KARATINA UNIVERSITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

AUGUST, 2017

CONTACTS
Karatina University
P. O. Box 1957 – 10101 Karatina, Kenya
Telephone: 020-2176713/+254729721200
Email: vc@karu.ac.ke
Website: http://www.karu.ac.ke

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SIGNATURE PAGE

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Prof. Mucai Muchiri
Vice Chancellor

VISION

To be a University of global excellence, meeting the dynamic needs and development of society.

MISSION

To conserve, create and disseminate knowledge through training, research, innovation and community outreach.

CORE VALUES

Equity

Teamwork

Meritocracy

Academic Freedom

Accountability

Excellence

Probity

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

CUE: Commission for University Education

DQA: Director, Quality Assurance

DVC: Deputy Vice Chancellor

IQA: Internal Quality Assurance

IUCEA: Inter-University Council for East Africa

KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KUCCPS: Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services

NCHE: National Council for Higher Education

PC: Performance Contract

QMS: Quality Management System

SOPs: Standard Operating Procedures

TCU: Tanzania Commission for Universities

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assurance: the act of assuring, freedom from doubt, inspires confidence

Customer: the recipient of a good, service or product

Mission: a written declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time.

Policy: a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions

Product: It is an idea, information, object, service or a graduate arising as an output our of a process or activity;

Quality: It represents the properties of products and or services that are valued by the customer. The totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bears its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs.

Quality Assurance: It refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirements for a product or service are fulfilled. It is the prevention of defects rather than detection.

Services: It is a series of activities designed to enhance customer satisfaction or process of ensuring customer satisfaction;

Vision: An aspirational description of what an organization would like to achieve or accomplish. It is intended to serve as a clear guide for choosing current and future courses of action.

FOREWORD

The vision of Karatina University is to be a world class university meeting the dynamic needs and development of society. This is a goal whose achievement requires development of a strong Directorate of Quality Assurance.

The Commission for University Education expects compliance to the provision of quality higher education through universities instituting internal quality mechanisms. The design of the policy is therefore an affirmation that Karatina University is committed to providing for quality university education through relevant teaching, research, innovation and community outreach. In quest to provide quality education, we have aligned our academic programmes to effective management by academic leadership, well designed structures, mechanisms and processes that have been clearly documented.

Quality assurance is broad based as it involves more than collection of data at each operations stage of the university, its analysis, interpretations, findings and giving of recommendations. The achievements of graduates of the University including graduate's profiles and attendant indicators such as pass rates and drop-out rates, average completion time and their employability in the job market. The opinions of our students and the alumni inform on the quality decisions of this policy. Indeed our graduates are fairing exemplary well in the, labour market owing to stringent quality checks that we undertake in Karatina University.

The policy focuses on effective implementation of the curriculum, development of new quality curriculum and review of existing curriculum. It will further set the framework for achievement of quality curriculum design, staff development services and operations to achieve quality products of the university as specified. It will also identify operations that require modification for continuous improvement. We will give objective evaluation and analysis of strengths and weaknesses for quality action plans and implementation plans.

In conclusion, the Quality Assurance Policy will affirm that Karatina University is on the path of commitment to ensuring that quality standards are adhered to so as to achieve our clients' satisfaction.

Prof. M. Muchiri
VICE CHANCELLOR

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There are many challenges facing universities in the era of marketization and globalization, the validation of knowledge generation and transmission through Quality Assurance (QA) mechanism ranks in the top tier. In Africa, QA in universities has acquired a sense of urgency owing to the rapid growth of the university sector in the last decades. In Kenya, quality assurance challenges in higher education have their genesis in the privatization and marketization of university development, the products of neoliberal development policies of the last two decades.

The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has come up with regional quality assurance initiative by involving the Commission for University Education (CUE), the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) of Uganda and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). IUCEA concern is quality of programmes, management of institutions and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems in order to harmonize regional quality assurance systems in all universities in East Africa.

The involvement of CUE is in line with its mandate of regulating and accrediting Universities in Kenya which is vested on it under the Universities Act, 2012. This is through setting and enforcing rules, standards and guidelines for global competitiveness. The Universities Act, 2012 makes provisions for the advancement of university education and for connected purposes. It empowers CUE to regulate and establish quality assurance mechanisms to guide admissions, maintenance of standards for courses of study and examinations, and to gather data from universities for research and development on matters of quality.

