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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AQA	Accreditation and Quality Assurance
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IQAMS	Institutional quality assurance management system
IP	Institutional Portfolio
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
SEMS	Student enrolment management system
SER	Self-evaluation report

The legislative framework for programme accreditation This manual should be read in conjunction with the document *Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia* (December 2009), related acts (such as the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) Act (1996) and the Higher Education Act (2003).

The approach to programme accreditation

#### Higher education in Namibia is governed by the following acts:

- Higher Education Act (2003)
- Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA) Act (1996)

It is the Higher Education Act (2003) that gives the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) its mandate to operate at a national level and to, among other things, promote:

- The establishment of a coordinated higher education system
- Access for students to higher education institutions
- Quality assurance in higher education.

The mandate and approach of NCHE to quality assurance is laid out in the *Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia* (December 2009).

Purpose of the<br/>manualThe purpose of this manual is to provide to both the higher education<br/>provider as well as the NCHE Secretariat, guidance and advice on how best to<br/>implement the programme accreditation system as laid down in the document<br/>*Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia* (December 2009).<br/>A further purpose of the document is to recommend procedures that will<br/>be complementary to the processes that have been outlined in the Quality<br/>Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009).

Scope of accreditation process The scope of programme accreditation includes the following:

- Programmes at public institutions
- Programmes at private higher education institutions offering only and exclusively higher education programmes (i.e. at and above level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework)
- Programmes at private institutions offering, among others, higher education programmes.

In addition, NQA and various statutory bodies also have a variety of responsibilities for the quality and quality assurance of programmes. In the case of the statutory (or professional bodies), professional programmes will have to meet the stakeholder requirements for programme quality, as well as be subjected to the requirements of NCHE for programme accreditation.

Programmes will be accredited by agreement between with NCHE and NQA.

Note that the accreditation of short courses is excluded from the accreditation process.

NCHE does not accredit institutions; it accredits the programme that the institution intends offering.

Make your own notes here.

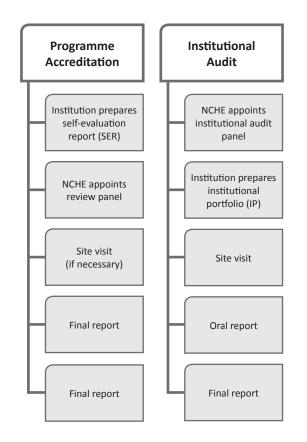


Overview of the programme accreditation process

#### Flow chart of the process

• New or existing programme submission of self-evaluation report SER by 1 institution to NCHE • NCHE appointment of review panel of peers 2 • Pre-site meeting 3 Panel validates SER 4 • NCHE arranges site visit 5 • Oral report delivered at any of site visit 6 • Panel draft report developed 7 • Panel draft report submitted to NCHE's Accreditation and Quality 8 Assurance (AQA) committee for noting and comment • Report forwarded to institution for comments 9 • AQA submits final panel report and institution's comments to NCHE 10 Council for approval • NCHE makes decision on accreditation outcome (in concurrence with NQA) 11 • Presentation of final report to institution 12 • Summary of report published on NCHE website 13 • Report to Minister if deemed necessary by NCHE 14

Synergy with quality assurance process The programme accreditation should be seen as a subsystem, along with *Notes* institutional quality assurance audits, of the quality assurance system. While there are many similarities between the two sub-systems, there are also differences. The table below explain these synergies.



Concurrence with other stakeholder requirements In the case of professional programmes, the requirements of other statutory bodies must also be met before the programme can be offered.

"NCHE will perform its accreditation duties with due recognition of the responsibilities of other stakeholders."

Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Refer to Quality

Different approach to accreditation

- Each of the following categories of qualifications will be approached differently:
  - New programmes
    - Completely new (never offered)
    - Offered but changed by more than 40%

#### • Existing programmes

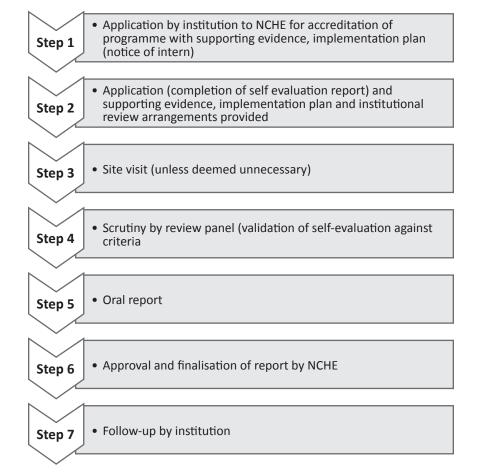
- $\circ$   $\;$  Being offered but not accredited
- o Been accredited and require re-accreditation
- Professional programmes (new)
- Professional programmes (existing)

Costs of programme accreditation The responsibility for the costs of programme accreditation will be decided **Notes** from time to time by the NCHE Council and institutions will be informed of these arrangements.

