through EDP-ODL, conventional universities are expected to offer selected academic study programmes leading to degrees that have high market demand and developed for the internal students, through a separate window, utilizing the physical and human resources put in place for the internal compartment in each university.

iv. In the EDP-ODL window, the registered students are expected to engage in self-study using learning material provided in print and/or electronic forms on the prescribed courses in the chosen study programme. In addition, registered students have the freedom to seek tutoring for prescribed courses from a private tutoring service provider. Indeed, this is the popular practice, and there exists a variety of visible and lucrative private informal arrangements, which may range from individual tuition sessions conducted by individual instructors to informally-organized syndicates of instructors or formally established institutions.

v. However, there have been justifiable and frequent criticisms regarding indiscretion in the selection and learning and evaluation processes and poor quality and relevance of degrees offered by EDPs. Recognizing the need to bring reforms into the sector, in March 2008, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had initiated a comprehensive study into the matter. The UGC at its 809th Meeting held on 5th August 2010 approved the findings and recommendations made by the report of the study and has decided to issue directives under i) Policy Framework, ii) Institutional Organizational Arrangement, iii) Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration, iv) Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree Programmes, Curricula of Study Programmes and Courses, v) Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services, vi) Student Assessment and Evaluation, vii) Quality Assurance and viii) Collaboration to respective universities/higher educational institutions. Accordingly, the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010 was issued to all universities/higher educational institutions for information and compliance.

vi. In addition, the UGC has also issued a comprehensive document titled **"Handbook on Qualification Framework, Quality Assurance and Codes of Practice for External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses",** to facilitate formulation and conducting External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses as prescribed through the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010.

vii. For the benefit of ETIs, the information provided through in the UGC Circular No. 932 of 10th October 2010 is reproduced. Please note that the annexures mentioned in the text are not included as the information provided in those annexes are of no importance to ETIs.

2. Policy Framework and Guidelines for offering External Degrees and Extension Programmes by Universities

The UGC Circular 932 of 10th October 2010 detailed out the Policy Framework and Guidelines under the following 09 key aspects.

i)   Policy Framework

ii)   Institutional Organizational Arrangement

iii)   Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration

iv)   Programme Structure - Types and Structure of Degree Programmes, Curricula of Study Programmes and Courses

v)   Programme Delivery and Learner Support Services

vi)   Student Assessment and Evaluation

vii)   Guidelines for Extension Courses

viii) Quality Assurance

ix)   Collaboration

2.1   Policy Framework

2.1.1   The external degree programmes (EDP) through open and distance modes of learning (EDP-ODL) are considered as a way of widening the access to higher education to the highest number possible at an affordable cost, on flexible conditions and be accessible to students of all age groups.

2.1.2   Through the EDP-ODL system, conventional universities shall design and offer degrees, diploma and certificate courses, based on market surveys, to cater to current and emerging market demands. This is to ensure that the graduates and diploma and certificate holders produced through the EDP-ODL are highly employable.

2.1.3   EDP & EC must be fee-levying and operate without adding any burden to the mother university.

2.1.4 All programmes offered through EDP-ODL system must be guided by the following definition:

Open and Distance Learning refers "to p*roviding learning opportunities in an environment where there is a separation of teacher in time and/or place and learning is achieved through the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic media which requires specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses. Throughout the learning period, two-way communication is maintained allowing learners and tutors to interact with one another in occasional face-to-face meetings. Finally, the learning process and outcome are certified by means of evaluation by a specified institution or agency".*

(*Source: Quality Assurance Toolkit for Distance Higher Education Institutions and Programmes published by Commonwealth of Learning 2009*)

2.1.5 Admission Committee of the Senate in each university will be responsible for selecting number of students based on the UGC guidelines. The total number of students accommodated into a degree programme, except under special circumstances should not exceed twice the number admitted into the internal compartment for a similar study programme

2.1.6 Subject to the guidelines issued by the UGC and the relevant University, EDP & EC must be kept open for foreign students.

2.1.7 As a means of adjuvant to material provided through the ODL mode, registered students are free to follow didactic learning through a State/Non-State Training institution of his or her choice.

2.1.8 Universities are encouraged to promote State/Non-State training institutions to obtain quality assurance and accreditation certification from a recognized authority.

2.1.9 Universities should make all attempts to explore the synergy of State/Non-State inter-institutional partnership in improving quality and relevance of degree and certificate/diploma programmes offered through the EDP-ODL system.

2.1.9.1   Role of Degree Awarding University

i)   The state university is the degree awarding university. It determines and specifies the following:
- Programme structure and regulations of EDP & EC
- Disciplines of study programmes and credit requirements
- Curricula of study programmes and courses, course contents. Essential readings and assessments
- Examination procedure and awards

The State/non-state training institutions will conduct the training for registered candidates for the specific study programmes on the basis of the curricula designed by the degree awarding institutions.

ii)   The degree awarding institution is required to print and/or to publish, in electronic or on-line modes, all required information to registered candidates with regard to the following:
- Specific study programmes and their structure

- Regulations of EDPs & ECs
- Disciplines of study programmes
- Credit requirements, curricula of study programmes and courses (including foundation, core and supplementary courses)
- Outline of course material of prescribed courses and recommended learning resources.

iii)   Further, the degree awarding institution is required to provide limited face-to-face instructions through 'day classes' at the beginning and middle of the course/programme while the balance is to be delivered through print and electronic media as course materials, computer-based and/or on-line teaching and learning material, tutorials and assignments.

iv)   The degree awarding institutions must not undertake programmes beyond their capacity and offer only programmes which have a high demand in the employment market. They should not attempt to cater to an external student population which is greater than twice the number of students in its internal compartment for a similar study programme.

v)   The internal lecturers who set question papers and/or mark answer scripts should not undertake teaching of the same set of students registered in private training institutions.