The objective of the Quality Assurance policy (QAP) for Karatina University is to ensure that its products and services meet the expectations of the customer and that of the institution. The QAP will lead to quality audit and ensure the university maintains and improves quality of products and services rendered to its customers through regular evaluation of its procedures and processes.

Factors that influence qualities are; quality of inputs, quality of processes and quality of outputs. The scope of the policy is hence defined to apply across all the universities functions that contribute to the core mandate of the University. The key functions related to academic activities have been provided for in the policy areas. The Policy also recognizes that there are existing guidelines issued by CUE together with other institutional policies already developed that will be used hand in hand when implementing this policy. Measuring and evaluation strategies have also been set out in this policy together with the responsible office (ers).

1.1 Mandate

The mandate of Karatina University as provided in the Karatina University Charter of 1st March, 2013 are to:
   a) Provide university education, knowledge and skills to citizens of Kenya.
   b) Participation in the creation, discovery, transmission, preservation and enhancement of knowledge and stimulation of economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological advancement.
   c) Conferment of degrees and, award of diplomas and certificates.
   d) Conduct examinations as may be provided by the Statutes.
   e) Create campuses, faculties, schools, institutes, departments, resource and research Centre's.
   f) Develop degree programmes and courses of study.

1.1 Quality Policy Statement

The Quality Policy affirms the University's commitment to quality and describes the University's approach to quality assurance and continual improvement. The Quality Policy shall be communicated to the entire Karatina University fraternity through visual display at strategic areas in all Campuses, awareness sessions, University webpage, computer desktop displays, calendars and diaries, newspaper advertisements and all formal meetings.

Karatina University is committed to providing quality training and services that meet the requirements of its customers and stakeholders locally and globally through quality and relevant teaching, research, innovation and community outreach. The University is committed to nurturing a scholarly culture by promoting creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurial skills, through an environment that is anchored in the core values of the institution. The University Management will continually monitor and improve the quality policy to achieve customer satisfaction and conform to the Quality Management system based on ISO 9001:2008 standard.

1.2 University Quality Objectives

The quality objectives are desired results and benefits which are important to Karatina University in the context of service delivering of quality University education. These are to:
   a) Provide relevant academic programmes, quality training and conduct research that inculcates creativity, innovativeness, leadership and entrepreneurial skills that are responsive to the needs of society and socio-economic development;
   b) Establish local and international linkages and collaborations with industry, research institutions and peer Universities to enhance training, community outreach and extension services;

c) Establish an infrastructure that attracts, develops, motivates and retains highly qualified staff and students while implementing the affirmative action on gender parity and persons with disability;

d) Establish a functional management structure and systems through prudent management of resources and ensure financial sustainability through implementation of systems that promotes transparency, accountability and integrity;

e) Provide and enhance diverse quality services and corporate image by meeting the customer requirements and exceeding their expectations;

f) Continually monitor and review performance of University structures and systems, and academic programmes by implementing an effective Quality Management System based on ISO 9001:2008; and

g) Embrace ICT in all University operations to enhance timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness.

1.3 Scope and Parameters of the Policy

a) The policy addresses all areas of the University activities focusing on their contributions in line with the University's strategic plan and other instruments. At various stages the university management shall liaise with relevant stakeholders in setting relevant and measurable quality objectives that are consistence with the Quality Policy. The objectives will be documented, established and monitored by the respective heads of departments and staff members.

b) The policy shall apply to staff and students in the University. In addition, it will cover the following areas in the University:
   i. Colleges, campuses, schools, faculties, institutes, centers, libraries, directorates, academic and non-academic departments and sections;
   ii. Coordinators of programmes, collaborations and linkages;
   iii. Physical infrastructure and resources;
   iv. Corporate and social responsibility;
   v. Community outreach services; and
   vi. Research and consultancy services.

c) The Commission for University being charged with accreditation of Universities has issued Universities Standards and Guidelines, 2014. Such standards and guidelines and any other operating at any time will be the basis of evaluation.

d) The University has also developed a number of institutional policies that will form the threshold for evaluation which are hereby listed but not limited to the following"
   i. The prevailing Karatina University Quality Manual (QM), 2014;
   ii. Karatina University Common Rules and Regulations for University Examinations;

iii. Karatina University Rules and Regulations governing Postgraduate Studies;

iv. Karatina University Admission and Credit Transfer Policy;

v. Karatina University Service Charter, 2015;

vi. The approved curriculum for each programme;

vii. Other guidelines issued by CUE and other government bodies from time to time.

