Lira University
Quality Assurance Policy

March 2021

Foreword

Globally, the resultant impacts of the rapid growth, popularization and internationalization of higher education have raised public interest in the relevance and efficacy of higher education. Consequently, in many countries, the assessment and enhancement of quality have become critical issues for higher education. In Uganda, since 2006 when the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) developed the Quality Assurance Framework for Ugandan Universities, it became mandatory for all higher education institutions to have appropriate and effective internal structures and mechanisms for monitoring quality control procedures in their institutions. It is within this context that the Quality Assurance Policy for Lira University was developed.

This policy takes cognizance of the fact that quality is a fundamental pillar of Lira University, explicitly stated in her Mission Statement "To provide quality access to Higher Education and Research and to conduct professional training for the delivery of appropriate Health Services directed towards sustainable healthy Community and Environment" and Vision statement "To be a Beacon Centre for Applied Sciences and Technology". The establishment of this policy is therefore, a formal commitment by the University to improve the quality of services and products at Lira University. Overall, the policy spells out the key strategies the University intends to explore to maintain acceptable standards in the pursuit and fulfillment of her core functions of teaching and learning, research/innovation and publication, and provision of service to community.
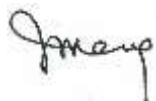
Since issues of quality touch on almost every aspect of the University system, the successful implementation of this Policy will require the commitment, participation and contribution of all stakeholders (The Council, Senate, Administrative and Academic Units, all Staff, Students and Affiliated/External partners). This robust implementation structure necessitates the establishment of a Central Coordinating Centre to provide professional leadership and guidance on the quality assurance processes,

systems,

procedures and activities in line with national and international standards.

It is anticipated that the implementation of this policy shall add value to the services, products and partnerships of Lira University and enhance the University's competitiveness.

Signature:

Professor Jasper Ogwal Okeng
 THE VICE CHANCELLOR

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List of Acronyms

QA   Quality Assurance

ICT   Information Communications Technology

M&E   Monitoring and Evaluation

Short title

This policy may be cited as Quality Assurance Policy of Lira University.

Definition of terms

Quality: Quality refers to 'fitness for purpose', where the purpose is summarized in the University's vision, mission and strategic objectives.

Quality Assurance: Quality Assurance refers to the process of promoting, evaluating and assessing the extent to which the individual/ unit/ institution conforms to prescribed standards.

Stakeholder: Stakeholder refers to a person/agency or a group with interest in the activities of the University and is either directly or indirectly affected by this policy.

The University: For purposes of this policy, "the University" shall mean Lira University.

Academic Department: Academic Department refers to an academic unit in a Faculty/School devoted to a particular academic discipline and charged with the responsibility of mainstreaming quality in all departmental activities.

Administrative Department: Administrative Department refers to an Administrative unit charged with the responsibility of planning, coordinating and putting in place mechanisms and systems to ensure quality delivery of services in the University.

1.0 Preamble

In Uganda, quality assurance in Higher Education has become an issue of great concern among all stakeholders. A number of factors have contributed to this concern, among them being the increased students' enrollment and mobility, increased number and competition among Universities both Public and Private, internationalization of higher education, technological changes and expectations of the labor market.

Lira University, established in 2015 as one of the Public Universities in Uganda with a niche of training students in Health Sciences, is in the process of transformation to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to her clients. The University has positioned itself as one of the prominent Universities in Uganda offering a number of academic and skilling programmes that are in line with National and International development needs.

The University's Strategic Plan for the year 2015/16 - 2019/20 defines the systematic direction of the growth of Lira University and its three thematic areas of focus, namely: Teaching and Training; Research, consultancy and publication; and outreach. In order to achieve this growth, there is need to establish efficient and effective Quality Assurance (QA) systems, procedures and processes underpinned by quality teaching and learning, research, innovation and knowledge generation, physical infrastructure, facilities and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) development, students' welfare and strategic marketing focused on the needs of the University, the nation, the East African region and beyond.

2.0   Vision, Mission, Motto and Core Values

This policy is guided by the Vision, Mission, motto, Strategic Objectives and Core Values of the University.

2.1   Vision: A Beacon Centre for Applied Sciences and Technology.

2.2   Mission: To provide quality access to Higher Education and Research and to conduct professional training for the delivery of appropriate Health Services directed towards sustainable healthy Community and Environment.

