

UNIVERSITY OF NICOSIA
INTERNAL REGULATIONS

**CHAPTER FIVE: STANDARDS AND QUALITY
ASSURANCE**

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5.0 Standards and Quality Assurance

5.1. Relevant Definitions

- Quality Assurance comprises all the policies, systems and processes directed to ensure the enhancement of the quality and standards of the educational provision.
- Quality Audit is the process of ensuring that the quality assurance and control arrangements are satisfactory and operating effectively.
- Quality Enhancement is the process of continuous improvement.
- Academic Standards are the expected levels of academic attainment which are used to describe and measure the academic requirements and performance of students.

5.2. Quality Assurance

a. Aim

The primary purposes of quality assurance are the enhancement of the quality of the student learning experience and the maintenance of academic standards in the context of an increasingly diverse student population and the particular nature of University of Nicosia's academic portfolio.

The University, in its commitment to developing a genuine culture of continuous quality improvement shall set out how it shall meet its aims in a Quality Assurance Policy.

The aims of this policy are to ensure the following key principles:

- safeguarding of academic standards, and the
- assurance and enhancement of the quality of academic provision (academic quality) of all University awards

The policy, which shall reinforce the standards set out in the sections below (b-g), shall be made available, along with all associated policies and procedures, to all staff, students and other stakeholders.

Where appropriate, academic departments will have the freedom to tailor University-wide procedures and structures to their own requirements. Such customization will also be documented, and evidence of their adoption is kept.

The University will work constructively with external quality assurance agencies and professional bodies.

The University will rigorously and continuously monitor the effectiveness of its quality assurance procedures to assure that they are operating in accordance with good practice, in the best interests of students and the maintenance of academic standards.

b. Principles

All teaching/research/administrative staff are expected to take personal responsibility for their own professional quality and standards in all their activities. In view of that, staff are expected to be aware of and act within the provisions of the Internal Regulations of the University.

Staff will exercise this responsibility within a supportive environment where expectations and standards are defined, continuous improvement and innovation are encouraged, development and training opportunities are provided, feedback is actively sought from students and other major stakeholders; and duplication of effort is avoided.

c. Safeguarding Academic Standards

Academic standards are concerned with the appropriateness of intended programme learning outcomes (in relation to programme aims, content and qualification level), the appropriateness of the curriculum and syllabi (in relation to learning outcomes), and the effectiveness of assessment (in relation to the measurement of the attainment of learning outcomes). Student achievement of standards is also an important consideration.

d. Principles relating to the safeguarding of Academic Standards are as follows:

- learning outcomes will be defined for every qualification offered by the University.
- these learning outcomes will describe in an explicit, transparent and consistent manner the knowledge, understanding and abilities that are to be demonstrated by holders of the qualification.
- learning outcomes will be appropriately defined with due regard to appropriate reference points (including aims of the provision, level of qualification, subject benchmarks, etc.).
- achievement of learning outcomes will be assessed in a sound, secure and appropriate manner.
- achievement will be classified for all qualifications.
- standards will satisfy or exceed, as far as is possible and desirable, the requirements of governmental, professional and statutory bodies and similar organisations.
- standards, and their achievement, will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis; and
- the views of Institutional planning and other recognized domain experts external to, and independent of, the University will be sought when standards are established, monitored or reviewed, or when the achievement of standards is monitored or reviewed.

e. Assuring and enhancing Academic Quality

Academic quality embraces those activities that contribute to the nature of a student's academic experience including:

- learning, teaching and assessment.
- the deployment of learning resources; and

- other mechanisms that determine the quality of a student’s engagement with the University, including:
 - student recruitment and admission.
 - progression advice and programme planning.
 - careers advice and guidance.
 - pastoral support.
 - student academic appeal procedures; and
 - student complaint and grievance procedures.

f. Principles relating to academic quality are as follows:

- The quality of the student experience will satisfy or exceed, as far as is possible and desirable, the requirements of governmental, professional and statutory bodies and similar organisations.
- The quality of programmes will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
- The views of external quality assessors will be sought when the quality of programmes is reviewed.
- Enhancement of quality will be informed by a robust monitoring and feedback mechanism, ensuring that the information derived from monitoring is used effectively to improve and enhance delivery of education and that due regard is given to the views of students. This feedback mechanism will involve Departmental, School and University level monitoring and feedback, and will be supported by self-evaluation as required; and
- Enhancement will be supported by staff development involving professional development programmes, staff appraisal, teaching observations and peer review.

g. Managing quality and standards

The principles presented above will be developed in more detail within subsidiary academic quality and standards policies, and the principles of all policies will be realized within academic quality procedures, codes of practice and the academic regulations.