Focus of NCHE accreditation process "The focus of the accreditation process is on the evaluation of the programme's capacity or potential capacity to meet NCHE's criteria within a specified period of time."

This means that an application by an institution to offer a new programme must demonstrate to NCHE that the institution has the capacity or potential capacity to meet the accreditation criteria in a reasonable period of time. This capacity must be demonstrated in the self-evaluation of the programme conducted by the institution wishing to offer the programme.

Procedures for applying for new programmes



Notes

Refer to Quality

Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Assurance

System for



Suggested time frames for accrediting new programmes

#### These are the **suggested** time framework for programme accreditation:

Notes

ACTIVITY	DURATION
Application and preparation of self-evaluation report (including implementation plan)	Commences 9 months prior to being offered as an accredited programme
Submission of self-evaluation report to NCHE	Completed 7 months prior to offering
NCHE appointment of review panel	Completed 6 months prior to offering
Site visit (if necessary)	Completed 6 months prior to offering
Panel reviews self-evaluation report	Completed 5 months prior to offering

Preparing the self-evaluation report

The institution compiles a self-evaluation report with a supporting implementation plan which addresses the criteria for programme accreditation and how they will be met. In addition to this, evidence of the following should be provided together with the former requirements:

- Needs analysis that has been conducted
- Commitment to quality of provision
- Commitment to quality of programme delivery
- Budgetary allocations
- Human resources
- Infrastructure requirements
- Time frame for having resources in place
- Related policies and procedures pertaining to the programme.

Additional information can be provided to support the application. Evidence must be provided that the programme self-evaluation has been approved by the institution's governance structures.



# Procedures for accreditation of new programmes (continued)

Implementation plan The implementation plan is provided to NCHE at the same time as the selfevaluation report. It will include a detailed account of, among others, the following:

- How the programme will be implemented (including implementation steps)
- How the criteria will be met
- Budgetary allocations
- Human resource allocations
- Infrastructure
- Timelines for introduction
  - Projected student enrolment for a period of 3 years.
  - Institutional mission statement
- Organogram illustrating the structures and lines of responsibility for academic planning and approval
- Documentation on policy, procedures and guidelines to academic staff for the planning and design of programmes
- Documentation on consultation with internal and external stakeholders around programme development
- Documentation on financial planning and budgeting for programmes
- Documentation on policies and plans for the appointment, induction and development of academic staff
- Documentation on policies for student admissions and student development
- Examples of Student Enrolment Management System (SEMS) data on programmes
- Academic handbooks or calendars
- Other promotional material on academic offerings
- Policy documentation on the Quality Assurance (QA) of programmes.

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Notes



Suggested data sources



#### Format for the accreditation request

#### The format for the accreditation request will be as follows:

Notes

Title page	Institution's name Institution's logo
Table of Contents	(Electronic where possible)
Table of figures	Numbered and referenced by page
Table of graphs	Numbered and referenced by page
Body of portfolio	Font to be easily readable 11 point font size for body 1.5 spacing 12 point font size for headings Numbered correctly
References	All references be complete and accurately referenced consistent throughout to one referencing system.
Proof of approval by governance structures	Minutes of meeting to be attached
List of all documents supplied	All documents to be clearly numbered and referenced
Acknowledgements	Persons responsible for various tasks within the portfolio
Number of copies to be provided	To be decided by NCHE
Bound	
Length	The length of the report will vary from institution to institution

Application for a new programme

Application must be made for new programmes that fall within NQF level 5 Notes and above to NCHE.

Application for If the new programme is at a postgraduate level, the institution should show postgraduate that it has successfully offered the programme at the lower level before it programmes may apply for the accreditation of the higher level programme.

