

**Standard 2.2 Programme Design and Teaching-Learning Methods**

**Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA)**

-Guidelines on Criteria and Standards for Programme Accreditation

**Standard 2.1 Curriculum Design and Teaching-Learning Methods**

**Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA)**

-Guidelines on Criteria and Standards for Higher Education Providers

**INTRODUCTION**

This advisory is issued pursuant to Standard 2.2.1 in COPPA and Standard 2.1.1 in COPIA and more specific programme standards. The standard at the institutional level requires that HEPs “consider a programme only after a needs assessment has indicated that there is need for the programme to be conducted”. (COPIA, p. 18).

**ISSUE**

In the course of carrying out audits for provisional accreditation and full accreditation, MQA often comes across programmes which have less than optimum number of students. Although it is the HEP’s prerogative to commence a programme with less than the viable enrollment, this frequently motivates the provider to engage in practices that is contrary to submissions made to MQA. Classes are combined with other courses or courses not offered as per agreed programme structure to facilitate combinations which are economical. In the course of MQA’s maintenance audits, we have also encountered programmes which have not commenced due to lack of interest or unable to continue after several cohorts. Consequently, HEP cannot proceed to accreditation or terminate an accredited programme.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF HEP**

HEPs are advised to carry out rigorous needs assessment to ascertain the real need for the programme to avoid uneconomical class sizes and inability to support the programme as required. Among the official source of reference for such assessment is the Labour Force Survey Report issued by the Department of Statistics.

**IMPACT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Failure to engage in practices as per the submissions made to MQA will place programme accreditation at risk. MQA will not hesitate to initiate withdrawal of accreditation proceedings should it become known that a programme is at risk due to uneconomical enrollment.