

**UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA
SRI LANKA**

**Internal Quality Assurance
Policy Document**

**Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
Principles and Bylaws**

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Internal Quality Assurance : Policy Document1

Faculty Quality Assurance Cell - Principles and Bylaws

This policy document elucidates the widely accepted Internal Quality Assurance principles that are practiced at the Faculty level in coordination with the Internal Quality Assurance Unit of the University and bylaws that are formulated to regulate the functioning of the Faculty quality Assurance cells.

Composition

- All Faculties shall have Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC).
- FQAC shall be managed by a Chairperson and members appointed by the Faculty Boards. Total membership of a FQAC varies with the size of the faculty, preferably three to four members.
- Chairperson of a FQAC shall be a Senior Academic appointed by the Faculty Board.
- Chairperson and members of FQAC are appointed for three years.

Functions and Responsibilities:

FQAC shall design action plans and implementation mechanisms to ensure that the Quality principles (Best practices) are actually practiced by the Faculty. The “best practices” are dynamic and continuous. They are the result of identification, experimentation, reflection, feedback and innovation based on experience. Best practices are amenable to documentation and have the potential for replication; they are transparent, accountable, affordable and accessible to both staff and students, and add value to an institution. They are contextual and influenced by many factors. Best Practices show the path to success through continuous improvement leading to the benchmark of excellence.

Criteria and Corresponding Best Practices at the Faculty level

Brief descriptions of best quality assurance practices are categorized under ten criteria as follows:

Criterion 1- Governance and Management

- Faculty has a clear vision encapsulated in its Corporate Plan/Strategic Management Plan which enables it to meet the challenges of the 21st century and to acquire a competitive edge. Its mission and goals are compatible with this vision and supported by a well-defined strategic plan for systematic future development within a specific time frame.
- Faculty as far as possible also comply with other reference points such as the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and Codes of Practice. The Faculty will also comply with the standards, by-laws and guidelines drafted by the Council/Senate/Academic Syndicate.
- The progress of the Faculty is dependent on the efficiency and effectiveness of the monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms of the accepted policies. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are built into all departments and programmes.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is integrated into the system for teaching and learning, administration, research and community engagement. A user friendly Management Information System (MIS) is in place for effective and efficient management of operations.
- Faculty Administration is receptive to the welfare of staff and students and adequate welfare measures are in place for staff and students to function optimally.
- Faculty strives to improve the employability of its graduates by maintaining a dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders and ensures that its products meet societal/labour market expectations. The stakeholders include national/regional government and legislative bodies; professional and statutory bodies; employers and industry; future students, alumni and parents; partner institutions and the wider society.

- Faculty has clearly defined work norms for academic staff taking into account all aspects of workload including teaching, assessment, counselling, research, administrative work, outreach activities, community work, etc.
- Performance appraisal system for staff is available with the aim of identifying training needs, motivating, improving performance and retention.
- The faculty regards the availability of effective channels for student feedback as a key element in monitoring of quality and standards. Detailed procedures may vary but must be clear and appropriately publicized. Faculties and departments have documentation that refers to consultative committees, feedback questionnaires, and student representation.
- Faculty has a clear policy reflected in the Examination By-laws, Regulations and Manual of Examination Procedures. Faculties/departments are in a position to demonstrate that their processes comply with policy and all the relevant regulations. Key elements in the overall management of assessment processes are monitored closely such as appointment of examiners, examination conventions, examiners' reports.
- Faculty adopts students' disciplinary by-laws (based on UCG Circular 919), to prevent ragging and any form of intimidation/harassment among students and develops and implements deterrent measures through a comprehensive network operated through academia, student counsellors, marshals and security staff.

Criterion 2 - Curriculum Design and Development

- Programmes are developed based on the needs analysis exercise of including market research, liaison with industry, review of national priorities, and views of professional bodies and reflecting the latest development and practices in the field of study.
- The process of curriculum design takes into account the core elements of the educational process such as graduate attributes and intended learning outcomes (ILOs); aligning the course content with reference points in SBS, SLQF and ILOs; teaching and learning activities that are congruent with student-centred learning; and appropriate assessment methods to measure the attainment of ILOs.

