QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA

DECEMBER 2009

Contents

Acronyms vi

A. BACKGROUND 1

1. International trends 1
2. Higher education in Namibia 2

B. THE PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION SYSTEM 6

3. Introduction 6
4. Principles, aims and objectives of the accreditation system 6
5. Scope of accreditation activities 8
6. Procedures for programme accreditation 9
   - 6.1 Procedures for accreditation of new programmes 9
     - 6.1.1 Self-evaluation 9
     - 6.1.2 Application for accreditation 10
     - 6.1.3 The review panel 10
     - 6.1.4 Approval and finalisation of the report 12
     - 6.1.5 Follow-up by the institution 13
     - 6.1.6 Approval of postgraduate / higher levels of a programme 14
7. (Re)-accreditation of existing programmes 14
8. Consequences of programme accreditation 15
9. Quality reviews of existing programmes at institutional level 16
10. Criteria for programme accreditation 17
    - 10.1 Introduction 17
    - 10.2 Nature of the criteria 17
    - 10.3 Scope of application of the criteria 18
    - 10.4 Requirements of other stakeholders 19
    - 10.5 Classification of criteria 19

Contents

10.6 Criteria for accreditation of new programmes 21
10.6.1 Theme 1: Aims and objectives 22
10.6.2 Theme 2: Curriculum 23
10.6.3 Theme 3: Assessment 25
10.6.4 Theme 4: Staff 26
10.6.5 Theme 5: Facilities and support 27
10.6.6 Theme 6: Internal quality management system 28
10.6.7 Theme 7: Financial resources 29
10.7 Criteria for(re)-accreditation of existing programmes 29
10.7.1 Theme 1: Aims and Objectives 30
10.7.2 Theme 2: Curriculum 31
10.7.3 Theme 3: Assessment 33
10.7.4 Theme 4: Staff 34
10.7.5 Theme 5: Facilities and support 35
10.7.6 Theme 6: Internal quality management system 36
10.7.7 Theme 7: Outcomes 36

C. THE INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT SYSTEM 37

11. Introduction 37
12. Principles and objectives of the institutional audit system 37
13. Scope of institutional audit activities 39
14. Procedures for institutional audits 40
14.1 Preparing for the institutional audit 40
14.2 The institutional portfolio 40
14.3 Appointment of the audit panel by National Council for Higher Education 41
14.4 The site visit by the audit panel 42
14.5 The audit panel's report 42

Contents

14.6 The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee 43
14.7 Post-audit requirements 43
15. Consequences of institutional audits 44
16. The audit criteria 44
16.1 The nature of the audit criteria 44
16.2 Classification of the audit criteria 45
16.2.1 Theme 1: Institutional vision, mission and goals; and general management processes 45
16.2.2 Theme 2: Teaching and learning 48
16.2.3 Theme 3: Research 55
16.2.4 Theme 4: Community engagement 56

Appendix A: Summary of the accreditation process 57

Appendix B: Summary of the accreditation process for professional programmes and programmes where no statutory councils are involved 58

Appendix C: Summary of the institutional audit process 59

Appendix D: Summary of programme accreditation and institutional audit activities in the National Council for Higher Education's 1st quality assurance cycle 60

Glossary 61

Documents consulted 65

Acronyms and abbreviations

AQA	Accreditation and Quality Assurance
AAU	Association of African Universities
ACTET	Advisory Council on Teachers' Education and Training
CHE	Council on Higher Education
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
IQAMS	Institutional quality assurance management system
IUM	International University of Management
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NIED	National Institute for Educational Development
NPST	National Professional Standards for Teachers
NQA	Namibia Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NVAO	Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (English: Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SEMS	Student enrolment management system
UNAM	University of Namibia

A Background

The quality assurance system of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Namibia consists of two sub-systems, namely, programme accreditation and institutional audits.[1] The quality assurance system was developed against the background of international trends in higher education and the higher education context in Namibia, both at national and institutional levels.