2.1.9.2   Role of the State/Non-state Training Institution

i)   The State/Non-state Training Institution's role is limited to providing training to students registered as external candidates in a degree programme offered by the external arm of the degree awarding university, on the basis of the curriculum and course contents defined by the degree awarding institution.

ii)   The existing informal State-Non-state, inter-institutional partnership would be allowed to continue while taking steps to formalize the system in a gradual and non-compulsory manner.

iii)   In the proposed formalized State-Non-state, inter-institutional partnership;
- The State/Non-state training institution must preferably seek recognition from the chosen university.
- The University-recognized State/Non-state training institution is required to submit their institution and programme to periodic review by the Quality Assurance and Acreditaion council of the UGC (UGC-QAAC)
- The University-recognized State/Non-state training institutions;

  ➢ must have qualified staff to provide instructions on prescribed courses relevant to the particular degree programme,
  ➢ must prepare the registered students for the specific study programmes leading to degree/diploma/certificate on the basis of the curricular defined by the university, and

> ➢ must submit their academic teaching staff periodically for continuing education programmes conducted by the university concerned.

2.1.10   The examinations are solely conducted by the university separately from those of held for internal candidates. Degrees/certificate/diplomas are awarded to successful candidates by the degree awarding state university.

2.1.11   The degree certificate shall contain a statement indicating that the student has followed an external degree/certificate/diploma programme

2.1.12   Resources within the state universities should be optimally used when conducting EDP & EC programmes and should not compromise the quality of internal undergraduate programmes.

2.1.13   In the event such facilities not being available within a given University, steps must be taken to make use of facilities available in Regional Study Centres of Open University of Sri Lanka.

2.2   Institutional Organizational Arrangement at the UGC and University Level

The UGC shall guide the proposed transformation of the defective and diverse EDP-ODL units and systems prevailing in universities into one which is uniform, efficient and productive. This will be done by placing EDP-ODL system under the close scrutiny of the UGC for a period of five years. During this phase, all universities shall transform the existing external examination units into fully fledged "Open ad Distance Learning Units" as prescribed by the UGC.

2.2.1   At the UGC Level

i)   The UGC shall coordinate and continue to operate Interim Board for External Degrees (IBED) for a further period of five years. At the end of the 5 –year period, it could be replaced by a Standing Committee on External Degrees and Extension Courses (SC/ED&EC). Alternatively, the EDP-EC system after 5 years could be brought under the purview of the Standing Committee on Education and Distance Education.

ii) UGC will establish an administrative unit i.e. Open and Distance Learning Coordinating Unit (ODLCU) within the UGC to provide administrative assistance to IBED. The ODLCU will have the services of Deputy/Senior Assistant Secretary who will oversee the functions of the EDP-ODL system during the transformation phase. He or she will receive guidance from the Chairman of the IBED.

iii) The IBED shall be chaired by Member of the Commission nominated by the UGC who will directly report to the Chairman/UGC.

iv) The UGC shall appoint seven external members to the IBED from among those who have rendered distinguished service in educational, professional, commercial, industrial, scientific or administrative spheres. In addition, all the

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Directors/Coordinators of External Examinations Units in the Universities will become ex-officio members of the IBMED. The Deputy/Senior Assistant Secretary/Assistant Secretary of UGC who oversees the functions of ODLCU will functions as the secretary to the IBED.

Terms of Reference of IBED/ (SC/ED&EC)

The IBED or SC/ED&EC shall assist and oversee the efficient and effective delivery of external degree programmes and extension courses services by the universities and higher educational institutes. The specific functions of the IBED are,

- Facilitate the transformation of the units/centers currently operating in universities institutes to fully fledged Open and Distance Learning Units/Centers in accordance with the framework and guidelines issued by the UGC.
- Facilitate curricular reforms of existing degree programmes in compliance with the guidelines issued by the UGC
- Review the proposals submitted by Universities/Institutes for establishment of Open and Distance Learning Units/Centers and curricular of EDP and ECs and submit recommendations to the UGC.
- Deliberate on issues, review the existing systems and on-going practices and submit recommendations to the UGC on policies regarding the EDPs & ECs on;
  - o the type, structure, credit qualification framework and curricula of the study programmes,
  - o intake and entry criteria,
  - o method of selection, and
  - o quality assurance and accreditation.

2.2.2 At the University Level

i) Each University shall have an Administrative Entity to handle all maters relating external degree programmes and extension courses.

ii) Description of model structure for the proposed administrative entity is given in Section 1 of Annexure I. Universities could adopt the salient features in the model for reorganizing their existing "External Examination Division" or "Centre of Open and Distance Learning" or "Centre for Distance and Continuing Education" and submit to UGC for approval. The university has the option to label the 'External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses Unit (EDECU)' according to its defined mandate. The alternate names proposed are Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL) and Centre for Distance and Continuing Education (CDCE).

iii) The Centre /Unit shall be headed by a Director or Coordinator (depending on a Centre or Unit) appointed by the Council.

  a) The Head of the EDECU shall be a teacher who shall be of the rank of Senior Lecturer Grade II or above.

  b) He shall be an invited member of the Senate.

Fully functional EDECU could have well defined subdivisions, namely Division of Learning Resources, Division of Training and Division of

Examination, each headed by a Coordinator. The required academic qualifications and experience required for consideration for appointment for these posts are same as for the post of Director. The job description for the Director and Coordinators are given in Section 4 of Annexure I.

iv) The Centre shall be governed by a Management Committee (MC) under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor with representatives from Faculties, Centers, Units, general administration and finance. The composition and Terms of Reference of the MC are given in Section 2 of Annexure I.

v) The Faculties, Centers and Units are expected to link with the Administrative Entity through Boards of Studies. The Composition and the Terms of Reference of Boards of Studies are given in Section 3 of Annexure I.

vi) The Centre or Unit must have minimum administrative, financial, secretarial and technical staff on the basis of the cadre determined and provided by the UGC. Any additional staff, as and when required, should be employed on contract or assignment basis with the approval of the Governing Council of the University utilizing earned funds from EDPs and ECs. The administrative aspects of the EDECU are given in Section 5 of Annexure I.

v) The cadre defined by the UGC for a fully functional unit is given in Section 6 of Annexure I. The university shall request cadre provision, as and when required, with a strong justification from the university. The UGC will issue circular instructions for recruitment for new cadre provisions approved by the UGC.

vi) The Centre shall be operated on self financing basis and the cost charged should include the cost for academic training management of the administrative and technical units, located centrally as well as regionally.

vii) Universities / Higher Educational Institution shall develop well documented procedures for operating a Centre or Unit for ODL programmes and for conducting external degree programmes as per policies determined by the UGC.

2.3 Admission Criteria and Methods of Selection and Registration for EDPs

2.3.1 Admission Criteria

2.3.1.1 Minimum qualification for entry to an EDP is as follows:

(a) at least three passes in all three approved subjects in one sitting, and

(b) a minimum mark of 30% for the Common General Paper.