Submitting the accreditation request

Application is made through the office of the Registrar of the institution, and should also provide evidence of the head of the institution's support for the programme.

There is currently no schedule of closing dates for applications and each application will be reviewed as and when it is received.

The review panel – appointment, roles and composition NCHE will appoint a review panel to deal with a new application. Members of the review panel will be selected with due consideration for subject matter expertise and experience in the subject areas, as well as in curriculum development.

Members of the review panel will be selected from Namibian and international higher education institutions, stakeholder groups, professional bodies, QA agencies or subject matter experts. The panel should consist of no fewer than four (4) members and no more than six (6 members). The panel should include one student.

The function of the review panel is to validate the institution's self-evaluation of the new programme against NCHE's criteria for accreditation of new programmes in order to see if the requirements can be met.

Students should be given the opportunity to engage with the proposed programme in an appropriate forum prior to the review process. This forum could be a Teaching and Learning Committee (if such exists) or a consultative meeting with selected members of the student body for the purposes of obtaining feedback. Student input to the programme is imperative.

Review panel members will be required to submit a declaration of interests. The institution has the right to object to any panel member, by providing grounds for the objection or conflict of interests that may be evident.

The chairperson of the panel is responsible for the following:

- Facilitating the pre-site visit meeting
- Ensuring all documentation is available to the panel
- Ensuring that logistical arrangements are in order for the panel
- Liaisoning with the institution during the site visit
- Making panel members aware of confidentiality issues
- Ensuring professional behaviour of panel members
- Ensuring that any changes to the time schedule are communicated to all stakeholders timeously
- Ensuring that optimal use is made of times allocated on the schedule
- Ensuring that individual panel members contribute to the writing of the draft accreditation report
- Finalising draft accreditation report
- reporting back orally

Roles and responsibilities of the panel team members are to:

- Prepare for the site visit
- Advise NCHE if further documentation is required
- Read all institutional documentation in detail
- Evaluate the site visit
- Contribute to the report of the panel
- Consult with chairperson after the site visit and sign off the report
- May be required to rework report.

Note that further training will be provided to panel members that will cover;the conduct of interviews, making professional decisions and conducting site visits during the 'review panel members' training' that is to take place.

Site visit to institution (if necessary)

2

A site visit will be conducted in cases where there is insufficient evidence provided by the institution or where the self-evaluation report is inadequate. In such instances, members of the review panel and representative/s from NCHE will conduct the site visit.

See Appendix 6 for a typical schedule of a site visit

Notes

A date for the site visit will be agreed upon by the institution and NCHE.

The institution will be allocated a NCHE contact person with whom it can liaise on matters related to the site visit (including logistical arrangements). The institution is required to appoint a site visit coordinator who will serve as the liaison person before and during the visit. (NCHE must be informed of who this person is and the contact details once the site visit date has been agreed upon).

The purpose and scope of the intended site visit will be indicated to the institution by notification. The purpose of the site visit will differ from case to case and for this reason, no 'typical' site visit schedule is provided.

The duration of the visit is one full day at the institution. (It may be necessary for the review panel members to meet prior to this site visit.)

Note that additional days will be required in the case of multiple site delivery.

The visit will consist of various time slots which should accommodate the following:

- Meeting with panel and head of institution, programme coordinator and quality assurance officer
- Interviews with various stakeholder groups, such as academic staff, as well as support and administrative staffwithin the programme
- Visits to various facilities required for the delivery of the programme.

Note that further training will be provided to panel members that will cover; the conduct of interviews, making professional decisions and conducting the site visit, during the 'review panel members' training' that is to take place.

The assessment process

2

The review panel's assessment process consists of three stages:

- Validation of the institution's SER of the programme against individual criteria
- Assessment of the evidence of potential quality within the themes
- The accreditation recommendations.



Review panel'sThe panel's report will be specific in terms of assessment results regarding<br/>the following:

- Individual criteria
- Themes
- Accreditation outcomes.

The report will include justification as to how the decisions were reached. It will also contain a summary of the recommendations and commendations.

