



BLANTYRE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BIU QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT

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Introduction

Blantyre International University (BIU) is committed to delivering high-quality academic programs that produce skilled graduates capable of contributing meaningfully to global development. The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit plays a pivotal role in improving the quality of BIU's educational offerings. It focuses on enhancing inputs, processes, and outputs to ensure the following:

- Value for Money: Achieving efficiency and productivity to maximize resources.
- Transformation: Implementing value-added activities to evolve the educational system.
- Perfection: Striving for near-flawless products, services, and systems.
- Excellence: Pursuing exceptionally high standards in all aspects of education.

Structure of the Quality Assurance Unit

The Quality Assurance Unit is an integral part of the Chancellor's office and headed by the Academic Dean. The Academic Dean is the Chairperson of the BIU Quality Assurance Unit. The Dean is complimented by other staff members as follows:

- a) Dean of Academics (Chair)
- b) Dean of Applied Studies
- c) Dean of Commerce
- d) Departmental Headss
- e) Registrar
- f) Finance Officer
- g) Librarian

Objective of the Quality Assurance Unit

The QA Unit is tasked with establishing cyclic processes that promote quality enhancement through self-criticism and self-reflection. Its objectives include:

- Developing a Quality Assurance policy for BIU.
- Monitoring the implementation of the University's strategic plan.
- Contributing to the achievement of educational goals and a conducive learning environment.
- Ensuring performance processes across the University are appropriate and relevant.
- Identifying strengths and weaknesses in instruction and training.
- Supporting systematic efforts for quality assurance and improvement.
- Periodically evaluating the quality assurance system.
- Coordinating student evaluations and staff assessments.
- Encouraging self-assessment among teaching staff.
- Managing internal and external program and institutional assessments.



- Organizing capacity-building activities such as seminars, workshops, and conferences.
- Formulating strategies, policies, and guidelines for academic quality assurance.
- Promoting academic quality culture.
- Monitoring, reviewing, auditing, evaluating, and continuously developing quality assurance strategies and procedures.
- Providing administrative support for quality assurance at all levels.
- Advising on program and course approval and development.
- Overseeing the allocation of teaching development grants and organizing teaching enhancement activities.
- Compiling publications related to learning and teaching enhancement.

Expected Outcomes

Successful implementation of QA activities is expected to yield several outcomes, including:

- Improved student performance and learning success.
- Enhanced work performance of academic and support staff.
- Increased transparency and stakeholder confidence.
- Improved competitiveness with other higher learning institutions.
- Management by processes and facts.
- Continuous learning and quality improvement.
- Better quality of graduates.
- Feedback from clients and consumers.
- Positive changes in staff attitudes and behaviors through sensitization workshops.
- Improved work ethics.

Quality Assurance Policy Statement

BIU's Quality Assurance Unit derives its policy statement from the institution's vision and mission, which are as follows:

BIU Vision

“To be a world-class university of academic excellence.”

BIU Mission Statement

“To provide world-class, broad-based educational programs that promote inquiry, mastery, and application of knowledge, concepts, and skills while fostering ethical leadership and responsibility.”

The Quality Assurance framework at BIU aligns with these statements, ensuring that systems, processes, and core activities meet the intended purpose. The QA Unit serves to safeguard the interests of stakeholders in maintaining high-quality education.

Vision and Mission of Quality Assurance Unit

The vision of the Quality Assurance Unit is to ensure excellence in quality assurance instruments in education, while its mission is to coordinate and evaluate quality assurance processes in teaching/learning, research, and support services to achieve the University's goals.

Sustaining the Culture of Quality

The culture of quality will be sustained by:

- Sensitizing staff at all levels.
- Internalizing quality throughout the university, encompassing service units, teaching, research, and extension.

Principles Underpinning Quality Assurance

The principles on which quality assurance are built in the university are developmental, to ensure continuous improvement through the involvement of all relevant parties within and outside the university. The work of the Quality Assurance Office and, indeed quality assurance across the university, rests on several principles:

- Quality assurance and enhancement are developmental and are part of the university's strategy for ensuring the highest quality learning, teaching, curricula, research and academic operations and standards of the university.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are collaborative and cooperative.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are empowering and involve all areas of the university, parties and stakeholders.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are designed to meet internal and external approval, accreditation and recognition requirements.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are ongoing and part of the university's strategies for continuous improvement and excellence;
- Quality assurance and enhancement practices at all areas of the university are documented, monitored, reviewed and evaluated.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are designed to promote institutional and public confidence in the academic standards of the university.
- Quality assurance and enhancement are transparent, systematic, rigorous and equitable.
- Quality assurance and enhancement focus on input, processes, outcomes and impact.
- Quality assurance and enhancement is a supported and facilitated process in the university.

Role of External Examiners

External examiners are asked to participate in the examinations of all degree programmes offered by the University. In addition to providing students with an independent and external assessment of their work, this practice helps to ensure that the standards and quality



of the qualifications awarded by the University are comparable to those of other reputable institutions.

External examiners' reports are sent to the Chancellor who then pass these on to Heads of Department for consideration. It is expected that due consideration is given to any concerns/recommendations for improvement.

Student Feedback

Students' evaluation of their learning experience is an integral and necessary component of any quality assurance system as adopted by universities as it allows the institution to evaluate how its service provision is viewed by its most important group of stakeholders, namely, its students. Besides providing them with an opportunity to comment on the quality of courses, feedback ensures that lecturers are made aware of problems perceived or encountered by students and affords an opportunity for tutors to conduct self-evaluation and introspection for improvement.

In each semester, students are invited to give feedback on the whole university processes including teaching and courses for instance. The main issues highlighted during any feedback exercise are communicated to the Chancellor and any urgent/serious matters are discussed with the respective Heads of Department. Results are monitored and study-units which elicit a pattern of recurrent problems are re-assessed for any developments.

Staff Feedback

In order that the University is better informed of what resources (human) are available, and how these are being utilised, members of the academic staff are each year asked to confirm details pertaining to their lecturing activities for the academic year in question. This exercise is intended primarily as a management tool for Heads of Department to enable them to make full use of available resources, provide for equity amongst staff and to ensure that the necessary resources to deliver programmes are available while, at the same time, taking into consideration the other needs which permit staff and their students to enhance the research profile of their department.

Periodic Programme Review

All departments and other academic entities within the University which provide teaching services are required to undertake a review, which essentially involves an evaluation of the complete portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes on offer. This process is an important aspect of the University's quality assurance procedures, and serves to ensure that programmes on offer are and remain of acceptable quality, appropriate academic standard and relevant to the needs of society.