2.3.1.2 Eligibility of students for consideration for the next stage of selection (as prescribed in Section 3.2) should be determined on the basis of rank order on average Z-Scores obtained by candidates at the GCE A/L Examination.

2.3.1.3 UGC will decide minimum Z-Score required to become eligible for consideration for various courses of study after finalizing the number of students that can be accommodated to each course of study.

2.3.1.4 Each university shall determine and advertise GCE (A/L) subject combinations for relevant courses of study for the respective EDP offered by the university. This information shall be published annually for the benefit of prospective applicants.

2.3.1.5 Any other qualification acceptable to the Senate of the relevant University may be considered for eligibility to be enrolled in a study programme. However, all such instances of applying alternative criteria should be adopted only with the concurrence of the UGC.

2.3.2 Methods of Selection and Registration

2.3.2.1 To select the required number of candidates from among the eligible candidates, the University shall conduct an aptitude test and may also conduct a practical test and/or interview, depending on the degree programme.

2.3.2.2 The intake for each degree programme must be determined by the Senate of the University, in concurrence of the UGC and the Centre/Unit should not admit students in excess of the approved number.

2.3.2.3 The registered students are required to maintain annual registration to retain the studentship.

2.4 Programme Structure of EDPs: Types, Structure and Design of Curriculum

2.4.1 Types of Study Programmes

2.4.1.1 All universities must ensure that the graduates produced by the external degree programmes meet the human resource needs of the country. Therefore, the types of degree programmes must be determined on the basis of findings of employment market surveys.

2.4.1.2 The University shall once in 4 years, assess the quality of output, the mobility and employability of graduates and decide on the continuation of a study programme or refocus the degree programme through curricular reforms to make the study programme more relevant to changing market requirements.

2.4.2 Structure of Study Programme

2.4.2.1 All study programmes shall follow the semester-based course unit system and grade point average evaluation and marking scheme

2.4.2.2 The external degree may take the form of General or Special degree as determined by the relevant University.

2.4.2.3 All study programmes should conform into Credit Qualification Framework specified by the UGC based on the recommendations of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC (UGC-QAAC).

   i. The general degree should offer a minimum of 90 credits, to be completed within a period of 3 years (6 semesters of 20-week duration including examination period), with provision to extend up to a maximum of over 6 years, depending on the student's choice.

  ii. The special or applied science degree should offer a minimum of 120 credits to be completed within a minimum period of 4 years (8 semesters of 20-week duration including examinations) with provision to extend maximum of 8 years, depending on the student's choice.

 iii. One credit hour is equivalent to 30 hours of contact time (face to face instructions, tutorials lab-classes, if any, on-line or computer-based learning, independent learning and examination).If the student registers for maximum of 15 credits per semester in order to complete the degree in six semesters he/she requires 450 hours of study and examination time during a 20 week semester.

 iv. However, the student has the option of following the course with a lesser work load such a student require to register for a minimum work load of 8 credits per semester (minimum 2 courses). This should consist of at least one core and one supplementary/optional course per semester. Such a student requires a minimum number of 225-250 study hours per semester and would have to forgo the grace period and hence requires to complete the programme in six years.

2.4.2.4 All study programmes should follow the following generic structure where programme should be offered in 3 or 4 levels depending on 3- or 4-year degree programme and the study programme shall consist of a) Foundation Courses, b) Core Courses in principle subject area/s, and c) Supplementary Courses in subjects areas of emerging importance.

Foundation Courses – Compulsory for all students and should consist minimum of 20% the study programme. The list of courses may include English Language, Computer Applications, Introduction to Basic Science and Mathematics, and Career Guidance.

Core Courses: Optional and compulsory courses should consist minimum of 65% the study programme and would be made available from a basket of choices. The compulsory courses are defined by the study programme for the general or special degree.

Supplementary Courses: These courses should consist minimum of 15% the study programme and will supplement the study programme, based on the students' choice. This basket may include courses that would give a competitive edge in the employment market. The available choice of courses may change with changing times and include introductory courses in Economics, Business Management, Human Resource Management, Education Technology, etc.

2.4.3 Design of Curriculum

2.4.3.1 The curriculum specified for the study programme must be developed on the basis of a predetermined graduate profile. This has to be developed by the Department / Faculty.

2.4.3.2 Once the ideal graduate profile is defined, the curriculum must include courses that would facilitate the training of such graduates, adhering to the structure specified in **Section 2.4.2.**

2.4.3.3 Once the courses are determined, the development of course contents must precede the defining intended learning outcomes

2.4.3.4 Based on the intended learning outcome of the course, the detailed course contents must be defined along with and methods of teaching and learning.

2.4.3.5 Sources of information, supplementary reading material must be clearly defined.

2.4.3.6 Finally, the evaluation methods and specific weightage given for each component must be spelt out clearly.

2.4.4 Credit Transfer

2.4.4.1 Within University - It is recommended to explore the possibility of introducing credit transfer schemes to EDPs, enabling the students to claim credits earned in internal or other external degree programmes of the same university

2.4.4.2 Between Universities - Credit transfers related to External Degrees between the Universities should be encouraged

2.5   Programme Delivery and Learner Support for EDPs

2.5.1   All registered students should be provided with an orientation programme in the form of a 'day class' at the beginning of the programme (first week of Semester I of the programme) and at the beginning of every semester thereafter. This orientation should provide information about the programme, courses offered, teaching, learning and assessment methods, etc.

2.5.2   In this 'day class' all the students must be provided with a list of learning material, available sources and information as regard to computer-based learning material available to them

2.5.3   Study material should be made available using innovative technology (regular educational TV programmes, on-line learning sessions, interactive multimedia CDs, video conferencing, etc.).

2.5.4   Face-to-face discussions/seminars and other relevant activities should be considered as essential components of the EDPs.

2.5.5   Where practicals are considered to be an integral part of an EDP, it is imperative that such practical classes are conducted in a manner similar to those in the internal degree programmes.

2.5.6   Wherever hands-on experience in a subject area is considered necessary, providing industrial placement (Apprentice Training) should be explored in both public and private sector institutions.

2.5.7   In addition to the instructional sessions and materials provided by the University, the students are free to follow instructional training in a private institution of their choice.