In the main, responsibility for following policies, procedures, codes of practice and regulations will be devolved to Schools. However, the University recognizes that students, external quality agencies, employers, partners and other stakeholders need to be confident that standards and quality are being maintained, and that at an institutional level, the University is assured of the standards and quality of provision.

A variety of techniques can provide such assurance including audit, internal review, continuous monitoring, and feedback from observers of internal quality processes. The principles underlying these methods are that they should:

- highlight any need to change the practices of schools and services.
- highlight any need to change academic policies, procedures, codes of practice and regulations.

- highlight any staffing or other resource requirements, including the need for staff development.
- ensure that necessary changes are made.
- make a valuable contribution to quality enhancement.
- be designed to give external agencies, employers, partners, students and other stakeholders confidence in the University's quality assurance policies and procedures.
- integrate as far as is possible or desirable with the procedures of external auditing organisations.
- be developed in consultation with those who deliver academic provision; and
- should be periodically reviewed for appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency.

5.3. Internal Quality Assurance Committees and Responsibilities

a. University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) - Composition

The University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) comprises of the following members, in line with the Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education and the Establishment and Operation of an Agency on Related Matters Laws, 2015 and 2016:

1. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs: Chair
2. One TRF representative from each School with significant research contribution and extensive academic experience / holding the rank of at least Assistant Professor
3. Up to two TRF with extensive experience in Quality Assurance, including one actively involved in the delivery of Distance Learning programmes/courses
4. One staff member representing the staff
5. Two student representatives (one 1st Cycle student, one 2nd or 3rd Cycle student).

b. School Internal Quality Assurance Committee (SIQAC) – Composition

For each School, there exists an Internal Quality Assurance Committee (SIQAC) comprising of:

1. The Dean or Associate Dean of the School (Chair)
2. One representative from each Department preferably holding the rank of at least Assistant Professor.
3. One student representative.

c. Department Internal Quality Assurance Committee (DIQAC) – Composition

For each Department, there exists an Internal Quality Assurance Committee (DIQAC) comprising of:

1. The Head or Associate Head of Department (chair)
2. One faculty member of the department preferably holding the rank of at least Assistant Professor, and preferably experienced in quality assurance procedures
3. A third-year 1s Cycle (undergraduate) student representative.

d. University of Nicosia Internal Quality Assurance Committee (UNIQAC) – Responsibilities

1. Reports to the Senate through the Chair of the Committee.
2. Develops a quality culture at the University.
3. Is in charge of academic quality assurance at the Institution level.
4. Develops, implements, monitors, audits and evaluates a QA framework which comprises of the strategy, standards, policies, processes, mechanisms.
5. Provides support in all academic/professional internal and external accreditation activities and prepares documents, reports for external quality assurance requirements and requests.
6. Develops indices and quality measures/indicators.
7. Develops QA manual, templates and tools.
8. Develops IT tools to assist the recording, processing and production of useful information.
9. Maintains a central repository of QA reports, data and information.
10. Oversees the QA of Schools, Departments and programmes.
11. Oversees QA pertaining to the Distance Learning operations of the University.
12. Suggests improvements to the university, its processes, its structure, resources, programmes, teaching/learning methods, etc.
13. Ensures quality of teaching/learning and research.
14. Establishes effective channels of communication to ensure the dissemination of good QA practices within the University.
15. Prepares reports for QA audits.
16. Deals with all QA issues pertaining to academic issues.

e. The School Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) – Responsibilities

1. Is in charge of academic quality assurance at the school level.
2. Reports to UNIQAC.
3. Develops a quality culture at the school.
4. Performs QA audits of the Departments and programmes of the school.
5. Monitors the annual evaluation of programmes.
6. Performs QA audits for the Distance Learning programmes of the school.
7. Suggests and implements improvements pertaining to the school, its processes, its structure, resources, programmes, teaching/learning methods, etc.
8. Ensures quality of teaching/learning and research.
9. Suggests to UNIQAC improvements on the policies, processes, templates, quality indices, tools, etc.
10. Prepares QA reports.
11. Collects and stores data and information pertaining to QA issues of the School, Departments and programmes.
12. Deals with any other QA issues pertaining to the school.

f. The Department Quality Assurance Committee (DQAC) – Responsibilities

1. Is in charge of academic quality assurance at the Department level.
2. Reports to SQAC.

3. Develops a quality culture at the Department.
4. Performs QA audits of the programmes in the Department.
5. Monitors the annual evaluation of programmes.
6. Performs QA audits for the Distance Learning programmes of the Department.
7. Suggests and implements improvements pertaining to the Department, its processes, its structure, resources, programmes, teaching/learning methods, etc.
8. Ensures quality of teaching/learning and research.
9. Suggests to the SQAC and UNIQAC improvements on the policies, processes, templates, quality indices, tools, etc.
10. Prepares QA reports.
11. Collects and stores data and information pertaining to QA issues of the Department and programmes.
12. Deals with any other QA issues pertaining to the Department.

