

## **Accreditation Standards**

### *Institutional accreditation of universities*

This document outlines the accreditation standards that EQAA uses for the institutional accreditation of universities. The standards are the terms of reference for judging whether a university qualifies for accreditation by EQAA.

#### Standard 1

##### *Mission and Strategy*

- (1) The university has a publicly available mission statement, which has been formally adopted.
- (2) The mission statement of the university appropriately and sufficiently reflects the characteristics of the university.
- (3) The university has a comprehensive strategy, which is derived from the mission, and that supports the university in the implementation of its mission.
- (4) The strategy of the university provides guidelines for the development of the university by indicating short, medium and long-term goals and objectives.
- (5) The university periodically reviews and adjusts its strategy.

#### Standard 2

##### *Quality Assurance*

- (1) The university assumes responsibility for assuring the quality of its operations. The university places the focus of its quality assurance activities on the enhancement of quality and the development of a quality culture.
- (2) The university has a system and strategy of quality assurance in place, which is based on its publicly available quality assurance policy. The policy has been developed with the support of stakeholders. Stakeholders also have an active role in the quality assurance system.
- (3) The university has processes for the management and implementation of its quality assurance policy and strategy. The processes are managed with clear responsibilities and implemented through an appropriate structure. The outcomes of these processes are

continuously integrated into the university operations, in particular into planning, decision-making and administrative processes.

- (4) The quality assurance system of the university covers all units and areas of the university's operations, including teaching and learning, research, engagement with the community, governance, administration and support services. The quality assurance activities provide relevant information and data to support the university in its management and development.
- (5) The university periodically reviews its quality assurance system for its effectiveness and impact.
- (6) The university ensures the involvement of management, academic and other staff and students in the operational processes of its quality assurance system.
- (7) The university includes external stakeholders in its quality assurance system.
- (8) The university periodically undergoes external quality assurance by an appropriate body.

### Standard 3

#### *Governance*

- (1) The university has an effective governance system in place that is in line with its mission and strategy.
- (2) Academic and other staff as well as students are adequately involved in the governance of the university.
- (3) The university's governance ensures an appropriate division and distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities.
- (4) The university ensures the transparency of its decision-making processes.

### Standard 4

#### *Learning and Teaching*

- (1) The university has an effective system in place for the design, approval, monitoring and review of study programmes. This system also ensures that study programmes conform to national regulations, meet the requirements of applicable qualifications frameworks and are in line with the university's strategy.
- (2) The university publicly provides information about study programmes, including provisions about credits, learning outcomes, methodology and admission, progression and completion.
- (3) The university basis its admission policy on clear and consistently applied regulations.
- (4) The university guarantees the recognition of periods of studies unless substantial differences exist in a fair and timely manner.

- (5) The university actively supports and encourages student-centred learning.
- (6) The university ensures that students are provided with adequate learning resources, including adequate facilities, libraries, IT infrastructure and support, and academic guidance. The university also ensures an appropriate learning environment, in particular through counselling and other support services.
- (7) The university ensures that students are fairly assessed on the basis of consistently applied and transparent regulations. The university enforces a policy against plagiarism and other forms of malpractice.
- (8) The award of a qualification is accompanied by appropriate explanatory documents.

### Standard 5

#### *Research*

- (1) The university has an institutional research policy and strategy.
- (2) The university ensures that its research activities conform to internationally accepted methodological standards.
- (3) The university provides adequate and sufficient facilities and equipment for the research activities of its staff and students in line with its strategies.
- (4) The university encourages research collaboration and cooperation across the university and externally.
- (5) The university has a policy on intellectual property in place that is consistently applied.
- (6) The university ensures that the outcomes of research are appropriately integrated into the teaching activities.
- (7) The university has mechanisms to ensure compliance with ethical standards.
- (8) The university ensures that academic misconduct, including plagiarism, is prevented.

### Standard 6

#### *Community Engagement*

- (1) The university has defined the community or communities it caters for, assesses their needs and requirements and takes these into consideration for its activities.
- (2) The university provides adequate public information about its activities, including its study programmes and other learning offers.
- (3) The university ensures that its activities impact and benefit the relevant community/ies.
- (4) The university ensures that an appropriate system of contact and exchange with its alumni is in operation.

## Standard 7

### *Staff*

- (1) The university uses a well-defined system for the recruitment and promotion of its staff. The system places a strong emphasis on appropriate qualifications, competences and skills.
- (2) The university offers and encourages the professional development of its staff based on appropriate needs assessment.
- (3) The university supports and encourages the research activities of its teaching staff and ensures their academic freedom.

## Standard 8

### *Resources*

- (1) The university has appropriate financial resources to undertake its operations. The financial resources are efficiently managed.
- (2) The university's budget is appropriate for its mission and adequate to implement the strategic objectives.
- (3) Budgetary procedures should allow for medium-term planning.
- (4) Accounting systems are in line with accepted professional accounting standards.
- (5) The university ensures risk assessment and external financial auditing.
- (6) The university has a risk management strategy.