2.6   Student Assessment and Evaluation for EDPs

2.6.1   Assessment System

The assessment system should consist of formative and summative components. Final evaluation should be a combination of summative and formative assessments

A)   Formative assessments- up to 40%
  i)   Continuous assessments (such as Quizzes, Discussion forums, Take home assignments and projects should be introduced)

  ii)   Completion of continuous assessment must be made mandatory to sit the final examination

  iii)   Minimum percentage of marks should be compulsory to proceed to the final examination

B)   Summative Assessment (*Final Examination/end-semester/end of the year examination*) - Minimum should be 60% of total marks

2.6.2   Appointment of Examiners

2.6.2.1 Board of Examiners should be appointed by the Senate on the recommendation of the EDECU and the relevant Faculty Board for each examination consisting of Chief Examiner and other Examiners for setting questions and other tests, scrutinizing questions and question papers and other tests, moderating and invigilating examinations and other tests and marking examination papers and evaluating other tests, as appropriate.

2.6.2.2 Appointment criteria shall include the following;

  i)   No person engaged in conducting private classes/ tuition to External Degree students should be appointed as Examiners.

  ii)   A statement must be obtained from each Examiner declaring their non-involvement in the teaching of External Degree students

  iii)   Qualifications of the Examiners must be disclosed in the information presented to the approving authority (Faculty Board/Senate/ Council).

2.6.3   Marking of Scripts

2.6.3.1 Marking shall be either individual or conference marking depending on the number of answer scripts to be scrutinized. Conference marking is

considered better and should be given first preference in view of the need for releasing results early.

2.6.3.2 Chief/Setting Examiner shall ensure that the model answers and marking scheme for the entire question paper is handed in together with the question paper.

2.6.3.3 The number of answer scripts to be marked by each examiner shall be subject to the guidelines to be drawn by the EDECU.

2.6.3.4 As a policy, second marking shall not be practiced. However, it is recommended to carryout random marking of best and worst answer scripts by an Examiner nominated by the Chief Examiner. In the event of a significant discrepancy in marks the matter should be referred to the Board of Examiners for corrective action.

2.7 Guidelines for Extension Courses

2.7.1 Extension courses of the ODL system refer to both certificate level and diploma level programs to be offered using a blended mode delivery, namely use of both face to face instructions and self-learning using printed learning material complemented by on-line and computer-based learning resources.

2.7.2 Curriculum , Curricular of programmes and courses/modules for certificate level and diploma level programs via the ODL system should be developed under the course unit system, and should essentially include an assessment/examination component by the university in compliance with standards and norms issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.

2.7.3 Programmes, courses/modules, course/module context and admission criteria for certificate and diploma courses shall be proposed by the Board of the Study of Department/Faculty/Centre, in accordance with guidelines issued by the university and in compliance with standards and norms issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.

2.7.4 Selection of candidates for certificate/diploma courses should be based on the university approved criteria prepared and adopted according to guidelines issued by the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of UGC.

2.8 Quality Assurance

2.8.1 Policy for Quality Assurance (QA)

2.8.1.1 It will be the responsibility of the UGC to ensure Quality Assurance of the EDPs in Sri Lanka in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC.

2.8.1.2 Tools necessary for QA such as Standards and Performance Indicators will be developed for EDP-ODL system.

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2.8.1.3 Guidelines regarding the frequency of quality assurance reviews to be conducted, procedures, regulations and guidelines for monitoring, evaluating and implementing procedures for QA will be established

2.8.1.4 Internal QA processes will articulate the external review processes as laid down by the QA Council of the UGC.

2.8.1.5 Through the use of Standards and Performance Indicators, Universities and Higher Educational Institutes offering External Degree Programmes will be encouraged to practice self assessments for continuous improvements and quality sustenance.

2.9   Collaborations

2.9.1 Collaboration with other state and private institutions/ organizations in conducting EDP & EC is encouraged, as it ensures optimal utilization of physical, technological, intellectual and human resources available in the country to improve the quality of the system

2.9.2 Wherever possible, collaborative relationships between Departments/ Faculties/ Universities/ other Institutions (National and International) should be established for;

i.   Sharing of developed course material

ii. Jointly developing new courses/ programmes

iii. Sharing facilities such as laboratories, learning centres, IT centres, facilities at the Open University of Sri Lanka, National Online Distance Education Services (NODES) available through the Ministry of Higher Education

iv. Jointly delivering programmes

2.9.3 Rules, regulations, MOUs, TORs etc. necessary for such collaborations to be drawn up by the respective institutions in compliance with guidelines issued by the UGC.

Annex 05 – Glossary

Term	Definition
Academic audit	is a quality assurance review process that focuses on the procedures a university or an institution uses to assure its academic standards and quality. It evaluates how the university or institution satisfies itself, that its chosen standards are being achieved and makes a judgement about threshold standards.
Academic award	the outcome or successful completion of a course or programme of study that leads to a qualification such as a degree, diploma or certificate or other formal recognition.
Academic calendar	the schedule of the institution for the academic year giving details like dates of reopening and closing, holidays, exams, results, convocation, etc.
Academic quality	describes how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their awards. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided.
Academic standards	the level of achievement a student has to reach to gain an academic award.
Access	the arrangements that an educational or training system makes with respect to entry requirements (exam qualifications, etc.) so as to offer entry opportunities for a much wider range of applicants than was traditionally the case.
Accountability	the obligation to demonstrate and take responsibility for performance in the light of agreed expectations.
Accreditation	It is typically a formal process of enquiry against a set of agreed criteria (or standards), undertaken by a formally constituted body and will lead, if successful, to a formal status (as an accredited institution or accredited programme or accredited degree).
Accrediting agency	anorganisation or association with authority to certify the quality of the educational provision of an institution and of individual programmes.
Action plan	description of specific activities that respond to short and longer term strategic objectives. The plan includes outcomes and outputs along with detailed roadmap and planned milestones. It also details resource commitments and time

horizons required for the accomplishment of the plan.