2.0 POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This quality assurance policy endeavors to enhance the effectiveness of the university's activities as specified in its vision and mission by putting in place mechanisms to maintain and improve quality of products and services offered by Karatina University.

2.1 Justification of the Policy

Karatina University recognizes the importance of quality of its inputs and processes to ensure customer satisfaction in all its products and services. The policy will provide coherent and comprehensive guideline in maintaining and improving high quality curriculum, operations and services as required by the stakeholders and the customer. Karatina University aims at producing quality graduates as a strategy of enhancing its competitive edge against an environment of increased number of institutions operating in the higher education sector.

2.2 Overall Goal

The goal of the policy is to ensure that quality assurance is embedded in all operations of the university to guarantee that services and products meet customer satisfaction.

2.3 Specific Objectives

These are to:
  a) Enhance quality assurance in the University operations and services;
  b) Provide framework in development and implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures and practices;
  c) Provide mechanism for the development of quality and relevant academic programmes;
  d) Ensure graduates are equipped with the relevant skills, knowledge and attitude for a competitive and dynamic job market; and
  e) Facilitate the development of a culture of continual quality improvement in the University Services and Products.

3.O POLICY AREAS
The policy areas covered in the policy are:
   a) Admission of Students;
   b) Academic Programmes;
   c) Examinations;
   d) Student Support Services;
   e) Learning Environment;
   f) Recruitment of Staff;
   g) Research and Outreach;
   h) Alumni Involvement; and
   i) Feedback Mechanism.

3.1 Admission of Students
Admission of qualified students into various programmes is vital for skills acquisition and timely completion of the programme

Objective
   a) To admit students as guided by CUE and KUCCPS.
   b) To admit students whose mean grade at KCSE is at least C+ (or equivalent).
   c) To admit students as guided by the approved curriculum for each programme.

Policy Statements
The University shall:
   a) Admit students as approved by CUE for each academic year;
   b) Admit students who meet the minimum university entry grade (C+ at KCSE level);
   c) Admit students with at least equivalent qualification of the minimum university entry grade (C+);
   d) Admit students according to the prescription given in the approved curriculum for every programme.

3.2 Academic Programmes
Academic programmes that meet the needs of customers and stakeholders are vital in achieving quality products and services.

Objective
To develop quality and relevant academic programmes.

Policy Statements
The University shall:
a) Develop quality and relevant curriculum in line with the changing society needs and technological advancement;
b) Review current curriculum to meet customer needs and stakeholder's satisfaction.

3.3 Examinations

Quality examination, administration and processing of results is key in evaluation and/or assessment of Students to ensure that they meet they satisfy all the requirements of an academic programme.

Objective

To improve quality of examinations and results.

Policy Statements

The University shall ensure that:
   a) Examinations are moderated both internally and externally;
   b) Proper administration of examination; and
   c) Timely and accurate processing of results.

3.4 Student Support Services

The support services are necessary in enhancing teaching, learning and research for quality products and services.

Objective

To provide for student support services

Policy Statements

The University shall strive to provide the following facilities and services:
   a) Learning facilities;
   b) Accommodations services;
   c) Catering facilities;
   d) Games and other extra-curricular activities;
   e) Counselling services;
   f) Medical services; and
   g) Internet services.

3.5 Learning Environment

The university shall have a conducive learning environment

Objective

To maintain a conducive learning environment.

Policy Statements

The University shall ensure:
   a) Lecture examination timetable is in place;
   b) Lecture hall are enough with sufficient space;
   c) Sufficient seats are available;
   d) Maintain clean compound/environment .

3.6 Recruitment of Staff

Quality teaching, development of good curriculum and production of quality graduates require competent and professional staff.

Objective
a) To recruit relevant and high quality staff in all areas
b) To facilitate skills development of staff

Policy Statements

The University shall:
a) Ensure recruitment of quality staff;
b) Facilitate skills development for staff;
c) Ensure teaching, learning and research;
d) Initiate pedagogical training for staff;
e) Ensure mentorship among staff.

3.7 Alumni Involvement

Alumni shall be involved as stakeholders who have both experiences of the curriculum and services offered, and in the industry/job market. Therefore, their feedback will lead to improvement quality of products and services.

Objective

To involve the alumni of the University to give feedback and support

Policy Statements
a) The University shall put in place mechanism to involve alumni in improving quality of products and services;
b) The University shall carry out tracer studies to establish the employability of her graduates.