2.3   Motto: The Beacon

2.4   Strategic Objectives: The University has 5 key objectives as follows:

2.4.1 To provide equitable access to quality higher education and training programmes

2.4.2 To improve infrastructure and facilities in line with University needs

2.4.3 To promote applied research, innovations and publications

2.4.4 To strengthen the University's institutional capacity and promote community outreach

2.4.5 To promote community engagement for socio-economic transformation.

2.5   Core Values

2.5.1 Management Excellence
2.5.2 Effectiveness and Efficiency
2.5.3 Professionalism
2.5.4 Integrity
2.5.5 Internationalization
2.5.6 Team work
2.5.7 All-inclusiveness
2.5.8 Accountability and transparency
2.5.9 Concern for elderly and people with disability

3.0 Legal Framework

In pursuit of the above objectives, this Quality Assurance Policy is in line with the following;

3.1   The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 as amended by Act No. 11 of 2005 gives the overall legal framework for quality assurance in higher education.

3.2 The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) 2001, as amended, provides for establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) to regulate the quality of higher education and advise government on higher education issues. Section 40 of the same Act provides the functions of the University Council which includes among others, the formulation of general policy to guide University operations.

4.0. Policy Statement

Lira University takes cognizance of the fact that quality is a fundamental pillar of excellence and professionalism. The University is committed to delivering goods, services and products of acceptable standards. This policy provides key strategies for the University to maintain acceptable standards in her core functions: teaching and learning, research/innovation and publication, and provision of service to community.

5.0 Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the University establishes relevant and appropriate structures, regulations, and guidelines so as to maintain acceptable standards in the pursuit and fulfillment of her core functions of teaching and learning, research/innovations and provision of service to community.

6.0 Guiding Principles

This Quality assurance policy adheres to the following guiding principles:

6.1 **Principle 1: Client Focused:** The University depends on her clients and therefore should understand the current and future client needs, meet client requirements and aspire to exceed client expectations;

6.2 **Principle 2: Quality Leadership:** Leaders establish unit of purpose and direction in the university. They should create and maintain conducive internal environment in which people are motivated and fully involved in achieving the University's objectives;

6.3 **Principle 3: Involvement of People:** People at all levels are a core

asset of an institution and their involvement enables their abilities to be used to an institution's benefit;

6.4 **Principle 4: Systems Process Re-engineering:** Identifying, understanding and managing a system of interrelated processes for Quality Assurance objectives improves the University's efficiency and effectiveness;

6.5 **Principle 5: Factual Approach to Decision making:** Effective decisions are based on the analysis of data and information;

6.6 **Principle 6: Mutually Beneficial Client or/and Supplier relationships:** The University and her suppliers are interdependent, and a mutually beneficial relationship enhances the ability of both to create value; and

6.7 **Principle 7: Focus on persons with special needs:** Providing quality services and infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of persons with special needs enhances their ability to contribute to the attainment of the University's vision and mission.

7.0 Scope of the Policy

This Policy shall guide all teaching and learning processes including Online, Distance, electronic Learning (ODeL); academic and professional programs; research, innovations and consultancy; infrastructural facilities and equipment; University Human Resources; students and staff support services; information and accessibility; partnerships and outreach activities.

8.0 Policy Focus Areas

This policy shall focus on the following areas:

8.1 Teaching and Learning Processes and Resources

Teaching and learning activities should be aligned to support the achievement of intended learning outcomes while taking students' needs into consideration. The University has a responsibility to promote and enhance student-centered learning through the provision of adequate and timely teaching and learning resources for both face-to-face and ODeL learning.

8.2 Academic and Professional Programmes

The quality of academic and professional programmes that meet client expectations is critical in positioning the University to have a competitive advantage in Higher Education. It is important that the University develops quality academic and professional programmes that respond to clients' needs and conform to prescribed standards.

8.3 Research, Innovations and Consultancy

In fulfilling her core functions and strategic objectives, the University shall consistently monitor and evaluate the quality of research, innovations and consultancy activities conducted in the University.

8.4 Infrastructural facilities and Equipment

The quality of infrastructural facilities and equipment (i.e. lecture rooms, library, book banks, ICT's, Laboratories or practical facilities, and others) is important for achieving the core functions and mandate of the University. The University shall provide adequate and modern infrastructural facilities and equipment that are responsive to the needs of clients and academic programmes.

8.5 University Human Resources

The quality of human resources is critical in the achievement of the University's core functions and strategic objectives. The University shall carefully identify, effectively deploy, develop and manage her human resources. The rules and processes that govern selection, promotion and reward of staff in various positions at the University shall be adhered to.