Active learning	interactive instructional techniques that engage students in such higher-order thinking tasks as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and reflection. Students engaged in active learning might use resources beyond the faculty, such as libraries, Web sites, interviews and/or focus groups, to obtain information. They may demonstrate their abilities to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate through projects, presentations, experiments, simulations, internships, practicum, independent study projects, peer teaching, role playing, or written documents.
Activities	are questions or tasks designed to help learners to think for themselves, come up with explanations/solutions, sort out the features of an argument, draw inferences, engage in controversy and relate their own ideas and experience to a topic. Sometimes called self-assessment questions (SAQs), in-text questions (ITQs) or adjunct aids.
Advance organiser	is built into the beginning of a piece of self-instructional material to give learners a general idea of what is to follow and to help organize their learning.
Appeal mechanism	documented procedures for dealing with challenges to a rule or decision, or for reviewing a judgement or decision made on behalf of the institution. This also includes the constitution, roles, responsibilities and ethical practices of the committees or authority established for the purpose.
Assessment	is the measurement of aspects of a learner's performance in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes (usually referred to as 'evaluation' in the USA). It can be formal or informal and formative or summative. It may be paper or computer-based or on-the-job assessment.
Assignments	Student centred learning exercises given during a course at pre-determined intervals and according to defined criteria in fulfillment of assessment requirements. Work submitted by the learners may be computer-marked or tutor marked.
Audio-visual	a term used to describe instructional materials or teaching aid which use both sound and vision; more generally, a term used to describe all communication media.
Audit	on-site verification activity, such as inspection or review, of a process or quality system, to ensure compliance to requirements.
Award	a certificate or title conferred by an academic institution

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	signifying that the recipient has successfully completed a prescribed course of study.
Benchmarking	Is a technique in which an institution measures its performance against that of the best of others, making reference to how those institutions achieved the 'benchmark' levels, and uses that information to improve its own performance by comparing its own to the standard/good practice of that performance.
Beneficiaries	anyone who benefits from a particular action. In the case of an ODL course this may include learners, employers, the community etc.
Bridging course (Bridge course)	a course designed for learners who have difficulty in coping with the transition to a higher level of study. The bridging course is often of a short duration and is intended to bridge the gap between an existing level of competence and the level required for effective study at the higher level.
Certification	the process of granting recognition to a learner who has satisfied the predetermined criteria set by an authorized awarding body.
Code of conduct	expectations of behaviour mutually agreed upon by the institution and its constituent members.
Collaboration	the process by which people/organisations work together to accomplish a common mission.
Collaborative learning	is a method of teaching and learning in which students team together to explore a significant question or create a meaningful project. Within the context of electronic communication, collaborative learning can take place without members being physically in the same location.
Communication	a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour.
Community engagement	developing and sustaining a working relationship between an institution and one or more community groups to help them both to understand and act on the needs and issues that the community experiences.
Competence	a broad term used to describe the range of abilities that people can demonstrate .
Competencies	ability to apply to practical situations the essential principles and techniques of a particular subject matter.

Compliance	a state of being in accordance with established guidelines, specifications, requirements or legislation.
Constituencies	of an institution various departments in the institution including administration and other sectors.
Content	the subject knowledge and information or other related matter that the faculty/teachers are expected to deliver to the students/learners.
Continuous improvement	a management process whereby academic teaching/learning processes are constantly evaluated and improved in the light of their efficiency , effectiveness and flexibility; the ongoing improvement of the content, material, services or processes through incremental and breakthrough improvements.
Continuous quality improvement	a philosophy and attitude for analyzing capabilities and processes and improving them on a continual basis to achieve the stated objectives and stakeholder satisfaction.
Counseling	the provision of academic, personal and emotional support and guidance to learners.
Course	is a planned series of learning experiences in a particular subjects offered by an institution.
Course completion rate	percentage of students in the total enrolment for the course/programme who have satisfactorily completed all of the prescribed requirements of a given course/programme.
Course development	a specified and quality assured process that combines the elements of course formulation and approval, academic content writing, assessment design, instructional design, integration of media content, media production and course materials production.
Course materials	materials in print or electronic format which are provided to the learner to support the achievement of the intended learning outcomes.
Credit	a unit used in the calculation of the academic value of the courses taken by a learner. A learner accumulates credits by passing courses. A pre-determined number of credits is required for an award. The value of a credit is normally determined by the number of notional learning hours required to complete it.
Credit transfer	the ability to transport credits (for learning) from one setting

to another. This not only facilitates smooth transfer of learners from one programme to another and one institution to another but also enables transnational mobility.

Criteria	mean a set of pre-determined standards of procedures, performance, degree of compliance and achievements of an institution of higher education that form the basis of graded assessment and accreditation.
Culture of the institution	norms, values, beliefs and behaviours inherent in an institution and reflected in the functioning of the institution and its staff. The top management of the institution defines and creates the necessary environment for the institutional culture.
Curriculum	the total planned structure of knowledge and skills and educational experiences that make up a programme of study that enable the learners to achieve the intended learning outcomes.
Curriculum planning	any systematic process intended to develop the structure of a curriculum.
Database	a collection of data fundamental to an operation, organized in some pre-defined structure; print or electronic media
Delivery	(of programme/course) refers to the deployment of instructional approaches –modes of teaching and organizational activities and experiences directed towards effective learning.
Developmental testing	field trial or pilot - trying out draft materials with a small group of learners in the hope of developing or improving those materials for the benefit of other learners.
Disabled learners	learners who have a physical or mental impairment which effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Discipline (Academic)	a branch of knowledge or learning which is taught or researched at the college or university level.

Distance Education	an educational process and system in which all or a significant proportion of the teaching is carried out by someone or something removed in space and time from the learner. Distance education requires structured planning, well-designed courses, special instructional techniques and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as specific organisational and administrative arrangements.
Distance learning	a system and a process that connects learners to distributed learning resources. All distance learning, however, is characterized by a) separation/distance of place and/or time between instructor and learner, amongst learners, and/or between learners and learning resources; and b) interaction between the learner and instructor, among learners and/or between learners and learning resources conducted through one or more media.
Distance teaching	a term that emphasizes the teacher's role in the distance education system.
Distributed learning	a term that emphasizes learning rather than the technology used or the separation between learner and the teacher; distributed learning makes learning possible beyond the classroom and when combined with classroom modes becomes flexible learning.
Diversity (demographics)	differences among people and individuals based on caste, creed, geographies, colour, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, gender, learning abilities etc.
Dropout	is the term for learners ceasing to be active in their course of study before its completion and is a concern in any form of education or training.
Dual mode institution	an institution that offers learning opportunities in two modes: one using traditional classroom-based methods, the other using distance methods.
Educational Technology	It is the study, and application, of techniques, systems, tools and media used in education and training.
Effectiveness	The status having produced a desired effect.
Efficiency	The ratio of the output to the total input in a process
Elective courses	a range of courses not specified in programme completion requirements from which learners may select in accordance with their own preference and learning and career goals.