- The Faculty adopts a participatory approach to reach consensus on ILOs, curriculum alignment, teaching learning strategies and assessment. Collaborations with institutions of acknowledged repute nationally and internationally and consultations with external stakeholders such as experts, professional bodies, employers, industry, private sector etc. are encouraged in order maintain academic standards.
- Curricular development process includes selection and organization of relevant programmes to meet national needs, and to suit the international context; flexibility to accommodate student interests; commitment to enhance graduate employability; opportunity to develop independent learning skills; and encourage innovations.
- Curriculum structuring and assignment of credit to courses/modules and study programmes are based on SLQF guidelines.
- Each study programme has offered ample scope for encouraging and developing creative and critical thinking, independent and lifelong learning, interpersonal and communication skills and independent learning skills. Appropriate learning strategies such as experiential learning, collaborative learning, and personal learning are designed into the curricula of programmes and course/modules.
- Continuous quality improvement of programmes is ensured through regular monitoring and review of programme design, development, and approval by the faculty/department/programme committees.
- Information and reports collected by such monitoring are considered by the FQAC of the faculty and ensures that appropriate actions are taken to remedy any shortcomings. Departments are encouraged to use a common template for programme monitoring. The reports are open to scrutiny within the institution as well as to external subject reviewers.
- Periodic reviews at intervals not exceeding five years, enable programme teams to stand back and reflect on broader aspects such as programme ILOs, scope and depth of student learning, market/employer requirements, and review of the continuing validity and relevance of programmes offered.

- The study programme information package/prospectus available in print and electronic forms is comprehensive, contains learner friendly description of the study programme and course curricula including ILOs at the programme and course level, credit hours, course contents, teaching learning strategies, assessment and evaluation details, and recommended and supplementary readings.
- Faculties and departments are clear on lines of responsibility and accountability for the accuracy of information provided and maintain consistency between programme specifications, examination regulations and amendments to handbooks and to websites.

Criterion 3 - Teaching and Learning

- The teaching and learning are meticulously planned and executed through team work and coordination. The institution ensures that everyone involved is appropriately qualified, supported and facilitated for continuous professional development (CPD).
- Faculty/Department adopts and implements appropriate teaching and learning strategies to suit an outcome-based and student-centred learning approach.
- Faculty provides students with clear and current information that specifies the learning opportunities and support available to them and assists them to understand their responsibilities to engage in the learning opportunities provided.
- Teaching learning process is student-centred, where students learn by actively engaging in and interacting with the study material with the role of the teacher being more as a guide and facilitator.
- Faculty promotes the adoption of student-centred teaching techniques and tools such as student presentations, self-learning assignments, project work, role plays, field visits, case studies, debates, seminars, focus group discussions, brain storming sessions, games, problem-based/inquiry based learning, group work, quizzes, practical classes & industrial training as a supplement to classroom teaching.
- Faculty offers orientation/induction programmes to all incoming students regarding the rules and regulations of the institution, student-centred learning (SCL) and outcome-based education (OBE), and technology based learning.

- Self-directed learning by students is encouraged through assignments which require student to refer books and journals, use the internet, and engage in computer assisted learning.
- Student engagement and interaction with teachers and peers is used as a powerful driver for quality teaching. Formal representation of students in decision making bodies and their participation in discussions on educational changes are facilitated by the faculty and attention paid to their view points. To enable this, students actively contribute when consulted on teaching matters and when serving as representatives on relevant committees.
- Departments facilitate the practice among students in the formation of peer study groups consisting of strong and weak students in which the better performers help slow learners in their studies.
- Assessment methods are integrated into teaching and learning strategies. Formative assessments e.g. objective type tests, open book tests etc. give feedback to students in achievement of learning outcomes and for improvement of knowledge and skills.
- Teachers are encouraged to promote innovative pedagogy and introduce ICT into teaching learning practices and to link innovations in their practice to the institutional teaching and learning goals. Learning Management Systems (LMS) are in place to encourage technology enabled teaching and learning.
- Student and peer assessment of teachers are used for self-improvement in teaching skills, teaching methods, interest in teaching, and responsiveness to student problems and participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- A set of indicators of excellence in teaching are defined, and used to encourage improvement, evaluate performance and take into account decisions concerning promotion. These will identify champions of excellence, examine what makes their teaching excellent, publicize their accomplishments and use them as role models for others.

Criterion 4 - Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression

- Student support includes academic and personal counselling; financial support; progression of studies, acquisition of skills for employability and career guidance; 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.