1. International trends

The international higher education context has been characterised by an upsurge in quality assurance activities over the last two decades. The main reasons for the upsurge are a demand for greater accountability and efficiency in the use of public funds, mass participation in relation to shrinking resources, greater stakeholder scrutiny of education and training processes, mobility of students and cross-border education due to the internationalisation of higher education and the changes brought about by information and communication technology, and the concomitant need for explanation and recognition of standards in different countries. Today, numerous bodies exist worldwide with responsibility for quality assurance at institutional, national, and regional levels, both in developed and developing countries.

The mission, purposes and objectives of the various quality assurance systems often differ and are typically closely related to the particular country's history, educational and societal context, and specific needs. On the other hand, quality assurance systems exhibit also a large number of similarities which relate, amongst others, to a quality assurance methodology that has found broad acceptance in many countries internationally.[2]

[1] "Quality assurance" is used as an umbrella term which includes various models for ensuring quality, including programme accreditation, institutional audit, institutional accreditation, etc.

[2] The development of NCHE's quality assurance system has been enriched by international systems, in particular by features of the Accreditation Frameworks of the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO)(2003), the *European Standards and Guidelines* (ESG) of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) (2007), and the quality assurance system of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in South Africa.

2. Higher education in Namibia

NCHE was established by the Higher Education Act 2003, No 26 of 2003 and was launched in November 2005. According to the Higher Education Act, the objectives of NCHE are as follows:

- to promote -
  - the establishment of a coordinated higher education system.
  - access of students to higher education institutions.
  - quality assurance in higher education.
- to advise on the allocation of money to public higher education institutions.

With regard to quality assurance, NCHE must:

- accredit, with the concurrence of the Namibia Qualifications Authority (NQA), programmes of higher education provided at higher education institutions.
- monitor the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.[3]

NCHE must also advise the Minister of Education, either of its own accord or at the request of the Minister, on quality promotion and quality assurance in higher education.[4]

The NQA Act makes provision for any person, institution, or organisation providing instruction or training to apply to NQA for accreditation that they have the capacity to:

- provide a course or courses of instruction or training.
- assess the performance of persons partaking in any such course.[5]

The NQA Act makes provision for the Minister of Education, on recommendation of the NQA Council, to make regulations regarding requirements for accreditation. The Minister of Education promulgated the Regulations for the Accreditation of Persons, Institutions or Organisations in 2006.[6]

---

[3] This relates to NCHE's institutional audit responsibility.
[4] Higher Education Act 2003, No 26 of 2003, Sub-sections 5(a)-(b), 6 (a)-(b), and (6(e)(ii).
[5] Namibia Qualifications Authority Act 1996, No 29 of 1996, Sub-section 13(1)(a).
[6] Ministry of Education. 2006. *Regulations for the accreditation of persons, institutions or organisations: Namibia Qualifications Authority Act, 1996*.

NQA also has responsibility through the NQA Act to set up and administer a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) on which qualifications, including those of higher education, are registered.[8]

NCHE's quality assurance system functions within the context of the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP), as expounded in the Ministry of Education's document *Planning for a Learning Nation. Programme Document: Phase 1 (2006-11)* of 2007[8], and in the context of *Vision 2030*.[9] ETSIP's key objectives include improvement of the quality, range and threshold of skilled labour needed to realise a knowledge-driven economy, and improvement of levels of productivity that will contribute to economic growth.

ETSIP's strategic goals include improvement of the effectiveness, quality, efficiency, and development-relevance of the higher education and training system.[10] In the first phase of the programme this will be attained, amongst others, through the improvement of quality and the strengthening of quality assurance mechanisms. Quality and effectiveness also form part of ETSIP's critical sector priorities and strategic objectives.[11]

The policy document, *Investing in People, Developing a Country. Higher Education for Development in Namibia* of the Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology of 1999, acknowledges the importance of establishing and maintaining high quality in programmes.[12] In addition, the need for a strategy incorporating internationally recognised standards (and specifically Namibian needs and priorities) for evaluating the accomplishments of students and institutions is recognised.[13]

---

7 NQA Act, Sub-section 3(a).
8 Ministry of Education. 2007. *Planning for a Learning Nation. Programme Document: Phase 1 (2006-11)*.
9 Republic of Namibia. 2003. *Namibia Vision 2030: A policy framework for long-term national development*.
10 Ministry of Education. 2007. *Op. cit*., Sub- section 21.
11 Ministry of Education. *Op. cit*., Sub-sections 24 and 25.
12 Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology. 1999. *Investing in People, Developing a Country. Higher Education for Development in Namibia*, p. 31. This document is currently being revised.
13 Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology. *Op. cit*., p. 33.