Refer to page 10 of Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Refer to

of Quality Assurance System for

in Namibia (December 2009)

scales

Higher Education

for assessment

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education

(December 2009)

in Namibia



2

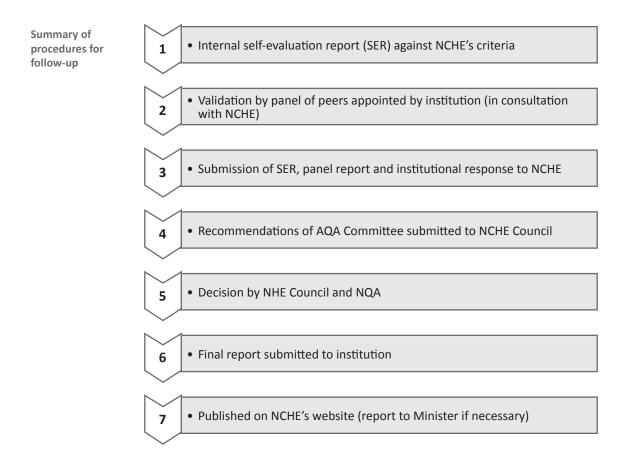
	Training and guidance will be provided to prospective review panel members in the preparation, structure and format of the review report.	/vc
Approval and finalising the report	NCHE and NQA concurrently make the final accreditation decision.	
	In cases where a programme is not accredited, the institution will be excluded from re-applying for a period of two (2) years.	
	The institution will also be excluded from offering that programme and / enrolling students on it.	
Reporting on programme accreditation	The institution will receive a final NCHE report and a summary of the report will be posted on the NCHE website.	
	The final NCHE report will indicate the period for which the accreditation is granted (six years) together with any conditions.	
Follow up by institution	The institution is required to conduct an internal review of the programme within two years of the first cohort of students graduating from the programme.	
Procedures for follow-up report and internal review	<ul> <li>The following procedures are to be followed with regard to the internal review of the programme within two years of the first cohort of students graduating:</li> <li>Self-evaluation report against NCHE's criteria for re-accreditation of existing programmes</li> <li>Validation of self-evaluation by panel of peers (including at least two subject matter experts) appointed by the institution in consultation with NCHE.</li> </ul>	Re As Sy Hi in dr
	The panel should monitor the level of compliance with NCHE's accreditation criteria for re-accreditation of existing programmes and whether the conditions set by NCHE in the initial accreditation process	

- have been met.
- Submission of the self-evaluation report, the report of the external panel and the institution's response to the report to the NCHE

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (Final draft 2009)

See section in manual on reaccreditation of programmes Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee

- Recommendation by the AQA Committee to the NCHE Council on reaccreditation of the programme for a maximum of 5 years (excluding the period in which it has already been offered)
- Decision on re-accreditation of the programme by the NCHE Council in concurrence with NQA
- Final report presented to the institution
- Summary published on the NCHE website
- Report to Minister if necessary.



## Understanding the criteria for accreditation and reaccreditation of new programmes

#### Introduction

The focus of accreditation process for new programmes is on the institution's capacity to meet NCHE's quality requirements, and more specifically on the evaluation of the implementation aspects and the achieved learning outcomes.

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

While the self evaluation questions are meant to guide the development of the SER, this document should not consist entirely of a set of questions and answers.

Theme 1: Aims and objectives

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators

#### Criterion 1 – 2: Institutional vision, mission, and national or regional Needs / imperatives

All academic programmes (professional, vocational and other) Are the proposed programme's learning outcomes and goals clearly formulated? Are the proposed programme's learning outcomes and goals in line with the institution's vision and general strategic direction? Are the proposed programme's learning outcomes and goals aligned to Namibia's

national needs and goals?

Criterion 3: Subject / discipline specific requirements and programme level

All academic programmes (professional, vocational and other) How has the institution ensured that the proposed programme's learning outcomes are at a level comparable to the same (or similar) programmes at a national and international level? How has the institution ensured that the proposed programme's learning outcomes are aligned to recent developments in the subject or discipline? Are the proposed programme's learning outcomes pitched at the correct NQF level as per the level descriptors?

#### **Criterion 4: Professional requirements**

Only professional programmes:

What mechanisms are there to ensure that the learning outcomes are based on professional requirements?

What mechanisms are there to ensure that the learning outcomes are aligned to recent developments in the profession?