8.6 Students and staff support services

A favorable environment for students and staff is a prerequisite for a

productive education process. It is the responsibility of the University to continually provide and maintain a conducive environment for quality educational outcomes.

8.7 Information and Accessibility

The University shall gather all classes of information regarding the standards and quality of its programs and disseminate it to the general public, specifically prospective and current students to have access to up-to-date, consistent and reliable information about the standards and quality of programmes offered.

8.8 Partnerships and Outreach activities

The principle purpose in developing partnerships and outreaches with other service providers, development partners, and community is the enrichment of educational opportunity, experience and provision of services. The University shall create an enabling environment for students and staff to partner with friendly institutions/organizations and communities.

9.0 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

9.1   Create awareness among all stakeholders on the benefits of quality assurance and the level of quality in the University;

9.2   Provide academic programmes, infrastructure, facilities and equipment that meet standards expected by her stakeholders;

9.3   Establish efficient and effective quality assurance procedures, processes and systems;

9.4   Provide a conducive environment for quality teaching and learning, research, innovations and consultancy services;

9.5   Improve teaching and learning processes by increasing the effectiveness of the education process; and

9.6   Strengthen institutional capacity for effective and sustainable responses to educational challenges.

9.7   Ensure that the University is achieving set goals and is continually improving its quality.

10.0 Strategies to Achieve Policy Objectives

The key strategies that will be used to achieve the objectives of the policy are outlined in the table below:

#	OBJECTIVES	STRATEGIES
1	To create awareness among all stakeholders on the benefits of quality assurance and the level of quality in the University	i. Disseminate information on programmes and services through various media; ii. Organize sensitization workshops/seminars for all stakeholders; iii. Build capacity of staff and students on quality assurance issues. iv. Ensure regular publication of student-driven Magazines and Newsletters to showcase the quality of the University.
2	To provide academic programmes, infrastructure, facilities and equipment that meet standards expected by her stakeholders	i. Design academic and professional programmes in line with set standards as provided by the relevant regulatory bodies; ii. Continuously review and evaluate academic and professional programmes to ascertain the quality, resource use and contribution to the mission and vision of the University; iii. Involve professional bodies, potential employers and other relevant stakeholders in curriculum reviews and design of new programmes; and iv. Offer academic programmes that

			are both locally and internationally relevant in terms of content and planned professional training.
		v.	Provide adequate facilities and skilled manpower for the University Teaching Hospital to enable it provide timely, efficient and professional health services to students, staff and the community.
3	To establish effective and efficient quality assurance procedures, processes and systems.	i.	Establish a Quality Assurance Directorate to coordinate all quality assurance activities in the University;
		ii.	Develop guidelines, rules, regulations and manuals to support the implementation of the policy;
		iii.	Establish and strengthen Quality Assurance Committees at all levels;
		iv.	Ensure the continued functionality of Quality Assurance Committees at all levels; and
		v.	Align all other policies, regulations, rules and guidelines to this policy.
4	To provide a conducive environment for quality teaching and learning,	i.	Ensure that there is adequate and modern facilities and equipment for both face-to-face and ODeL teaching and learning.
		ii.	Develop a system to ensure that excellence in teaching and learning are

	research, innovations and consultancy services.	acknowledged and appropriately rewarded. iii. Provide incentives and appropriate rewards for research activity by students and staff. iv. Develop appropriate applications and mechanisms to appraise research and publications; v. Adhere to existing University policies and procedures relating to research and publications; vi. Disseminate research findings and results; and vii. Provide equal opportunity for all staff and students in the University to participate in research and innovations.
5	To improve teaching and learning processes for enhanced learning outcomes.	i. Enhance student learning through constant adoption of the latest innovations in educational media and technology and in the professional field of pedagogy and andragogy; ii. Integrate research outputs into teaching and learning; iii. Increase information resources in the University; iv. Ensure external evaluation of the quality of programmes, teaching and assessment; v. Regularly involve students in appraising academic staff;

		vi. Emphasize skills training and provide for the development of a fair balance between academic knowledge and practical skills; vii. Equip the University Teaching Hospital with sufficient resources and staff to make it an exemplary teaching and skilling facility for health-related disciplines; and viii. Provide adequate and relevant teaching-learning resources for effective delivery of all teaching programmes including modern amphitheaters.
	To provide adequate and modern infrastructural facilities and equipment.	i. Provide and regulate the quality of social services offered to the students and staff in the university ii. Provide appropriate sports and recreational facilities for students and staff
	To provide quality support services to enable students and staff engage in a productive education process.	i. Provide and maintain adequate infrastructural facilities and equipment, including ICT for students and staff and ii. Provide infrastructural facilities and equipment that are responsive to the needs of clients and academic programmes.