In terms of the Higher Education Act, the registrar (Permanent Secretary) registers an institution as a *private higher education institution*, if the registrar is satisfied, amongst others, –

- that the institution or the facilities to be provided by the institution are suitable and adequate and not inferior to that provided by a comparable public higher education institution which is funded by the State.
- that after having consulted NCHE and the NQA ,
  - the teaching staff to be employed by the institution are sufficiently qualified.
  - the higher education programmes to be provided by the institution are of such a quality, that it will enable the institution to provide a standard of education that is not inferior to the standard of education provided by a comparable public higher education institution which is funded by the State.[14]

At the higher education *institutional level*, quality assurance systems are unevenly spread between institutions. The same also applies within institutions: in some areas efficient quality assurance systems are in operation, whereas in others quality assurance systems are underdeveloped or not yet developed.

Prior to the implementation of NCHE's quality assurance system, accreditation of academic programmes was optional for public institutions such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) and the Polytechnic of Namibia. Although there was no standardised and consistent policy, the institutions had internal quality assurance systems of varying quality. Prior to the implementation the NCHE's quality assurance system, programmes of the International University of Management (IUM) were accredited by the NQA in terms of the NQA Act.

[14] Higher Education Act, Sub-sections 25(2)(a) and 25(2)(c)(i)-(ii).
[15] Teachers' Education Colleges Act 2003, No 25 of 2003, Sub-section 20(c).

In the college sector, quality assurance systems form part of governance systems. The Board of a teachers' education college is required by the Teachers' Education Colleges Act 2003, No 25 of 2003 to establish internal academic monitoring and quality assurance measures to ensure that the education and training provided by the colleges conform to the norms and standards determined in terms of the Act.[15]

A number of *statutory councils* exist in Namibia with a variety of responsibilities for the quality and quality assurance of specific professional programmes and occupations. Higher education institutions are also required to meet these stakeholders' requirements for programme quality, where applicable.

NCHE performs its programme accreditation and institutional audit responsibilities with due regard to the legislative responsibilities of other stakeholders in quality assurance in higher education. It seeks to establish efficient communication channels and modes of cooperation with these stakeholders to streamline the accreditation process, and minimise the impact on institutions.

[15] Teachers' Education Colleges Act 2003, No 25 of 2003, Sub-section 20(c).

B The Programme Accreditation System

3. Introduction

This section sets out NCHE's programme accreditation system. The terms "programme" and "programme accreditation" are defined as follows:

> A programme is a purposeful and coherent combination of learning experiences that lead to a qualification. This applies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and includes postgraduate research programmes.
>
> Programme accreditation focuses on the quality of higher education academic programmes. Programmes are evaluated against NCHE's programme accreditation requirements by review panels comprising subject or discipline specialists. Programmes that meet the requirements are accredited for a specified period of time. Although accreditation is accountability oriented, improvement is an integral aspect thereof.

NCHE's programme accreditation and institutional audit systems are both evidence-based, i.e. reports, statements, etc. need to be substantiated by documentary proof.

4. Principles, aims and objectives of the accreditation system

The following *principles* underpin the programme accreditation system:

- Higher education institutions are the main custodians of quality and have primary responsibility for the quality of their programmes and the assurance thereof. NCHE's programme accreditation system complements institutional quality assurance systems by setting national requirements for programme quality, and by monitoring achievement of these requirements through its accreditation activities.

