

**Programme Accreditation
Trainer Manual**



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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

Guidelines

The legislative framework for programme accreditation

- It is important to be familiar with the Acts and to keep updated if changes occur.
- If changes occur the manuals need to be updated and providers need to be informed.

Please see the Higher Education Act

The approach to programme accreditation

- Processes for review and update of manuals need to be put in place by NCHE.

Purpose of the manual

- Important to understand concurrence and be able to explain it
- Stress that the quality of the programme is under scrutiny not the quality of the provider (although the two are interlinked).

Scope of accreditation process

- Procedures that are referred to may change from time to time
- Additional procedures will need to be added as they become necessary
- Need to standardise these procedures and the way in which they are communicated to the stakeholders
- Important to stress that public and private providers are included in the process
- Need to advise providers where only some of their programmes are at or above level 5.
- Need to be familiar with NQF

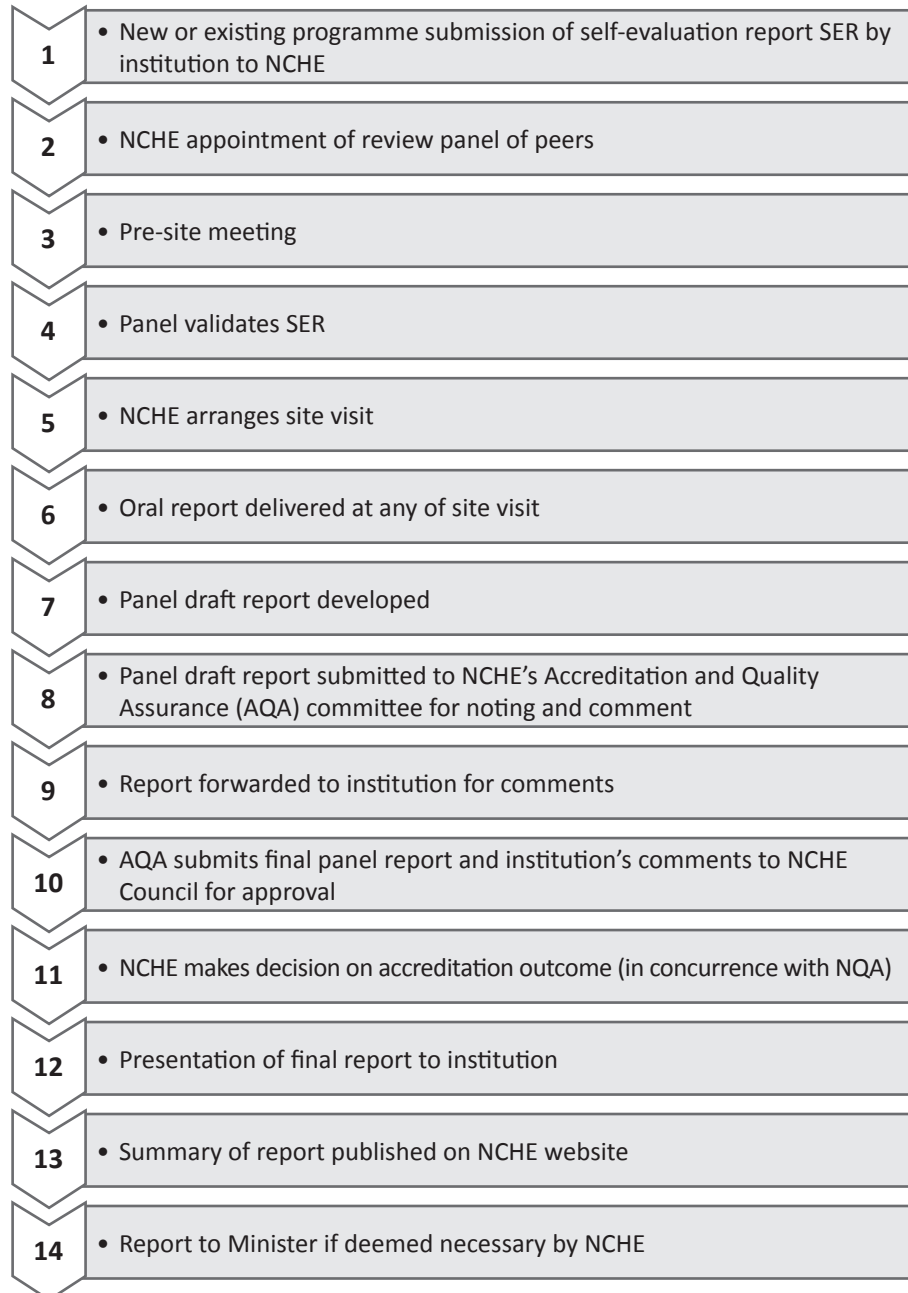
Notes

Overview of
the programme
accreditation
process

Guidelines

Flow chart of the process

Notes



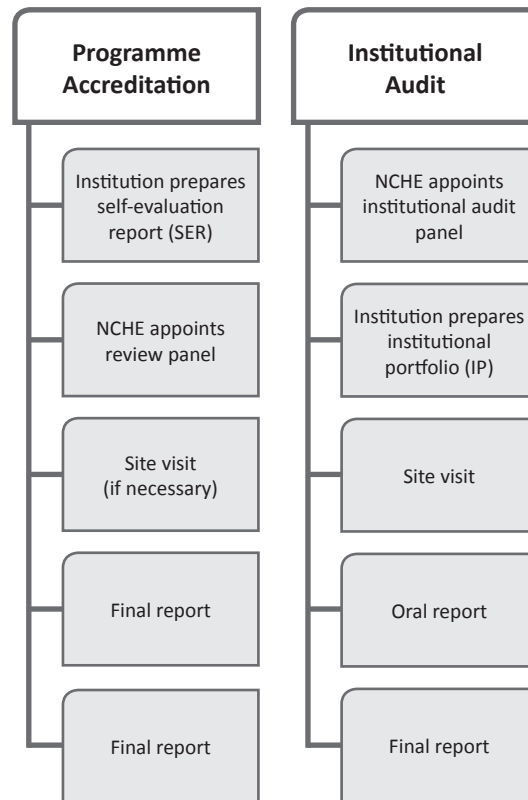
Synergy
with quality
assurance
process

The programme accreditation should be seen as a subsystem, along with institutional quality assurance audits, of the quality assurance system. While there are many similarities between the two sub-systems, there are also differences.

Notes

Guidelines

The table below explain these synergies.



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

Each of the following categories of qualifications will be approached differently:

- New programmes – **entirely new and never offered before**
- Existing programmes – **being offered and accredited but requiring re-accreditation due to accreditation cycle completion**
- Professional programmes (new) – collaboration with professional body (e.g. medical and legal qualifications)
- Professional programmes (existing – being offered but not accredited) – collaboration with professional body
- Existing programmes – being offered but not accredited
- Existing programmes that have changed by more than 40% and are therefore regarded as new programmes

