

**From Entry to Exit: A comparative
study of internal QA systems in
graduate education in the
humanities & social sciences
(Mak, UG. & Cam)**

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Structure

- **Work in progress.**
 - Brief Background
 - Purpose
 - Methods of collecting data
 - Some QA concerns
 - Some suggestions for quality enhancement

Background

- Rapid expansion of university education in HE gave rise to concerns over quality
 - Numbers rose faster than resources
 - Staff ratios
 - Infrastructure
- Establishment of QA structures (policies & implementation units) in Universities

Purpose

- Explore and compare existing internal QA systems & processes from other universities
- Learn lessons
- Make suggestions on quality enhancement
- Initiate discussions for possible adoption

Methods

- **Data Collection**

- Documentary reviews (online, written texts)
- Interviews
- Group discussions
- Observation

- **Analysis**

- Thematic content analysis

Role of QA framework

- **Philosophy**

- ‘Trust but verify’ philosophy - verify that established standards are being upheld

- **Mandate:**

- Limited to Academic Quality (UG)

- Devolved throughout the system (Cam)

- Academic and Support Services (Mak)

Some QA concerns

- **Admission processes**

- Similar procedures for application and admission but online application is optional for Makerere
- Minimum requirements based on previous academic performance. However for Mak
 - no interviews
 - Apart from PHD, there is limited indication of students research interests at MA application or admission stage.

- **Teaching & Learning**

- Delays in fees payment & registration of graduate students
- Induction: Clarifying expectations and responsibilities for T&L
- Monitoring of students' progress: what milestones? Whose responsibility?

- **Curriculum**

- **General vs thematic curriculum for MA**
- **Inadequate attention to the teaching of research methods especially at MA level**
- **Irregular review of curricula**
- **Lack of regular and systematic student feedback**
- **Duplication of the curricula**

- **Assessment**

- **Delays in marking and submission of exam results due to (among others)**

- **Large numbers**
 - **Late submission of external examiners reports**
 - **Delayed payment of examiners**
 - **Vague examiners' reports**
 - **Clogging of the system**

- **Staff Development (Personal and professional)**
 - Minimum of a PhD for teaching & supervision on graduate courses but with minimal transferable skills skills – communication, leadership, ethics
 - Induction: clarifying expectations and responsibilities
 - Training to teach in Higher Education
 - A dormant appraisal system- What is what is the purpose of appraisal?

- **Democratic decision making processes**

- Similar decision making organs but we differ in the degree of **centrality of rules/statutes more than the people**
- Similar principles of democracy, openness, and accountability in decision making but differences in how these are upheld in practice eg the committee structure – whose views?

- Inadequate feedback mechanisms on decision made eg it is hard for the University members to refer to University decisions as and when they need to.

Suggestions for quality enhancement

- 1. Establishment of a repository where all administrative and management decisions are kept and accessed by the whole University Community as and when needed**
- 2. Enforcing existing deadlines assertively (payments, registration) & establishing them where they are not.**

- 3. Curriculum review: increase attention to research methods training and possible adoption of thematic approaches to the curriculum**

- 4. Need for students determine area of research interest & Depts. determine capacity to supervise at MA admission stage**

5. Seminars and supervised essay writing appear to increase integrity and responsibility for teaching and learning

6. Regular staff appraisal should be primarily about finding solutions to problems as early as possible, not getting rid of staff

- 5. Establishment of a staff development programme based on identified gaps in the appraisal system**

- 6. Rewarding examiners who return books within the stipulated time with more pay**

Thank you very much