- Faculty ensures availability of adequate and well maintained infrastructure facilities including ICT and human resources, laboratory facilities, language laboratories and library facilities for the support of student learning and effective execution of each programme. Infrastructure growth must match the academic growth.
- Staff: Student ratio is adequate subject-wise to ensure a learning environment conducive for supporting effective teaching and learning.
- Faculty provides opportunities to create an environment that proactively encourages students to engage with staff positively.
- Faculty has an effective, efficient and securely maintained MIS with accessibility only to authorized persons to ensure confidentiality. The MIS has an updated permanent record of all currently enrolled students comprising all admissions; academic, demographic, educational background records; assessment and examination results.
- Students are provided with learning resources such as adequate laboratory facilities and a spacious computer centre with local area network and internet as well as a well equipped and staffed English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) and other language laboratories and recreation facilities for co-curricular activities.
- Career education, information and guidance, and the development of career management skills along with soft skills are considered as inter-dependent parts of a whole area of student support and there is an institution-wide commitment to preparing students for their future careers.
- Faculty promotes social harmony and ethnic cohesion through programmes and activities coordinated through institutional mechanisms such as student counselling and welfare systems and a multicultural centre.
- Faculty has arrangements that increase awareness and understanding of students to promote mutual respect and confidence amongst students and teachers. This includes attractive induction programmes for all new students, psychological support such as mentoring, personal tutoring and counselling, publication of

calendar of events for each semester/academic year, and use of student handbooks and study programme prospectuses.

Criterion 5 - Student Assessment and Awards

- Faculty pays due recognition to assessment as the key motivator to learning and as an integral part of the teaching learning process. Assessment is transparent and aligned with ILOs and measures the knowledge acquired, skills developed and understanding and attitudes gained.
- Student assessment policies, regulations and processes underpin the setting and maintenance of academic standards with reference to SLQF and SBS and where applicable requirements of the professional bodies.
- Assessment and examination policies, practices, and procedures provide differently abled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Faculty ensures that policies, regulations and processes are clear and accessible to all stakeholders (students, academic staff, administrative staff, examiners both internal and external)
- Faculty has approved procedures for designing (setting, moderating, marking, grading), monitoring and reviewing the assessment methods for programmes and awards.
- Faculty ensures that all staff involved in assessment of students have the necessary knowledge and skills, have received the appropriate training to fulfill the specific role and are clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Assessments are designed within the academic framework and regulations. Effective assessment should take into consideration the appropriate number and weightage of assessment tasks, the type of tasks and their timing. Consideration is also given to the appropriateness of assessment tools for recognition of prior learning.
- Institutional policy on examinations is available in examination By-laws, Rules, Regulations and Manual of Examination Procedures approved by appropriate authorities. 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, moderating, marking, and classification) and examiners' reports.

- Examination boards and panels are responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are recorded accurately with an explicit policy detailing the length of time for which records and students' results will be maintained.
- The staff carry out all aspects of assessment in a way which ensures the integrity of the assessment process and in turn the integrity of academic standards of each award.
- Where a programme forms part of the qualification regime of a professional/statutory body, clear information is made available to staff and students about specific assessment requirements that must be met for the award of the professional qualification.
- Assessment includes diagnostic, formative as well as summative methods and specific guidance on the amount and weighting of assessment, taking into account level of study, ILOs and credit requirements of the programme/course. Formative assessments are treated as learning tools which enable students to receive constructive feedback and an opportunity to improve by reflecting on their own learning.
- Involvement of external/second examiners is an essential part of the process of quality control and maintenance of standards. Faculty/department has a clear policy on who is responsible for considering the external examiners' reports, reporting lines and time frame to ensure that changes recommended in the examiners reports are implemented. Assessment outcomes are used to inform teaching methods and for improvement of the curriculum.
- Assessment regulations are strictly enforced and disciplinary procedures are in place for handling breaches of examination regulations by students; malpractices such as copying, plagiarism etc.; and violation of codes of conduct.
- Effective mechanisms are in place for continuous monitoring of assessment practices, student learning experiences and outcomes, completion, retention and progression rates and reviewing the overall performance of the assessment system. The Faculty provides periodic reports on academic performance to the Senate and Council.

- Students are informed through course guides before the commencement of the programme/course about the types of assessment, intended learning outcomes, timelines for assessment and publication of results, and distribution of transcripts. Students are also made aware of ethical practices, code of conduct for submission of assignments, project work, and for sitting examinations.