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

Concurrence with other stakeholder requirements

Differentiated approach to accreditation

Costs of programme accreditation

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

Procedures for accreditation of new programmes

Guidelines

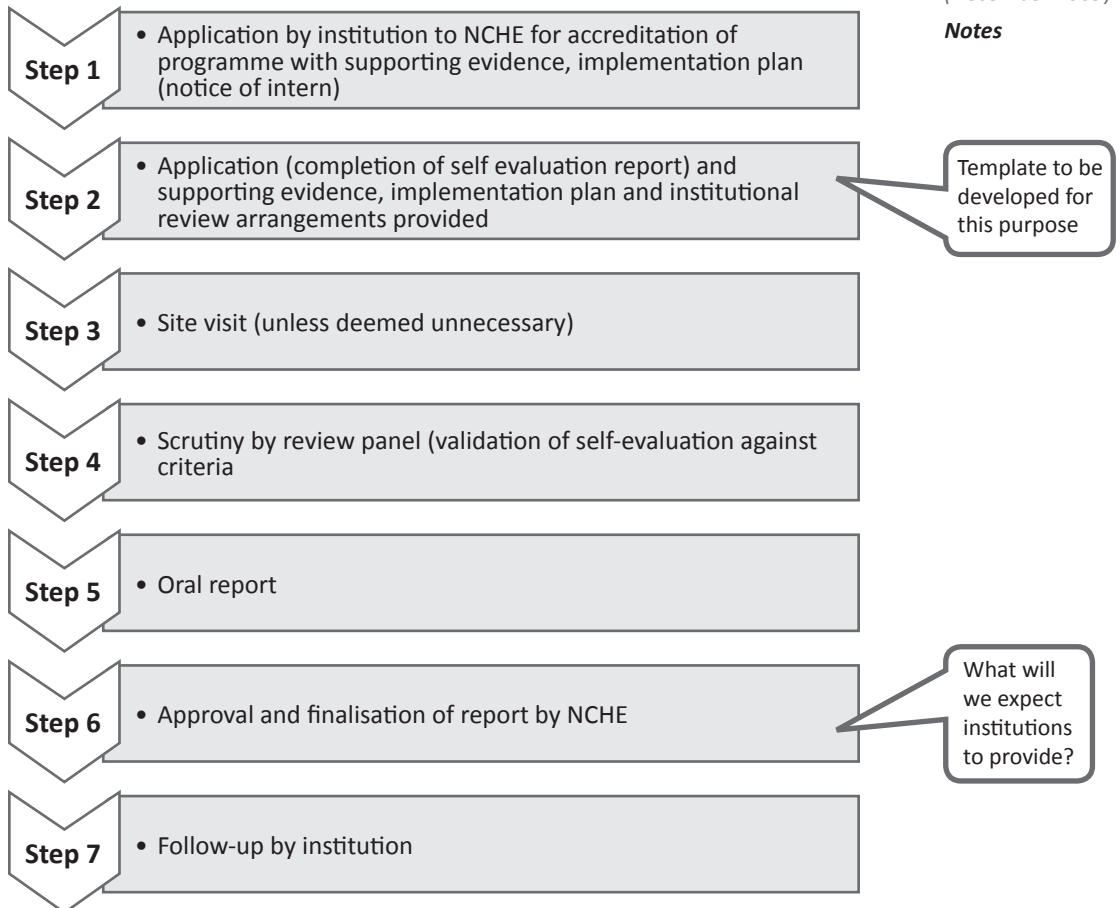
Focus of NCHE accreditation process

“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.”

Refer to page 7 of Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (December 2009)

Notes

Procedures for applying for new programmes



DOCUMENTATION MAY CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME AND THE SYSTEM SHOULD BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE THESE CHANGES.

Guidelines

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

The institution should be informed of the decision at least 4 months prior to registering students. This will allow for marketing of the programme in the case of new programmes.

Preparing the self-evaluation report

It will be important to conduct on-going workshops on the requirements and the preparing of the SER for institutions.

Implementation plan

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

Notes

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

Suggested data sources

- How the programme will be implemented (including implementation steps)
- How the criteria (for **programme accreditation**) will be met
- Budgetary allocations
- Human resource allocations
- Infrastructure
- Timelines for introduction
- Projected student enrolment for a period of 3 years.
- Not all institutions will have the same sets of documents. They will vary from institution to institution.
- There will however be some documents that all institutions will be required to have

See list of more data sources Appendix 7

Format for the accreditation request

Application for a new programme

Application for postgraduate programmes

Submitting the accreditation request

The review panel – appointment, roles and composition

Database to be developed

One NCHE secretariat member included

Guidelines

Accreditation request = self evaluation review

Notes

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

Example: should a programme be accredited to offer a master's programme at an institution where there is no undergraduate programme in that discipline?