Theme 2:

Curriculum

### Understanding the criteria for accreditation and reaccreditation of new programmes (continued)

Critorion E. Qual	ity of curriculum
Citterion 5: Qual	
Professional programmes: How is the proposed curriculum for he new programme aligned to current professional practice?	Vocational programmes: How is the proposed curriculum aligned to current technical and career requirements and paths?
low does the curriculum of the new programme enable the development of the required professional ompetences?	How is the new curriculum linked to the latest development in the technical roles of the particular career or vocation?
How does the curriculum make provision for work-based learning?	How does the curriculum make provision for work-based learning?
How is the new curriculum for the new p developments in the subject / discipline How is the new curriculum for the new p practice (where applicable)?	
Criterion 6: Need	ls of stakeholders
target student intake in terms of the follo Learning outcomes Modes of delivery Modes of provision Teaching and learning methods Learning materials All other aspects of the curricul needs? In what ways is close involvement of the	um? um responsive to national and regional relevant stakeholders ensured?
Criterion 7: Teaching	and learning strategy
appropriate for the institution type, mod How does the institution ensure that t acilitate the achievement of the intende How does the institution ensure that the ites of delivery?	he teaching and learning strategies will

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Note: when considering these criteria related to curriculum there are four different types of programmes: General

- programmes undergraduate
- Professional programmes
- Vocational programmes
- Postgraduate programmes

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

16 Institutional Quality Assurance Audit Manual

continuously monitored and improved?

#### **Criterion 8: Student enrolment**

All programmes:

What strategies are there for marketing, recruitment, admissions, selection and registration?

What strategies are there to ensure that the admissions requirements are in line with the proposed programme's academic demands and the academic level of the student intake?

Professional programmes:

What selection procedures are in place to ensure that the needs of the profession are taken into account?

#### **Criterion 9: Articulation**

What mechanisms are there to ensure that the curriculum articulates with other national and international programmes?

#### **Criterion 10: Postgraduate programmes**

Postgraduate programmes only:

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that students have the opportunity to develop research competence and research skills (through training)? What policies are in place to ensure that well-qualified and experienced supervisors are appointed?

How are the roles and responsibilities of supervisors and students stipulated?

Theme 3: Assessment

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators

#### **Criterion 11: Learning Outcomes and Assessment**

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the proposed assessment methods are appropriate for their purpose?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the proposed assessment methods will effectively measure the students' progress towards achieving the proposed learning outcomes for the programme?

#### Criterion 12: Assessment, moderation and security

Are there clear criteria for assessment that will be available to students? Does the proposed assessment system have:

- Provision for internal moderation
- Provision for external moderation at exit levels
- Criteria for assessment of work-based learning
- Clear regulations for dealing with mitigating circumstances?

What measures are in place to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of assessment methods and decisions that arise from them? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment practices are consistent

across all sites of delivery?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure the integrity and accuracy of certificates including:

- Data capturing
- Data management
- Control procedures
- Security measures?

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

3

## Understanding the criteria for accreditation and reaccreditation of new programmes (continued)

#### Criterion 13: Assessment and staff

What measures are in place to ensure that students are assessed by well-qualified and experienced staff?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff who conduct assessments understand the principles and functions of assessment?

#### **Criterion 14: Information to students**

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that students are made aware of the learning outcomes of the programme and the assessment methods?

#### **Criterion 15: Dissertations and theses**

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment of dissertations and theses make provision for at least one external examiner with a proven research record?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment of dissertations and theses at doctoral level make provision for at least one international external examiner with a proven research record?

Theme 4: Staff

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators

#### Criterion 16 - 19: Qualifications and experience

What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff meet the minimum qualification requirements at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff teaching on the programme will have the necessary skills to facilitate learning in the programmes? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff teaching on the programme will have the necessary level of teaching competence on appointment? What measures are in place to ensure that academic staff teaching on the programme have relevant research experience? What measures are in place to ensure that academic staff teaching on the programme have recognised research output?

#### Criterion 20: Number of staff

How will the institution ensure that there are sufficient staff (as per student to student ratios) to commence and continue with the proposed programme?

#### Criterion 21: Staff development

What developmental opportunities are available for staff to improve their knowledge and skills?

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009) for minimum qualification requirements



Theme 5: Facilities and support

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators

#### **Criterion 22: Physical facilities**

What measures are in place to ensure that there are adequate and appropriate physical facilities aligned to the nature of the programme?