Criterion 6 - Strength and Quality of Staff

- Human resource planning forms an integral part of institutional governance and management, undergraduate and postgraduate programme and course development, and assessment, research and innovations and outreach activities.
- Human resource policies on staff recruitment, career progression, professional development etc. would support the strategic objective of quality teaching.
- The responsibilities and job descriptions of staff are clearly specified to meet the learning needs of students and to suit a particular programme. The workload of staff conforms to the work norms agreed to, by the institution/UGC.
- A well designed professional development programme through Staff Development Centres address the needs of all categories of staff and regularly train, retrain and motivate them for the roles and tasks they perform.
- The faculty is supported to develop IT skills to upgrade their knowledge and digital capability for introduction of ICT into teaching and learning practices.
- Performance of staff is evaluated at regular intervals through annual self-appraisal reports, confidential performance appraisal reports and learner feedback on teaching. The outcomes of performance evaluation are communicated to and discussed with staff with the aim of improving the performance and identifying further training needs.
- Policies on recognition and reward for innovative and effective teaching, research and innovations, and outreach activities are available and implemented.

Criterion 7 -Postgraduate studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization

- Research, innovation and commercialization, publication and community engagement are encouraged as core duties of academic staff in addition to teaching.

- Effective arrangements are in place to maintain appropriate academic standards and enhance the quality of research programmes that are regularly monitored against appropriate internal and external indicators and targets.
- Supervisors appointed for student research supervision have the appropriate skills and subject knowledge to support, encourage and monitor students effectively. The quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors. The role of a supervisor is defined and there are clearly defined mechanisms communicated to students and staff for conducting formal reviews of student progress.
- Assessment procedures and progress reports are clear, operated rigorously, fairly and consistently and are communicated to students, supervisors, and examiners.
- Student research potential is optimized through the research culture of the institution. Undergraduate students carry out research as part of the teaching and learning strategy and are encouraged and supported to publish their research.
- The entitlements and responsibilities of students undertaking research are formally communicated to students.
- A conducive environment exists for research and scholarship to enable students to interact with academics and peers towards promoting their wellbeing and personal and professional development.
- An adequate structure is in place to promote good research practice that emphasizes integrity and rigour to create a research culture within the university.
- The University/HEI facilitates and encourages research by providing support to its academic staff through a research committee or an equivalent body that monitors and evaluates the research funded by the institution.
- Encouragement and motivation of good research is made possible by suitable incentives, awards, rewards, and public recognition.
- Provision of seed money for research, especially for the younger teachers, puts them on the research path early in their career.
- Participation and organization of national and international seminars and workshops on research also rejuvenate the faculty with fresh inputs of global knowledge.

- Publication linked incentives to the faculty in the form of enhanced funding from university resources serve to enhance the research culture.
- Faculty has strong links to various international, national, governmental and non-governmental agencies and industries undertaking research. Linkages with industries and getting consultancies significantly add to the academic standing of the institution.
- Faculty has a stated code of conduct and ethical practices in research.
- Collaborative arrangements for research cooperation are negotiated, agreed and managed in accordance with formally stated policies and procedures of the institution.
- Fair, transparent, robust and consistently applied complaints and appeal procedures, appropriate to all categories of postgraduate students are in place and publicized.

Criterion 8 - Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach

- Faculty diversifies their sources of income, principally undertaken by offering fee-levying programmes/courses for external students, consultancy and advisory services, commercializing research and innovations, laboratory services etc.
- A clearly defined policy framework and manual of procedures exist for income generating activities. This includes budgeting, fee-structures and rates, financial disbursement procedures, dispute resolution and termination of contracts.
- Faculty/department/centre/unit plans to show that specific academic abilities of staff are made use of for community service, demonstrating a proactive approach.
- The co-curricular activities of the faculty engage students, staff, administrators and faculty with the community and are supported by institution's resources physical, financial and human.
- Appropriate mechanisms and procedures are in place to encourage and facilitate academia to take on consultancies for the wider community. Potential expertise of the academic staff are identified and published through media and the website. Continuous offering of consultancies builds up the reputation of the faculty quest for new areas for research and social acceptance.

- Research, consultancy and extension services are actively promoted through extension units to build linkages and outreach to end users in farm and industry.
- Faculty has strong industry-institution-community linkages built into its activities through membership of Advisory Boards, Council and Board of Governors.
- Faculty has link with industry to promote commercialization.
- Policies and strategies are established to encourage, recognize and reward extension and consultancy services.