B The Programme Accreditation System *(continued)*

- The programme accreditation system should be internationally aligned in order to ensure academic programmes of a good quality for the benefit of students and other beneficiaries of higher education.
- The programme accreditation system should be fully contextualised within Namibia's specific circumstances and needs.
- The programme accreditation system should be in congruence with legislative and policy frameworks for higher education in Namibia.
- The programme accreditation system should support ETSIP as the blue print that will guide strategic interventions aimed at responding to the obligation placed on the sector by Vision 2030, namely that of guaranteeing Namibia's transition to a knowledge-driven economy and the attainment of equitable social development.
- The programme accreditation system is applicable to public and private higher education institutions and all types of higher education programmes, sites and modes of delivery and study.
- The programme accreditation system should be fit for its purpose: it should entail appropriate and necessary mechanisms for achieving its objectives.
- The programme accreditation system should be transparent, user-friendly, and adaptable, and should not stifle diversity and innovation through its policies and processes.
- The programme accreditation system should be manageable in the context of the capacity and resources available in higher education for this purpose, while the need for on-going capacity development at system and institutional levels, as well as the need for adequate resourcing, are acknowledged.

The overarching *aim* of the programme accreditation system is to contribute towards safeguarding the quality of academic programmes offered at higher education institutions in Namibia and facilitating the employability of their graduates.

The specific *objectives* of the system are to:

- set national quality requirements for programmes which are internationally comparable, and to implement efficient procedures to validate whether the requirements are met.
- grant recognition status by means of accreditation to programmes that meet NCHE's requirements.
- enhance the standards of programmes which are not of a sufficient quality by means of improvement measures.
- stimulate the development of institutional arrangements for ensuring and enhancing programme quality.
- provide to the public independently verified information about programmes and their quality.

5. Scope of accreditation activities

NCHE's programme accreditation system applies to all types of higher education academic programmes offered by public and private institutions, at all their sites of delivery and in all modes of delivery and provision. NCHE could also choose to focus reviews on a selection of particular programme areas or programmes.

The programme accreditation system also applies to academic programmes offered abroad by Namibian higher education institutions. These off-shore programmes must meet the same requirements as programmes which are offered locally. The programme requirements also to programmes which are offered by foreign providers inside Namibia, even if these programmes are subject to quality requirements in their countries of origin.[16]

The quality of short courses[17] does not form part of NCHE's programme accreditation activities. Institutions are required to establish internal mechanisms for ensuring the quality of these courses. NCHE monitors the efficiency of such institutional quality mechanisms for short courses during its institutional audits.

---

[16] The common quality assurance framework which is at present being developed within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries could, when finalised, provide a basis for mutual recognition of programmes that have been accredited by quality assurance agencies in the sub-region.

[17] A short course is defined as a course that has less than 40 NQF credits.

6. Procedures for programme accreditation

6.1 Procedures for accreditation of new programmes[18]

An institution that intends to offer a new programme, should apply to NCHE for accreditation of the programme. Apart from meeting NCHE's requirements for accreditation, the programme also has to meet the requirements of other statutory bodies, where applicable (for example, requirements set by statutory councils for professional programmes), before the programme can be offered.[19] NCHE will perform its accreditation responsibilities with due recognition of the responsibilities of these stakeholders. NCHE will seek to establish cooperation agreements with statutory councils in order to streamline the accreditation process, and minimise the impact on institutions.

In the case of new programmes, the focus of the accreditation process is on evaluation of the programme's capacity or potential to meet NCHE's criteria within a specified period of time. New programmes that meet the criteria will be accredited by NCHE, in concurrence with the NQA. Institutions should indicate in their applications for accreditation how the criteria will be met, together with supporting evidence.

The main procedures in the accreditation of new programmes are indicated below:[20]

6.1.1 Self-evaluation

The institution first conducts a self-evaluation exercise with regard to the new programme that it wishes to offer, using NCHE's criteria for accreditation of new programmes. This culminates with the compilation of a self-evaluation report, supported by an implementation plan. The self-evaluation report should be critical and clearly indicate, *among others*, that:

- a needs analysis has been conducted, and that the outcome thereof supports the introduction of the new programme.