6	To strengthen institutional capacity for effective and sustainable responses to educational challenges.	i. Ensure continued focus in the Health Sciences where the University has a niche;
		ii. Market the University through the use and production of innovative and sustainable solutions to societal challenges;
		iii. Conduct human resource competence audit at all levels and align the human resources to the University needs;
		iv. Ensure recruitment, motivation and retention of qualified and competent human resources that suit the needs of the University;
		v. Strengthen coordination and partnerships between public and private sectors through development of strategies for training the University's human resources;
		vi. Ensure the establishment of mechanisms to tap and train students of the University who excel in their programmes and incorporate them into the University human resources structure;
		vii. Ensure that all University staff are regularly appraised against set performance targets; and
		viii. Link the University with

		professional and other relevant agencies.
7	To ensure that the University is achieving set goals and is continually improving its quality.	i. Review academic programmes after every programme duration (i.e. after 3 years for a 3-year program). ii. Conduct University wide self-assessments every 5-6 year or whenever the regulatory bodies [i.e. National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) or the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)] demand. iii. To use information gathered from self-assessments at programme and institutional levels, and from stakeholders (employers, alumni, etc.) to improve the quality of programmes and services.

11.0 Implementation of the Policy

The successful implementation of this policy is dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the governance and management systems in the University. The following governance and management structures shall apply in the implementation of this policy:

11.1 Governance Structure

The governance structure shall consist of the University Council, Senate, Management Committee, Faculty Boards and Academic/Administrative Departments as elaborated in Figure 1 below:
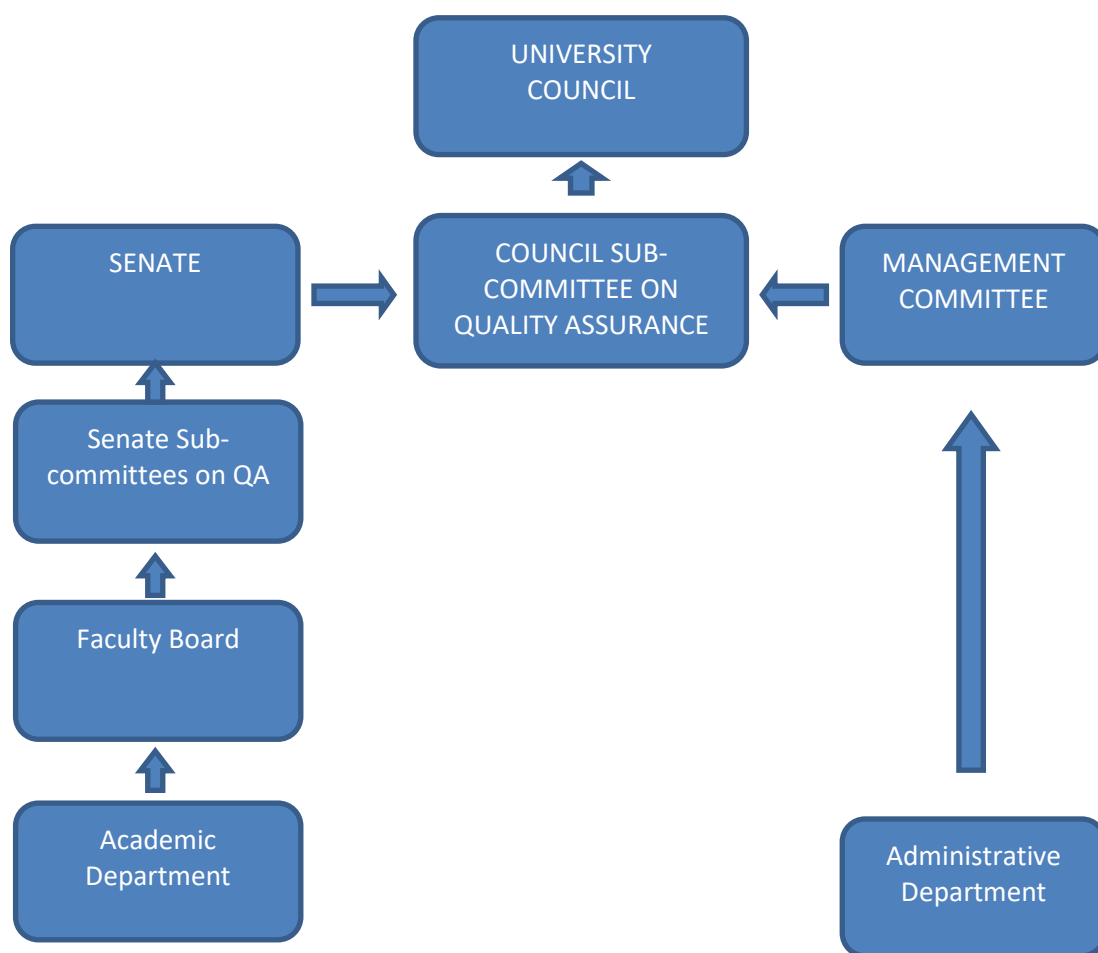
Figure 1: The Governance Structure of the Quality Assurance System at Lira University