An 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.

This may change from time to time.

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.**

Objections will be dealt with in the same way as outlined in the objections and / or appeals for audit panel members for institutional audits.

Guidelines

Call for nominations as panel reviewers can be made to institutions for inclusion on the data base.

The chairperson of the panel is responsible for the following:

- **Facilitates the pre-site visit (not necessarily on site at the institution)**
- Ensures all documentation is available to the panel
- Ensures that logistical arrangements are in order for the panel
- Liaisons with the institution during the site visit
- Makes panel members aware of confidentiality issues
- Ensures professional behaviour of panel members
- Ensures that any changes to the time schedule are communicated to all stakeholders timeously
- Ensures that optimal use is made of times allocated on the schedule
- Ensures that individual panel members contribute to the writing of the draft accreditation report
- Finalises draft accreditation report
- reports back orally

Chairperson appointed by the Executive Director of NCHE

Roles and responsibilities of the panel team members are to:

- Prepare for the site visit
- Advise NCHE if further documentation is required – **giving adequate time (but will need to set a deadline)**
- 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.

Further procedures will need to be put in place for this

The review panel – appointment, roles and composition

Guidelines

A site visit will be conducted in all instances, unless there are exceptional circumstances where it is deemed not necessary.

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.)

In writing and from the Executive Director of NCHE

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 stakeholders groups, such as academic staff, as well as support and administrative staff within the programme
- Visits to various facilities required for the delivery of the programme.

Institutions may only in exceptional circumstances apply for a suite of qualifications

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.

Training similar to that for audit panel members

See Appendix 6 for a typical schedule of a site visit

Notes

Guidelines

The assessment process

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**.

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

See section on Understanding the criteria and themes

Review panel's report

The panel reports will be specific in terms of assessment results in regard to 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**.

Logistical arrangement will be made for this

Training and guidance will be provided to prospective review panel members in the preparation, structure and format of the review report.

See Glossary

May use a standardised report format for this purpose

Approval and finalising the report

NCHE and NQA concurrently make the final accreditation decision.

Notes

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 the programme.

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

Procedures for follow-up report and internal review

Guidelines

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.

This means that the programme will only be reviewed internally in five years of offering the programme.

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:

- Self-evaluation report against NCHE’s criteria for re-accreditation of **existing programmes**
- Validation of self-evaluation by panel of peers (including at least two subject matter experts) appointed by the institution in consultation with NCHE.

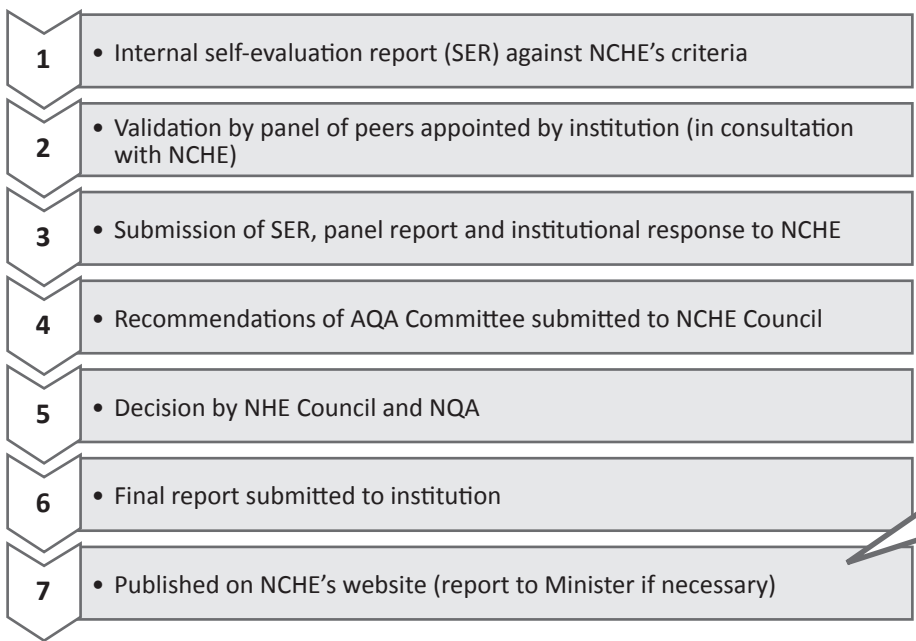
Refer to *Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia (Final draft 2009)*

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.