Criterion 9 - Distance Education

- Faculty retains the responsibility for the quality of the programmes/courses offered through distance education and the achievement of expected outcomes, irrespective of any contractual arrangements or partnerships entered into with third parties for the provision of components of a distance education programme/course of study.
- The University/HEI's publications, print or online, clearly describe distance learning programmes/courses, including the delivery system used, the pre-requisites for participation, ILOs, completion requirements and student services.
- Course materials developed by the faculty have clearly defined ILOs and are interactive, accessible and comprehensive to enable the learner to achieve the desired outcomes.
- ICT is used to mediate learning (e.g. video tapes, audio tapes, CDs, online sources). Learner support is provided through a variety of communication channels which could be synchronous or asynchronous via phone, fax, email, video conferencing etc.
- The programmes and courses of study provide for timely and effective interaction between students and the study materials, as well as students-faculty and student interaction.
- Clear policies and ownership of instructional materials and protection of copyrights are established.
- Faculty defines student learning outcomes on the course and programme level; assess student attainment of learning outcomes equivalent to face to face courses; design curricula for all learning formats; ensure the rigour of

distance programmes and the quality of instruction; provide direct instruction and/or mentor adjunct faculty when/where appropriate.

- The University/HEI has established policies addressing teaching load in credit hours, class size, time needed for course development, and sharing of instructional responsibilities which allow for effective teaching using distance education methods.
- Programmes/courses of study offered through distance learning methods are comparable to programmes/courses with similar subject matter offered through the face to face mode.

Criterion 10 - Quality Assurance

- Faculty recognizes that the primary responsibility for quality lies with the institution itself, and this provides the basis for accountability within the national quality assurance framework.
- Faculty has put in place the internal system of quality assurance, as prescribed by the UGC-QAAC within the framework of the national QA system.
- Faculty develops processes through which it demonstrates its commitment to Quality. It develops a quality culture by paying more attention to internal quality enhancement through the FQAC.
- Faculty ensures formal mechanisms for well designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed programmes.
- Faculty ensures that it has mechanisms to collect, analyze, and use relevant information for the effective management of its study programmes. The quality related information system includes profile of the student population, effectiveness of faculty, student progression and success rates, student satisfaction and employability of the graduates.
- The Faculty ensures that the recommendations of the External review Report are dealt with appropriately through the FAUC in consultation with the Departments.

Action Plans for compliance

FQAC shall design action plan for compliance of the above mentioned general quality assurance principles that should in particular incorporate the following actions:

Action	Responsibility/Monitoring	Remarks
Student Feedback on Course satisfaction/improvement	PIC/HoD FQAC shall monitor and collect the summary.	FQAC design and distribute a model feedback questionnaire for the HoDs to adopt.
Peer evaluation of teaching	Dean FQAC shall monitor.	FAQC design and distribute a model peer evaluation form for the Faculty to adopt
SLQF compliance of degree / Diploma programme	Dean/FQAC	Renaming of Degree and curriculum revision might be needed
Publishing the Vision, Mission and Objectives of the faculty	Dean FQAC shall monitor.	In alignment with Vision and Mission of the University
Outcome based Curriculum revamping	Dean/HoD/curriculum committee FQAC shall assist and monitor.	Faculty should have clear curriculum development policy
Evidence of stakeholder participation in curriculum revamping	Dean/HoD/curriculum committee FQAC shall assist and monitor.	Discussion meetings with prospective employers shall be arranged
Graduate feedback on degree programme through exit survey	Dean/HoDs/ FQAc	Programme satisfaction and employment waiting time shall be obtained

Follow up action on the subject review recommendations	HoD FQAC shall monitor	Based last review undertaken by QAAC
Follow up action on the Faculty review recommendations	Dean FQAC shall monitor.	Based last review undertaken by QAAC
Follow up action on the COLRIM recommendations	Dean, HoD FQAC shall monitor.	Recommendations relevant to Faculty/Departments only
Regular Department meetings	HoD FQAC shall monitor.	Meeting agenda and decision should be kept as records.

Meetings and Reporting

- FQAC shall have regular meetings with at least two meetings in every three months and submits its action plans and reports to the Faculty board.
- Quality Assurance shall be a permanent agenda item of faculty board meetings. Regularly submitted FQAC's report should also be discussed under this agenda item.
- Faculty Board shall report to the Senate on the action plans and implementation of Quality Assurance activities to the Senate.
- FQAC shall maintain a webpage the Faculty website with link to relevant QA manuals, reports and publications.
- FQAC shall undertake the documentation of QA activities and internal review reports, etc. with the assistance of the offices of the Dean and IQAU.

Faculty Board of Science would be expected to adopt these principle and bylaws with appropriate changes if needed.

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