11.1.1   The University Council

The University Council is the supreme organ of the University responsible for the overall administration of the University and ensuring the due implementation of the University functions in accordance with the Strategic Plan. It is the responsibility of the University Council to formulate Quality Assurance policy, guidelines, rules and regulations. The sub-committee of Council responsible for Quality Assurance, shall be in-charge of all matters pertaining to Quality Assurance on behalf of Council, as stipulated in its Terms of Reference.

11.1.2 The University Senate

The University Senate is responsible for the organization, control and direction of the academic matters of the University and as such Senate is in charge of teaching and learning, research, and the general standard of education in the University. The University Senate shall be the custodian of the Quality Assurance Policy and as such shall ensure that the Quality Assurance policy decisions are implemented with the desire to improve the University's performance in all its functions. The Senate Sub-committees in charge of Quality Assurance [currently the Quality Assurance, Timetable and Examination committee (QATEC); the Examination Malpractice and Investigation Committee (EMIC), and the Dean's committee] shall handle all matters pertaining to Quality Assurance of academic matters, as stipulated in their Terms of Reference, on behalf of Senate.

11.1.3 University Management Committee

The University Management Committee is the operational agency responsible for all issues relating to management of the University. Non-Academic issues pertaining to Quality Assurance shall be presented to the Committee by the office of the Director of Quality Assurance for consideration. These issues may arise from Administrative Departments, the Teaching Hospital, the

Student Guild, LUASA (Lira University Academic Staff Association), LUADSA (Lira University Administrative Staff Association) and NUEI (the local chapter of the National Union of Educational Institutions) etc.

11.1.4 The Faculty Boards

The Faculty Boards of the University are responsible for all matters relating to the Academic programmes offered by the Faculty, including issues pertaining to Quality Assurance. These matters are normally discussed at Faculty Board meetings, chaired by the Faculty Dean. A Faculty Quality Assurance representative, who is a member of the Faculty Board shall be solicited to the Quality Assurance Directorate to ensure that issues of Quality Assurance are presented to and discussed in Faculty boards meetings. The representative shall report to the Director of Quality Assurance.

11.1.5 University Departments

Issues that relate to the affairs of University Departments (both Academic and Administrative) are discussed at Departmental meetings with the Head of Department as Chair. University Departments are the lowest units responsible for implementing Quality Assurance activities. A Departmental Quality Assurance representative, who is a member of the Department shall be solicited to the Quality Assurance Directorate to ensure that issues of Quality Assurance are presented at Departmental meetings. The representative shall report to the Quality Assurance Director.

11.2 Management Structure

The management structure shall be constituted by the office of the Vice Chancellor, Directorate of Quality Assurance, Dean and Heads of Academic and Administrative Departments as highlighted in Figure 2 below:

11.21 Vice Chancellor

The Vice Chancellor (VC) shall be the overall supervisor of all matters concerning quality assurance in the University. In the execution of this mandate, the VC will be required to regularly report to Council on the status of Quality Assurance in the University.