See section in manual on re-accreditation of programmes

- Submission of the self-evaluation report, the report of the external panel and the institution’s response to the report to the NCHE’s Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee
- Recommendation by the AQA Committee to the NCHE Council on re-accreditation of the programme for a maximum of 6 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 the NQA
- Final report presented to the institution
- Summary published on NCHE website
- Report to Minister if necessary.

Summary of procedures for follow-up



Need to set a calendar with timeframes and meeting dates to coincide with processes and procedures

Guidelines

Introduction

The focus of accreditation process for new programmes is on the institution's capacity to meet NCHES 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
<i>All academic programmes (professional, vocational and other)</i> 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
<i>All academic programmes (professional, vocational and other)</i> 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
<i>Only professional programmes:</i> 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?

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

Refer to ETSIP
programme
www.etsip.na

Theme 2: Curriculum

Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators	
Criterion 5: Quality of curriculum	
<p><i>Professional programmes:</i> How is the proposed curriculum for the new programme aligned to current professional practice?</p> <p>How does the curriculum of the new programme enable the development of the required professional competences?</p> <p>How does the curriculum make provision for work-based learning?</p>	<p><i>Vocational programmes:</i> How is the proposed curriculum aligned to current technical and career requirements and paths?</p> <p>How is the new curriculum linked to the latest development in the technical roles of the particular career or vocation?</p> <p>How does the curriculum make provision for work-based learning?</p>
<p><i>Other programmes:</i> How is the new curriculum for the new programme aligned to current developments in the subject / discipline? How is the new curriculum for the new programme linked to current professional practice (where applicable)?</p>	
Criterion 6: Needs of stakeholders	
<p><i>All programmes:</i> In what ways is the proposed curriculum responsive to the learning needs of the target student intake in terms of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning outcomes • Modes of delivery • Modes of provision • Teaching and learning methods • Learning materials • All other aspects of the curriculum? <p>In what ways is the proposed curriculum responsive to national and regional needs? In what ways is close involvement of the relevant stakeholders ensured?</p>	
Criterion 7: Teaching and learning strategy	
<p><i>All programmes:</i> How does the institution ensure that the teaching and learning strategies are appropriate for the institution type, mode of delivery and mode of provision? How does the institution ensure that the teaching and learning strategies will facilitate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes? How does the institution ensure that the quality of learning is comparable on all sites of delivery? How does the institution ensure that the teaching and learning process is continuously monitored and improved?</p>	
Criterion 8: Student enrolment	

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

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
<p>Criterion 11: Learning Outcomes and Assessment</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the proposed assessment methods are appropriate for their purpose?</p> <p>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?</p>
<p>Criterion 12: Assessment, moderation and security</p> <p>Are there clear criteria for assessment that will be available to students?</p> <p>Does the proposed assessment system have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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? <p>What measures are in place to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of assessment methods and decisions that arise from them?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment practices are consistent across all sites of delivery?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure the integrity and accuracy of certificates including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data capturing • Data management • Control procedures • Security measures?