3.8 Research and Outreach

The University shall participate in research and outreach

Objective

Improve output in research and outreach

Policy Statement

The University staff and Students shall participate in:
a) Research
b) Outreach and extension

3.9 Feedback Mechanism

Feedback mechanism shall be in place for purposes of continual improvement of the products and services offered and for quality control.

Objective

To improve quality of services and products

Policy Statements

The University shall put mechanism in place for the evaluation of the following:

a) Curriculum;
b) Actual teaching;
c) Lecturer student ratio; and
c) Resources for teaching and infrastructure.

4.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

4.1 Implementation and Reporting framework

a) The Director of Quality Assurance is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy which shall include coordination of activities that may relate across all departments within the University that touch on academic affairs. The Director Quality Assurance is responsible for conducting evaluation(s) of each policy area or Department.

b) The Director Quality Assurance reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor, ARSA on a day to day basis. The Director shall be guided and/or advised by the Senate Quality Assurance Committee which is the oversight committee on matters of quality.

c) Every Head of Department or section is responsible for implementation of the relevant policy area that falls within the Department. Reports and recommendation thereof made from evaluation shall be considered at School Board levels so as to guide on implementation. Report on the effectiveness of the recommendations shall be presented to the Senate Quality Assurance Committee.

d) The Senate Quality Assurance Committee shall make bi-annual reports to Senate and for onward transmission to Council.

e) The diagram appearing as Appendix I is a representation of the Implementation structure and at Appendix II is the reporting framework.

4.2 Implementation Strategies

To ensure the success of this policy, the following strategies and approached shall be employed under the leadership of the Director Quality Assurance:

a) Awareness promotion workshops;

b) Induction of staff and students on core activities and values;

c) Establishment of various functional and administrative structures;

d) Communications of findings to the respective evaluated areas/departments

e) Creation of robust feedback mechanism; and

f) Continuous training and capacity building to all members of the University on quality assurance.

4.3 Evaluation Strategies

Quality evaluation strategies shall include various instruments in evaluating quality assurance activities which include but are not limited to:

a) Student satisfaction surveys;

b) Assessment of campuses and centers;

c) Programmes and course evaluations;

d) Employee satisfaction surveys;

e) Work environment survey;

f) Alumni tracer studies survey;
g) Customer satisfaction survey;
h) Staff appraisals;
i) Internal and external quality audits;
j) Accreditation;
k) Certification;
l) Suggestion boxes;
m) Feedback mechanism; and
n) Evaluation of teaching and of practicals.

4.4 Tools for Monitoring and Evaluation

The following tools may be adopted for both monitoring and evaluation and the list is not limited:

a) Questionnaire (s);
b) Observation schedule (s);
c) Interview schedule(s);
d) Check list (s) and
e) Any other tool that may be appropriate given the environment and circumstance.

4.5 Review of the Policy

This will provide the basis for monitoring and evaluation of the policy.

Objective

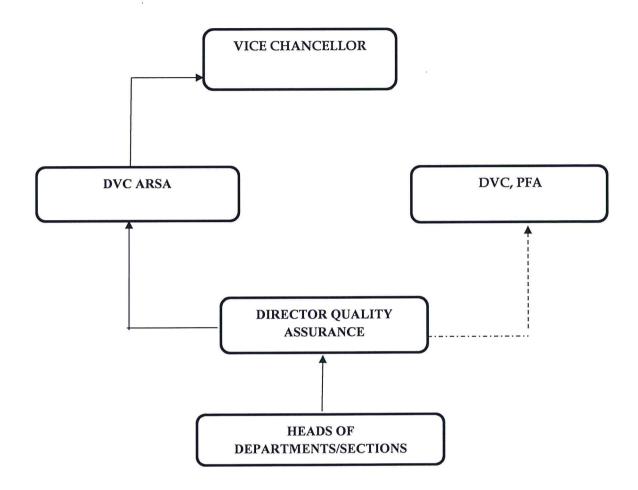To ensure that the policy remain relevant and effective.

Policy Statement

a) The University will monitor and evaluate the policy to ensure it is relevant and effective in meeting the policy objectives through the Senate Quality Assurance Committee which shall make recommendation for review.

The policy will be reviewed from time to time as need arises.

Appendix I Implementation Framework

The Structure for implementation of the quality policy is as follows:

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Appendix II Reporting framework

The structure for the reporting organs in the University is as follows:

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        │     SENATE QUALITY       │
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        │      SCHOOL BOARD (S)     │
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        │  DEPARTMENTAL BOARD (S)   │
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