Electronic media	media that utilize electronic or electromechanical devices to enable the teacher to deliver and end user to access the content. Includes video recordings, audio recordings, multimedia presentations, slide presentations, CD-ROM and online content. Excludes print media which may be produced electronically but do not require electronics to be accessed by the end user.
Equity	an educational and learning environment in which individuals can consider options and make choices throughout their lives based on their abilities and talents, not on the basis of stereotypes, biased expectations or discrimination with respect to race, caste, economic status etc. The achievement of educational equity enables females and males of all races and ethnic backgrounds to develop skills needed to be productive, empowered citizens. It opens economic and social opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status.
Ethics	the practice of applying a mutually agreed code of conduct based on moral principles to the day-to-day actions of individuals or groups within any organization.
Evaluation	is a periodic assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness impact and /or sustainability of an activity or intervention.
Experiential learning	learning acquired through workplace or other previous experience.
Excellence	Excellence in higher education can be achieved only through a synergy of multiple operations including planning, governance, administration, academic restructuring, quality assessment and assurance and institution-society interaction. A holistic approach to 'excellence' requires a realistic appraisal of the present practices in each of the operation as well as of the measures that need to be taken to facilitate improvement.
Extension programmes/courses	an educational training/courses provided by universities to people who are not enrolled as regular students.
Exit meeting	The concluding session of the onsite visit which is attended by various representatives of the institution where the chair of the peer team will share the highlights of the completed assessment exercise.
External quality Assurance (EQA)	it is performed by an organization external to the institution which is aimed or intended to assesses the operation of the institution or its programmes in order to determine whether it meets the pre-determined standards.

External review	a scrutiny process that examines standards and quality in a university .it is undertaken by people who do not work for the university?.
Face to face interaction	interaction between two individuals or groups in the same physical space.
Feedback	a) formative and evaluative comments made to individual learners by their tutors in response to written assignments. b) evaluative comments made by stakeholders to the institution on the quality and effectiveness of a defined process.?
Feedback mechanism	systems for obtaining information from participants in a process that contributes to the assessment of its quality and effectiveness.
Formative assessment	the evaluation of learning that is carried out as the learning activities of a course progress.
Formative evaluation	the assessment of learning that occurs as a project or course while it is in progress, with the aim of identifying short-comings in the course and addressing them immediately.
Generic skills	skills that are fundamental to a class of activities and are transferable from one job or activity to another. Lists of generic skills usually include the following categories: Basic/fundamental skills—such as literacy, numeracy, analytical skills, technical skills etc. People-related skills—such as communication, interpersonal, teamwork, customer-service skills Conceptual/thinking skills—such as collecting and organising information, problem-solving, planning and organising, learning-to-learn skills, thinking innovatively and creatively, systems thinking Personal skills and attributes—such as being responsible, resourceful, flexible, able to manage own time, having self-esteem Skills related to the business world—such as innovation skills, entrepreneurial skills Skills related to the community—such as civic or citizenship knowledge and skills, multiculturalism, entertainment and social responsibility etc.

Goal	a result, milestone or checkpoint in the future which will indicate significant progress towards achieving the institutional mission. A goal should be specific, measurable, critical for success and benchmarked.
Good practices	practices which when effectively linked together , can be expected to lead to sustainable high quality outcomes in quality provisions , student satisfaction, flexibility timeliness , innovations and cost effectiveness. A superior method or innovative practice that contributes to the improved performance of an organization, usually recognized as best by other peer institutions.
Governance	Managing or governing an organization based on pre-determined policy; providing leadership and managing and coordinating and the use of physical and human resources, procedures and processes, in transparent and efficient manner to successfully achieve towards the vision of the organization.
Governance structure	the system and structure for defining policy, providing leadership, managing and coordinating the procedures and resources that ensure the quality of all the activities of the organisations (NCATE Standards – http//www.cqaie.org).
Grievance redressal	mechanisms for receiving , processing and addressing dissatisfaction expressed, complaints and other formal requests made by learners, staff and other stakeholders on the institutional provisions promised and perceived.
Horizontal mobility	the opportunity for learners to move within and across disciplines for additional learning within the same level of education. Also see vertical mobility.
ICTs (see also new technologies)	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) consist of the hardware, software, networks and media for the collection, storage, processing, transmission and presentation of information (voice, data, text, images) as well as related services.
Independent learning	instructional system in which learners are prepared for carrying on their studies beyond the classroom instruction even without instructors or tutors for direction and assistance. This is for preparing students for lifelong learning.
Independent study	mode of learning in which learners work through their study materials independently of other learners.
Indicators	established measures to determine how well an institution is

	meeting its stakeholder expectations and other operational and financial performance expectations.
Induction (see also Orientation)	is the process by which learners are helped to understand the requirements, learning skills, mode of operation etc. of an open or distance learning scheme.
Informal assessment	assessment of learning that is carried out using discussion with tutors or peers, self-tests, etc in which the learner's performance may be noted but not formally graded.
Information flow	dissemination/transmission of information through a specified path within the organizational structure.
Innovation	using new knowledge and understanding to experiment with new possibilities in order to implement new concepts that create new value.
Inputs	products, services and prepared materials used to produce the desired outcomes.
Institutionalization	formalization of a practice; it is the opposite of any ad hoc arrangement which offers extensive flexibility.
Institutional research	collection, analysis, reporting and warehousing of quantitative and qualitative data about an institution's students, faculty, staff, curriculum, course offerings and learning outcomes to inform institutional decision-making and planning.
Instructional design	process of designing instructional materials in a way that helps learners to learn effectively.
Instructional package	all essential study materials for a course
Interactivity	the ability for the learner to respond in some way to the learning material and obtain feedback on the response ; there are two kinds of interactivity viz: **learning material interactivity** , involving the learner's interaction with the medium , the level, and the immediacy of feedback the medium itself provides , and the extent to which the medium will accommodate learner's own input and direction and **social interactivity** , extent to which learners interact with teachers and with each other via a given medium.