Notes

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

Criterion 13: Assessment and staff
<p>What measures are in place to ensure that students are assessed by well-qualified and experienced staff?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff who conduct assessments understand the principles and functions of assessment?</p>
Criterion 14: Information to students
<p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that students are made aware of the learning outcomes of the programme and the assessment methods?</p>
Criterion 15: Dissertations and theses
<p>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?</p> <p>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?</p>

Theme 4: Staff

Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators
Criterion 16 - 19: Qualifications and experience
<p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff meet the minimum qualification requirements at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff teaching on the programme will have the necessary skills to facilitate learning in the programmes?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure that staff teaching on the programme will have the necessary level of teaching competence on appointment?</p> <p>What measures are in place to ensure that academic staff teaching on the programme have relevant research experience?</p> <p>What measures are in place to ensure that academic staff teaching on the programme have recognised research output?</p>
Criterion 20: Number of staff
<p>How will the institution ensure that there are sufficient staff (as per student to student ratios) to commence and continue with the proposed programme?</p>
Criterion 21: Staff development
<p>What developmental opportunities are available for staff to improve their knowledge and skills?</p>

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

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

Criterion 23: Academic support
<p>What academic support services are available to enhance the academic skills of students?</p> <p>What services are available to students for tutoring and counselling purposes</p>
Criterion 24: Programme administrative services
<p>What measures are in place to ensure effective administration of venues and timetables?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure accurate and reliable student administrative information?</p>

Theme 6:
Internal quality
assurance
systems

Self-evaluation questions /quality indicators
Criterion 25 - 26: Internal quality assurance systems
<p>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?</p> <p>Has the programme been formally approved by the relevant institutional structures?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure periodic review of programmes?</p> <p>What mechanisms are there to ensure that the feedback from the review processes feeds back into the curriculum for improvement purposes?</p> <p>What mechanisms are in place for the routine and regular review of the institution's quality assurance mechanisms?</p>

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
<p>What provisions have been made for the proposed programmes planning and resource allocation processes?</p>
Criterion 28: Adequacy of funding
<p>What mechanisms are in place to ensure the adequacy of funding to commence and continue the programme?</p>

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

Guidelines

Introduction

Existing programmes will be required to meet NCHE's criteria for re-accreditation, as well as the requirements of other stakeholders. In the re-accreditation 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.

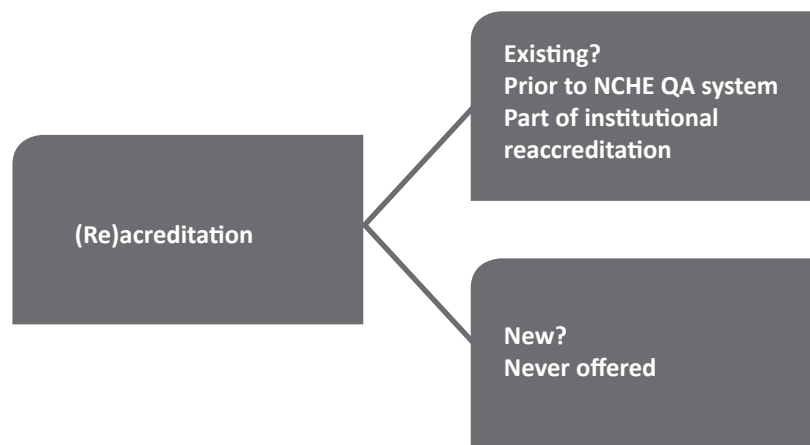
Notes

Application of the re-accreditation 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 self-evaluation during the first quality cycle of NCHE (2011 – 2016) as required by NCHE and as per NCHE's criteria for programme re-accreditation.

Summary of the re-accreditation process



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

See in particular page 24

NEEDS TO BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD

Re-accreditation criteria

The re-accreditation criteria are similar the accreditation criteria in several respects. For this reason, the self-evaluation questions provided in the accreditation section can be used as guidelines for addressing the re-accreditation criteria.

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

Can make use of accreditation questions where similar

Additional criteria have been added in the following areas:

- Programme retention (Criterion 9)
- Qualification and experience of administrative and technical support staff (Criterion 20)
- 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.

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 – Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education Vol 1: Guidelines for Self Assessment at Program Level

Notes

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.