---

[18] A new programme is one that has not been previously offered in Namibia or abroad by the higher education institution that is applying for accreditation. An existing programme becomes a new programme if more than 40% of the contents of the curriculum are changed, and / or when the programme is offered at a new site of delivery.

[19] These requirements are discussed in Sub-section 10.4 below.

[20] Further details are specified in the *Manual for Programme Accreditation* (NCHE, 2010).

- the institution is committed to ensuring the quality of provision and programme delivery.

6.1.2 Application for accreditation

An application is made by the institution to NCHE for the accreditation of the new programme. The application should include the following documents:

- The self-evaluation report, with supporting evidence.
- An implementation plan that specifies in detail how the programme will be implemented and how the criteria will be met. The plan should provide clear details on implementation steps with specification of budgetary allocations, human resources, infrastructure, etc., linked to time frames.

6.1.3 Assessment of application by review panel

(i) Composition of the review panel:

On receiving the application, NCHE appoints a review panel comprising appropriately qualified and experienced peers. Peers are drawn from other higher education institutions in Namibia, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, the Association of African Universities (AAU), or other countries, where appropriate.[21] Panels also include a student member.[22]

(ii) Role of the review panel:

The role of the review panel is to validate the institution's self-evaluation of the new programme against NCHE's criteria for the accreditation of new programmes, and to determine whether the requirements have been met. Where substantive supporting evidence is available, the panel should be able to arrive at an accreditation decision. Where insufficient evidence is available or where the self-evaluation report is inadequate, the panel may recommend that a site visit be conducted. Such a site visit is conducted by members of the panel and/or the NCHE Secretariat.

---

[21] Criteria and procedures for the appointment of review panels will be specified in the *Manual for Programme Accreditation* (NCHE, 2010).

[22] Criteria for the appointment of review panels will be specified in the *Manual for Programme Accreditation* (NCHE, 2010).

(iii) The review panel's assessment process:

Review panels apply and interpret the criteria for the accreditation of new programmes within the context of the programmes that are being evaluated. The review panel's evaluation process comprises three stages:

(a) It validates the institution's self-evaluation of the programme against individual criteria and determines whether the requirements have been met.
(b) It assesses the quality of themes.[23]
(c) It recommends accreditation.

The self-evaluation by the institution of the programme against individual criteria is first validated by the panel. The following assessment scale is used to denote the outcomes:

Table 1: Validation of self-evaluation against individual criteria:

Criterion	Assessment scale	
	Good	(= criterion is fully met)
	Satisfactory	(= criterion is met relatively well, and deficiencies can be remedied in a short period of time)
	Poor	(= criterion is insufficiently met, and serious problems exist)

The results of the validation are used by the panel in a holistic way to pass judgements on the quality of themes as a whole. Panels should motivate in their report how judgements on the quality of themes were arrived at. The following assessment scale is used to qualify themes:

Table 2: Judgements on the quality of themes:

Theme	Assessment scale	
	Good	(= Criteria in theme are sufficiently met)
	Satisfactory	(= Criteria in theme are met relatively well. Deficiencies can be remedied in a short period of time)
	Poor	(= Criteria in theme are insufficiently met. Serious deficiencies exist in many cases)

[23] The themes are discussed in Sub-section 10.5 below.

Accreditation of the programme as a whole is recommended by the panel if the quality of each of the themes is judged as good or satisfactory. The following classification scheme is used by the panel for accreditation recommendations:

Table 3: Accreditation recommendation:

Judgements on themes	Accreditation recommendation
All themes are evaluated as good	Accredited
Most themes are evaluated as good and the others as satisfactory. No theme is evaluated as poor.	Accredited, with conditions
One or more themes are evaluated as poor	Not accredited

(iv) The review panel's report

Panel reports should be specific and clearly indicate assessment results with respect to individual criteria, themes, and accreditation outcomes. Reports should indicate in each instance how judgments were arrived at and should contain a summary list of recommendations and commendations.