Interactive learning	learning that results from the two-way communication between tutor and learner, between learners and between the learner and the learning materials. The interactivity of the learning can be assessed in terms of the learner's interaction with the medium of delivery, the level and immediacy of the feedback the medium itself provides, the extent to which the medium will accommodate the learner's own input and direction and the extent to which learners interact with the tutor and with each other via a given medium.
Interdisciplinary study	an integrative approach in which information from more than one discipline is used in interpreting the content of a subject, phenomenon, theory or principle.
Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	temporary grants of monopoly intended to give economic incentives for innovative and creative activity. IPR exist in the form of patents, copyrights and trademarks.
Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)	Internal system of monitoring to ensure that policies and mechanisms are in place and to make sure that it is meeting its own objectives and pre-determined standards.
Internal review	methods used by universities to assure their own academic standards and quality.
Internal stakeholder	the staff or student or department within an institution who is associated with and responsible for one or more of the institutional activities.
Intervention	the action of an individual , team or the management getting involved in the processes to take appropriate decisions or provide meaning to a policy, rule or regulation to solve a problem , dispute or to bring in consensus
Learner-centred education	learner-centered education places the learner at the centre of education. It begins with understanding the educational context from which a learner comes. It continues with the instructor evaluating the learner's progress towards the achievement of negotiated learning outcomes. By helping the student acquire the basic skills to learn, it ultimately provides a basis for learning throughout life. This approach strives to be individualistic, flexible, competency-based, varied in methodology and not always constrained by time or place.
Learner profile	A description of an average potential learner or group of learners based upon knowledge of appropriate learner characteristics

Learner support	a supportive network of preparatory courses, study skill development opportunities, personal and course counseling, learning support through flexible approach to resources including individualized support from the teacher/facilitator, all constructed in ways which avoid deficit views of learners and which learners can draw upon to meet their needs. These will assist them perform to their potential, motivate them and to respond to their needs.
Learner support services	physical and academic facilities made available to learners to enable every individual to achieve the stated learning outcomes and optimize his/her learning. They may include online support, tutor support, library and information services, laboratories, administrative support for admission, assignments, examinations etc.
Learning centres	(also known as Access centres, Outreach centres or Regional centres); offices or buildings maintained by open and distance learning programmes in order to provide localized delivery of learning materials and support to learners.
Learning environment	the place and setting where learning occurs. A virtual learning environment is one in which a student is provided with tools and resources to learn both autonomously and with a virtual cohort of learners.
Learning outcomes	statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning.
Learning portfolio	A representative collection of a student's work that promotes self-assessment, awareness and continuous improvement.
Learning resources	the resources of the learning process which may be used by a learner (in isolation or with other learners) to facilitate learning that include the availability of access to courses, teachers or facilitators, learning materials, library facilities , laboratory facilities, media equipment, computer centres, and community experts.
Leadership	an essential part of a quality improvement effort. Organization leaders must establish a vision communicate that vision to those in the organization and provide the tools and knowledge necessary to accomplish the vision.

Lifelong learning	a philosophical concept in which learning is viewed as a long term process beginning at birth and lasting throughout life; a conceptual framework within which the learning needs of people of all ages and educational and occupational levels may be met , regardless of their circumstances.; a process of accomplishing personal, social and professional development throughout the lifespan of individuals in order to enhance the quality of life of both individuals and their collectives
Lifelong learning skills	knowledge and skills which improve learners' competence at the time of learning and facilitate continuous learning throughout life.
Livelihood	the application of knowledge and skills that will help an individual to boost his/her self-esteem and eventually achieve a better quality of life.
Management Information System (MIS)	a computerized integrated information collection, collation, analysis and reporting system to support institutional decision making process.
Market research	activities undertaken by an institution to determine the demand for its programmes and services and the features in similar programmes and services that its potential customers prefer.
Marking scheme	a set of criteria used in assessing student learning.
Mission	the overall function or purpose of an institution.
Mobile/cell(ular) phone	a portable telephone that connects to the telephone network over radio wave transmission.
Module	a separate and coherent block of learning; a part of the modular programme of studies where the curriculum is divided into a range of similar sized segments.
Modular curricula	courses offered in units which are complete in themselves.
Monitoring	a management function that operates during programme implementation to carry out a continuous or on-going collection and analyse of information about implementation to review programmes with a view to correcting problems as they arise. It is an internal activity that is the responsibility of those who manage implementation procedures thus representing a good management practices.
Multimedia	learning technologies that involve the whole range of audio, visual, text and graphics media available, integrated into a package that has been effectively designed from an

instructional perspective.

Needs analysis	a process of identifying the learning and training needs of a particular group or population.
Network	any system consisting of a number of physically separated but inter-connected sub-systems. It may be applied to computers, radio or TV stations, agencies, institutions as well as to people with shared interests.
New educational technologies	digital tools and resources (hardware and software) and their application in the field of education.
Objectives	(see also learning outcomes) In the context of teaching and learning, a specific statement about what the learner will be able to do when a learning activity is complete, the conditions under which learners will demonstrate their competency and the way in which this competency will be measured.
Open access	a way of providing learning opportunities that implies a lack of formal entry requirements, prerequisite credentials or an entrance examination.
Open learning	an educational philosophy that also emphasizes giving learners choices about media, place of study, support mechanisms and entry and exit points.
Open and Distance Learning	a way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media, including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face to face meetings between tutor and learners; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.
Open educational resources	educational materials and resources offered freely and openly for anyone to use and under some licenses to re-mix, improve and redistribute.
Open source software	a licensing model for software that gives free access to the source code of the software to allow interested parties to modify or contribute to the software as they see fit.
Organisational chart/ Organogram	a diagram that shows the structure of an organisation and the relationships and relative ranks of its parts and positions/jobs.