11.22 Directorate of Quality Assurance

The Directorate of Quality Assurance shall provide professional leadership, advice, interpretation and guidance on the quality assurance policy, processes, systems, procedures and activities in line with national and International standards. The Director shall coordinate all quality assurance activities of the University at all levels and shall report to the appropriate Deputy Vice Chancellor on all quality assurance matters in the University.
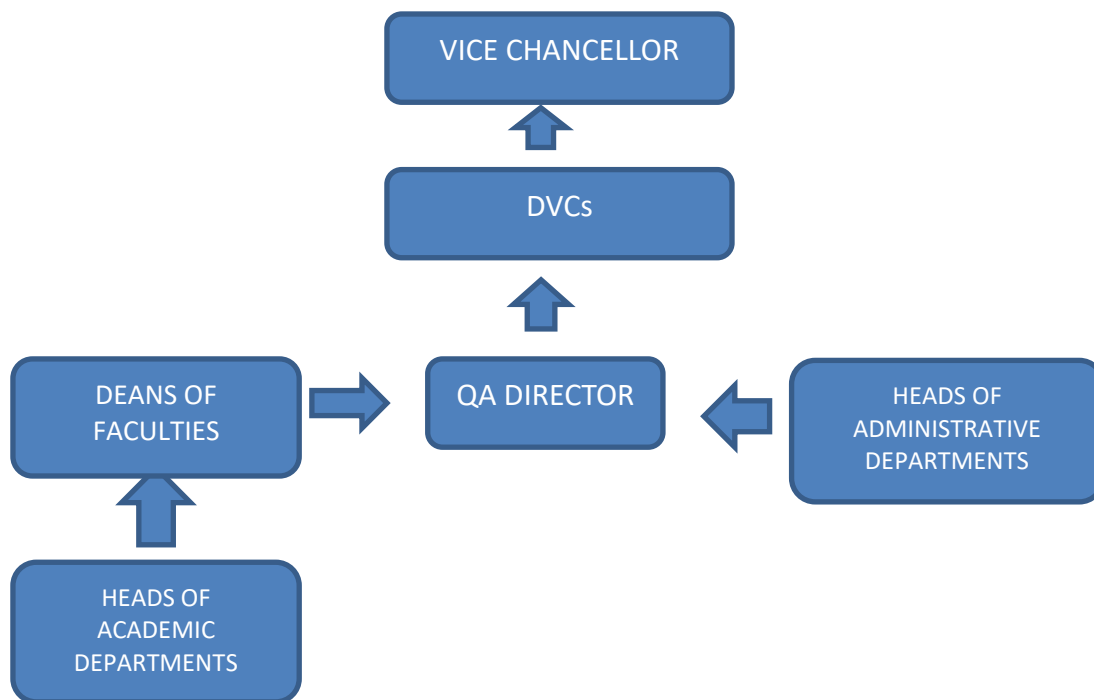

Figure 2: The Management Structure of the Quality Assurance System at Lira University.

11.23 Dean of Faculties

Deans of Faculties shall provide leadership, guidance and coordinate quality assurance activities at Faculty level. They shall report to the Director of Quality Assurance all matters of quality assurance in their respective Faculties.

11.24 Head of Academic Department

Heads of Academic Departments shall plan and budget, coordinate, monitor, evaluate and mainstream quality in all activities in their Departments. They shall report issues of Quality Assurance in their Departments to their Faculty Dean.

11.25 Head of Administrative Department

Heads of Administrative Departments shall plan and budget, coordinate, monitor, evaluate and mainstream quality in all activities in their Departments. They shall report matters of Quality Assurance to the Director of Quality Assurance.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

There shall be a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that will be used to check the progress and implementation of Quality assurance activities at all levels. The Directorate of Quality Assurance shall be responsible for developing and implementing the M&E framework. Specifically, the Directorate of Quality Assurance will develop:

A. Instruments to monitor student progress, pass rates and drop-out rates, feedback from the labour market and alumni, and research performance.
B. Tools to be used by students to evaluate courses/curricula, research, service and staff.
C. Tools to assess special quality assurance processes such as the quality of student assessments, academic staff, student support and facilities.
D. Special quality assurance instruments for periodic self-assessment at programme and institutional levels.

13. Policy Review and Distribution

The Policy shall be reviewed after every three years. The review process shall follow the governance and management structures as approved by the University. Recommendations from departments and faculties will be coordinated and compiled by the Directorate of Quality Assurance and

submitted to Senate and Council for consideration and approval.

The approved/revised Quality Assurance Policy will be widely distributed to all user Departments and Stakeholders by the Quality Assurance Directorate. It will also be uploaded onto the University website.

14. Start Date

Date of approval by Council: 24 May 2021

Signature: Signature:

(Augustine Oyang-Atubo)   (Prof. Joel Okullo Odom)
SECRETARY UNIVERSITY COUNCIL   **CHAIRPERSON UNIVERSITY COUNCIL**