The review panel's report is submitted to NCHE's Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee, which forwards the report to the institution for comments and acceptance. The comments from the institution are limited to identifying errors of fact and errors of interpretation, discrepancies and/or omissions. The review panel's report and the institution's comments are submitted by the AQA committee to NCHE's Council for approval.

6.1.4 Approval and finalisation of the report

The NCHE Council, in concurrence with the NQA Council, makes the final accreditation decision. The finalised report is a NCHE report that is presented to the institution and

a summary thereof is published on the NCHE's website. NCHE will also report to the Minister if deemed necessary.

The report must clearly indicate the period for which accreditation is granted together with any conditions, if applicable. If a new programme fails accreditation, the NCHE report should clearly indicate to the institution that it may not offer the programme. In addition, any stipulations pertaining to re-submission of the application must be clarified in the report.

6.1.5 Follow-up by the institution

Within 2 years after the first cohort of students have graduated from the programme, the institution is required to conduct an internal review of the programme. This comprises the following procedures:

(i) A self-evaluation of the programme by the academic department(s) against NCHE's criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes.

(ii) Validation of the self-evaluation by a panel of peers appointed by the institution in consultation with the NCHE. The panel should monitor –
- compliance with NCHE's accreditation criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes.
- whether conditions set by NCHE in the initial accreditation process have been met.

(iii) Submission of the self-evaluation report, the report of the external panel and institution's response to the report to NCHE's Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee.

(iv) Recommendation by the Committee to the NCHE Council on re-accreditation of the programme for a further maximum period of 6 years.

(v) Decision on re-accreditation of the programme by the NCHE Council, in concurrence with the NQA.

(vi) The final report is presented to the institution, and a summary is published on the NCHE website. NCHE will also report to the Minister if deemed necessary.

6.1.6. Approval of postgraduate / higher levels of a programme

A new programme which has been accredited by NCHE (in concurrence with the NQA), should establish itself first before the institution may apply for accreditation of the next higher level of the programme in the same field/subject. For example, an institution will have to demonstrate the success of a master's programme with regard to the number of graduates per graduating stream, before application can be made for a doctoral programme in the same subject/field.

7. Re-accreditation of existing programmes[24]

Existing programmes will not be accredited (or re-accredited)[25] by NCHE within its first cycle of activities, except where this is deemed necessary by NCHE. In the re-accreditation of existing programmes, the focus is on evaluation of implementation aspects and the achieved learning outcomes.

Existing programmes are evaluated against NCHE's criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes. Existing programmes also have to meet the requirements of other stakeholders, where applicable.[26]

The main procedures for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes are similar to those for the accreditation of new programmes, and can be summarised as follows:

(i) The institution does a self-evaluation of the programme against NCHE's criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes. The self-evaluation report is submitted to NCHE, together with supporting evidence.

(ii) NCHE appoints an independent review panel comprising peers from the

[24] An existing programme is one that was offered by higher education institutions in Namibia prior to implementation of NCHE's quality assurance system. Some existing programmes have been registered on NQF and/or are accredited by NQA.

[25] Existing programmes which have not been accredited by the NQA, are "accredited" as part of NCHE's programme accreditation system. Programmes already accredited by the NQA are "re-accredited".

[26] See Sub-section 10.5 below.

same subject or discipline. Experts are drawn from other higher education institutions in Namibia, the SADC countries, AAU, or other countries, where appropriate. Panels also include a student member.

(iii) The review panel validates the outcomes of the institution's self-evaluation of the existing programme and determines whether the requirements have been met. This could necessitate a site visit to the institution by the panel and/or NCHE Secretariat.

(iv) The review panel draws up a report on its findings and submit it to NCHE's Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee.

(v) The AQA Committee forwards the report to the institution for comments on factual errors, errors of interpretation, discrepancies or omissions.

(vi) The report of the review panel, as well as the institution's comments, are submitted to the NCHE Council for approval.

(vii) A decision on (re-)accreditation is taken by the NCHE Council, in concurrence with NQA.