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Organisational structure	the form of an organization that is evident in the way that divisions, departments, functions and people link together and interact. It reveals vertical responsibilities and horizontal linkages and may be represented by an organization chart (see organogram)
Orientation	a process through which a new student or employee is integrated into an institution, learning about its culture, policies and procedures, and the specific practicalities of his or her programme of study or job.
Outputs	products, materials, services or information arising outof a particular process.
Outreach	the provision of programmes, services, activities and /or expertise to those outside the traditional university community. Outreach is a one-way process in which the university is the provider either on a gratis basis or with an associated charge.
Outreach centres	see Learning Centres
Outreach programmes/activities	a systematic attempt to provide services beyond the conventional limits of institutional provision to particular segments of a community e.g. educational programmes for illiterate adults.
Participatory management	a system of institutional management in which every member of the institution is involved at one stage or the other in the decision making process.
Partners	refers to those key institutions /organizations who are working in concert with an institution to achieve a common goal or to improve performance.
Partnership	a strategy and a formal relationship between the institution and another institution or agency that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and for the learners.
Partnership/alliance	is a formal arrangement between two partners for a specific purpose.; It is both a strategy and a formal relationship between the university and another major provider that engenders cooperation for the benefit of both parties and the student population at large.
Peer assessment	a method of assessment that is based on the consensus opinion of a peer group of learners on the respective contributions made to the work of the group by each individual participant.

Performance appraisal	a systematic assessment of an employee's performance in order to assess his/her achievement of objectives, training needs, potential for promotion, eligibility for merit increment etc.
Performance indicators	criteria which are used by educational institutions themselves in self-evaluation and by external evaluators when judging the quality of educational provision.
Planning	is the formal process of making decisions for the future of individuals and organizations. Plans are statement of things to be done and the sequence and timing in which they should be done in order to achieve a given end.
Policy	a statement of aims, purpose, principles or intentions which serve as continuing guidelines for management in accomplishing objectives.
Pre-requisites	for a lesson/course are the knowledge, skills, relevant experience, and perhaps attitudes the teacher would like the learners to have before starting on some particular learning experience.
Print media	printed, as distinguished from broadcast or electronically transmitted, communications
Prior learning	what has been achieved by a learner prior to enroll a particular programme of study by means of previous experience, knowledge or skills acquired in the workplace.
Procedures	the documented steps in a process and how they are to be performed.
Process	a set of interrelated work activities characterized by a set of specific inputs and activities to achieve specific outputs.
Programme	structured teaching and learning opportunities which leads to an award; to choose from. Refers to all activities that engage students in learning .This may include courses, research, outreach, community services etc.
Programme options	a range of courses offered at various levels leading to degrees/diplomas/certificates for students
Progression	vertical movement of learners from one level of education to the next higher level successfully or towards gainful employment.

Prospectus	a booklet produced by an institution for prospective students giving details about itself, its programmes, courses and admission requirements.
Provider	any organization providing training or education.
Quality	the fitness for purpose of a product or service according to a set of required standards.
Quality Assessment	It is a process of evaluation of performance of an institution or its unit based on certain established criteria.
Quality Assurance	It is about putting an institution's notion of quality into action. It is 'policies and procedures initiated by an institution which guarantee the quality of educational courses and qualification. It also refers to the process of maintaining standards reliably and consistently by applying criteria of success in a course, programme or institution.
Quality audit/review (external)	a systematic, independent examination by an independent third party to determine whether quality activities in an i nstitution and related results comply with plans and whether these plans are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve the stated objectives.
Quality enhancement	This is a more modern term and is concerned with seeking to achieve something that is understood to be reasonably better than that which went before. It is also defined as efficiency in efforts at improving performance or performance efficiency of a system.
Qualification framework	a system that recognizes and assesses the skills and qualifications of individuals at any stage in their careers whether these skills and qualifications are acquired in a formal education setting, on the job or through self-study.
Quality policy	an organization's general statement of its beliefs about quality, how quality will come about and its expected result.
Quality tool	an instrument or technique to support and improve the activities of process quality management and improvement.
Reflective practice	thoughtfully considering one's own experiences in applying knowledge to practice while being coached by professionals in the discipline.
Regulatory agencies	government or quasi government agencies with responsibility for the overall planning and monitoring of the educational provision of institutions commonly under their

	purview.
Research	rigorous intellectual activity that probes into what is known to reach the unknown.
Scenario	a sequence of imagined events designed to indicate what might happen in real life.
Self-appraisal	individual's or institution's own evaluation of his/her or its performance.
Self-assessment	A process in which learners are required to answer questions or carry out prescribed activities and to judge the outcomes against pre-determined criteria.
Senior management	Chief Executive Officer and senior officers of the institution.
Social learning capital	the blending of social capital and lifelong learning taking place in the context of the horizontal transfer of knowledge.
Staff appraisal	is a systematic periodic evaluation of a staff member with respect to his/her performance on the job and his/her potential for development.
Staff development	skills development, refresher programmes or other training provided for staff within or outside the institution to enable them to continuously update their knowledge and skills for effective and efficient performance and career advancement.
Stakeholder	any individual, group, unit, department or organisation that will have a significant impact on or will be significantly impacted by the quality of a specific process or service. They may be internal (e.g. staff, students) or external to the institution (e.g. employers, government; for agriculture they include farmers, educators, extension personnel, researchers, representatives of financial institutions and NGOs).
Standardisation	the establishment of standards for different levels of performance.
Standards	measurable criteria that provide the basis for forming judgements concerning the performance of an instructional activity , innovation or programme.
Strategic plan	a specific, action-oriented medium or long-term plan for making progress towards a set of institutional goals.
Student handbook	an information book for registered students of an institution containing information on all matters relevant to students for their academic career in the institution.

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Student:tutor ratio	the average number of students assigned to an individual tutor across a programme or institution.
Summative assessment	evaluation of learning that takes place on completion of the learning activity or activities.
Summative evaluation	assessment that occurs at the completion of a course or project, which provides a summary account of its effectiveness and the extent to which it met its goals and objectives.
Survey	the act of examining a process or questioning a selected sample of individuals to obtain data about a process, product or service.
Systemic change	change that occurs in all aspects and levels of the educational process.
Total Quality Management	is a comprehensive approach for improving competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility through planning , organizing and understanding each activity and involving each individual at each level.
Transparency	institutional processes that are characterized by openness, communication and clearly assigned accountability.
Tutoring	an interactive approach to disseminating knowledge that helps students to improve their learning strategies in order to promote empowerment and independent learning.
Validation	process of confirming the appropriateness of something ; determination of the effectiveness of instructional materials or system by the use of appropriate summative evaluation techniques.
Vision	a short memorable statement that paints a vivid picture of an ambitious, desirable and future state aligned with institutional values. Its purpose is to inspire and act as a guide for decision-making and planning within a 5 year time horizon.