#### **Criterion 23: Academic support**

What academic support services are available to enhance the academic skills of students?

What services are available to students for tutoring and counselling purposes

#### **Criterion 24: Programme administrative services**

What measures are in place to ensure effective administration of venues and timetables?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure accurate and reliable student administrative information?

Theme 6: Internal quality assurance systems

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators Criterion 25 - 26: Internal quality assurance systems

What formal mechanisms exist for the quality assurance of programmes that actively involve staff, students and other relevant stakeholders in terms of design and approval?

Has the programme been formally approved by the relevant institutional structures?

What mechanisms are in place to ensure periodic review of programmes? What mechanisms are there to ensure that the feedback from the review processes feeds back into the curriculum for improvement purposes?

What mechanisms are in place for the routine and regular review of the institution's quality assurance mechanisms?

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Refer to Quality

Higher Education in Namibia

(December 2009)

Assurance System for

Refer to Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Theme 7: Financial resources

#### Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators

#### Criterion 27: Institutional planning and resource allocation processes

What provisions have been made for the proposed programmes planning and resource allocation processes?

#### Criterion 28: Adequacy of funding

What mechanisms are in place to ensure the adequacy of funding to commence and continue the programme?

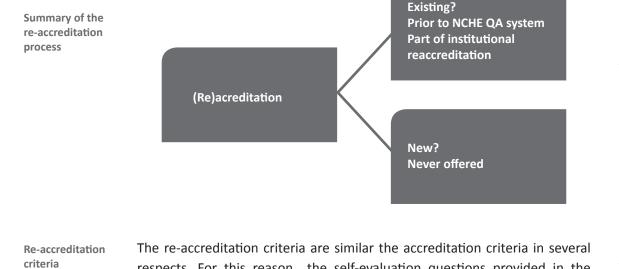
#### Introduction

Existing programmes will be required to meet NCHE's criteria for reaccreditation, as well as the requirements of other stakeholders. In the reaccreditation process, the focus falls on the implementation of the programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes of the programme as per the graduate who has completed the programme.

Application of the reaccreditation process

Re-accreditation of existing programmes is applied in the following instances:

- Programmes offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEI) prior to implementation of the NCHE quality assurance system
- New programmes accredited by NCHE and NQA concurrently, within . two years of the first cohort of students completing the programme
- Programmes that form part of the institutional systematic selfevaluation during the first quality cycle of NCHE (2011 - 2016) as required by NCHE and as per NCHE's criteria for programme reaccreditation.



Read in conjunction with Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Refer to *Ouglity* Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Additional criteria have been added in the following areas:

Programme retention (Criterion 9)

accreditation criteria.

Qualification and experience of administrative and technical support • staff (Criterion 20)

respects. For this reason, the self-evaluation questions provided in the

accreditation section can be used as guidelines for addressing the re-

- Achievement of learning outcomes (Criterion 28)
- Student retention (Criterion 29). •

### Appendices

- 1 Quality Assurance System for Higher Education (December 2009)
- 2 Higher Education Act 2003
- 3 Namibia Qualifications Authority Act 1996
- 4 Example of a letter of appointment for a review panel member
- 5 Code of Conduct for review panel members (including Disclosure and Confidentiality forms to be completed)
- 6 Typical schedule for site visit
- 7 Comprehensive list of possible data sources

## Glossary

Accreditation	Formal recognition by NCHE, in concurrence with the NQA, that specific quality standards have been met by a programme. Accreditation is valid for a stipulated period of time.
Commendations	Used with reference to issues identified in panel reports as good practices that support and enhance the quality of a programme
Qualitative data	Non-numerical data; related to quality
Quantitative data	Numerical data that can be measured; relating to an amount
Recommendations	Used with reference to issues indicated in panel reports as needing improvement and requiring action on the part of the institution.
Triangulation	Technique of investigating an issue by considering information on it from different sources. It is a process of verifying perceptions and conclusions.
Concurrence	

Concurrence

See full Glossary in Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

### References

The Inter-University Council for East Africa 2010: A Road map to Quality – **Notes** Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Vol 1: Guidelines for Self Assessment at Program Level

The Inter-University Council for East Africa 2010: A Road map to Quality – Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Vol 2: Guidelines for External Assessment at Program Level

National Council for Higher Education, 2009: Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia. Windhoek.





