

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

-Guidelines on Criteria and Standards for Programme Accreditation

- **Standard 7.1 Mechanisms for Programme Monitoring and Review**
- **Standard 9.1 Quality Improvement**

**INTRODUCTION**

This advisory is issued pursuant to Standard 7.1.1 and 9.1.1 in COPPA and more specific programme standards. The standard requires institutionalised monitoring and programme self-review processes which result in continuous improvements.

There are customarily three principal reasons for the ineffectiveness of the IQA system namely, an outward and compliance focus, competence and capacity of the IQA Unit and the commitment of the top management to quality and quality assurance.

**ISSUE & IMPACT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The accreditation and post accreditation audits have shown that in many HEPs the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) units are not as strong as they should be. Many IQA Units also double up as Accreditation and Compliance units which coordinate the preparation of accreditation documents for MQA. The focus is on completing and meeting minimum standards to attain accreditation. The maintenance and enhancements of standards are not given as much priority even though accreditation can become undone by periodic maintenance audits carried out by MQA.

**RESPONSIBILITY OF HEP**

Appointing a senior staff member as the IQA head does not by itself create an effective system of internal review. It is equally important that HEPs invest in training the IQA chief and officers in the design, execution and enhancement of an internal quality assurance system. IQA officers must be well versed in the policies relating to higher education and applicable programme standards to advise and also assist the programme managers to, not only meet the minimum requirements but more importantly, to benchmark to good practices for continual improvement. To discharge this role effectively, the IQA officer and his/her team must be trained in carrying out internal reviews rigorously and to execute ameliorative and improvement measures.

HEPs can communicate with MQA-TC (training centre) to inquire into training opportunities available to professionalise your IQA team. HEPs may also consider short placements in universities which have well established internal quality assurance systems. MyQAN, an IQA network of universities and colleges can be a useful forum to seek support for capacity building in QA from peers.

To be truly effective, the IQA system led by an experienced and competent officer must be strongly supported by the HEP's top management. To raise the stature of IQA within the HEP, the IQA chief should be co-opted into the HEP's Senate or academic council, curriculum review and examination committees/boards to enable IQA to inform and be informed about the core academic issues and challenges. Through this engagement, IQA's work can be aligned to the HEP's priorities and act proactively to mitigate quality related risks.