g. Selection and Term of Office of the UNIQAC's members:

1. The responsibility of the selection of the TRF representatives to the UNIQAC is with the UNIQAC Selection Committee (UNIQACSC) comprising of the Rector, Senior Vice Rector and Vice Rectors. UNIQACSC is chaired by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. Self-nominations are submitted to UNIQACSC together with a cover letter and a CV within a specified deadline and following a call sent by the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs.
2. The student representatives are selected by the Student Affairs Committee of the Senate, following consultation with the Student Union. The 1st Cycle student must have completed at the University at least 60 ECTS and have a minimum CPA of 2.0.
3. The term of office of all UNIQAC's members is 3 years. In the case of the student members, they also serve for 3 years or for the duration of their studies whichever comes first.

h. Selection and Term of Office of the SQAC's members:

1. The responsibility for the selection of the TRF representatives to the SQAC is with the Dean of the School. Self-nominations are submitted to the Dean together with a cover letter and a CV within a specified deadline and following a call sent by the Dean.
2. The student representative is selected by the Dean of the School, following self-nominations responding to a call sent by the Dean. The 1st Cycle student must have completed at the University at least 60 ECTS and have a minimum CPA of 2.0.
3. The term of office of all SQAC's members is 3 years. In the case of the student members, they also serve for 3 years or for the duration of their studies whichever comes first.

i. Selection and Term of Office of the DQAC's members

1. The responsibility for the selection of the TRF representatives to the DQAC is with the Head of the Department. Self-nominations are submitted to the Head together with a cover letter and a CV within a specified deadline and following a call sent by the Head.
2. The student representative is selected by the Head, following self-nominations responding to a call sent by the Head. The student must have completed at the University at least 60 ECTS and have a minimum CPA of 2.0.

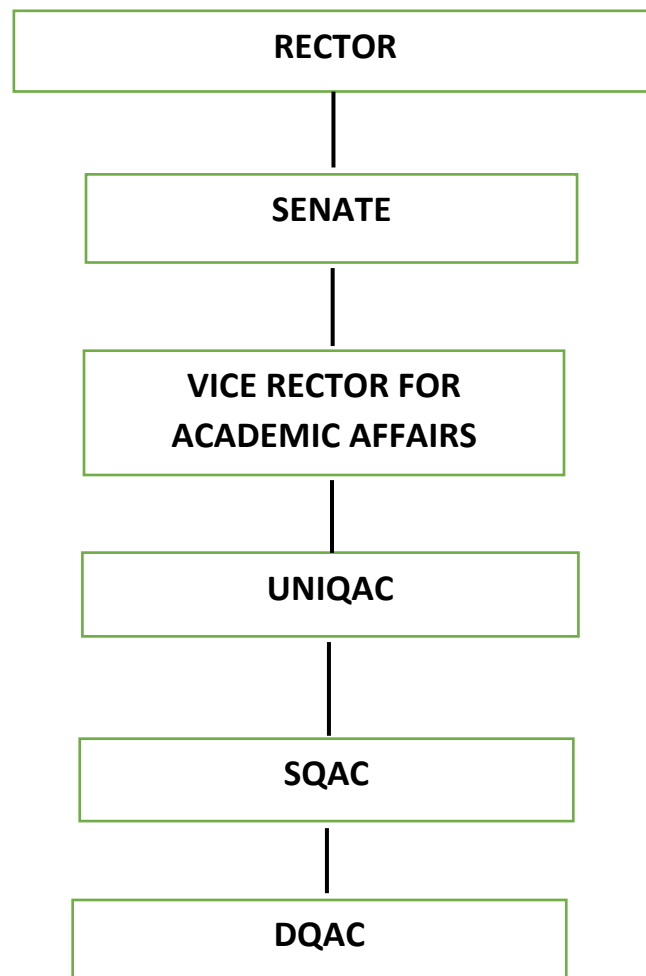
3. The term of office of all DQAC's members is 3 years. In the case of the student members, they also serve for 3 years or for the duration of their studies whichever comes first.

j. Notes:

The composition and functioning of the Medical School SQAC and DQACs may differ from the above descriptions.

5.4. Quality Assurance system

Quality Assurance activity at the University of Nicosia shall be ensured through the different responsible offices and committees that are referred to above. These are depicted in the diagram below:



The University, through its commitment to providing high-quality education, implements a rigorous, multi-layered system of quality assurance activity that includes programme, department, school and institutional level activities.