(viii) The final report is presented to the institution, and a summary is published on the NCHE website. NCHE will also report to the Minister if deemed necessary.

8. Consequences of programme accreditation

A new programme which is accredited by NCHE, in concurrence with the NQA, may be offered by the institution, subject to NCHE's conditions regarding institutional review arrangements.[27] New programmes should also comply with the requirements of other statutory bodies, where applicable, before they can be offered. A new programme which is not accredited, may not be offered by the institution. Accreditation of a new programme is valid for a maximum period of 6 years, after which the programme becomes eligible for re-accreditation.

[27] See Sub-section 6.1.5 above.

An existing programme which is accredited / re-accredited by NCHE, in concurrence with the NQA, is (re)-accredited for a period of 6 years, after which it becomes eligible for further re-accreditation.

In the case of both new and existing programmes which are accredited / re-accredited by NCHE, in concurrence with the Namibia Qualifications Authority, NCHE reserves the right to require re-accreditation of the programme before the end of the 6-year period, if evidence points to serious inadequacies.

An existing programme that fails accreditation / re-accreditation, may no longer be offered by the institution. Appropriate measures should be taken to systematically phase out students enrolled in the programme, with full protection of their rights and privileges. A report must be submitted to NCHE with details of the phase-out plan and the timeframe for implementation thereof.

9. Quality reviews of existing programmes at institutional level

In NCHE's first quality assurance cycle, institutions are expected to institutionalise regular quality reviews of their existing programmes in order to enhance and maintain quality. This comprises the following procedures:

(i) A systematic self-evaluation should be undertaken by institutions of all their programmes utilising NCHE's criteria for further (re-)accreditation of existing programmes.

(ii) Improvement plans should be developed, where necessary, and implemented.

(iii) The development and implementation of quality improvement plans should be monitored by the institutions through their own quality assurance structures, systems and processes.

(iv) Institutions should submit annual progress reports on reviews to NCHE for information purposes.

10. Criteria for programme accreditation

10.1 Introduction

NCHE's criteria were designed to be of an internationally comparable standard, and serve as benchmarks for programme evaluation and improvement. The criteria also inform students and the general public on the standards that are expected of higher education programmes in Namibia.

The criteria were developed with due regard to Namibia's legislative and policy framework for higher education, the prevalent quality of its higher education institutions, and its societal and economic needs.

10.2 Nature of the criteria

The criteria are generic in nature and not subject- or discipline-specific. The criteria need to be interpreted by subject or discipline experts on the review panels within the context of the programme that is being evaluated. For example, in the evaluation of a programme in the natural sciences, a criterion which refers to the need for "sufficient infrastructure" in the programme, could be interpreted by the review panel, within the particular context, as referring to well-equipped laboratories, amongst other things. In an honours course in Sociology, the same criterion could presumably be interpreted as referring to a sufficient number of lecture rooms, or sufficient space within a lecture room. Both interpretations are valid within the context of the respective programmes.

The need for interpretation of the criteria derives also from a deliberate effort that was made in their development to avoid over-specification of detail, which tends to distract from the essential issues, and often presents practical problems in application.

This emphasises the importance of the quality of review panels, and the need for careful selection of the panel members. Panels are trained by NCHE in order to perform their duties effectively. At the institutional level, a structured capacity development programme forms part of NCHE's schedule of activities during the first quality assurance cycle. Part of the programme is directed at the training of institutional staff on the NCHE's programme accreditation system, which includes training in the application and interpretation of the criteria.

10.3 Scope of application of the criteria

The criteria for programme accreditation apply to the following:

- All types of higher education academic programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate, formative, discipline-based, professional, career-focused, trans-, inter- or multi-disciplinary, etc.)[28] offered by public and private institutions in Namibia: -
  - at all site of delivery (main campuses, satellite campuses and tuition centres).
  - in all modes of delivery (contact, block release, distance and technology-supported learning).
  - in all modes of provision (full-time, part-time, etc).
- Higher education academic programmes offered abroad by Namibian higher education institutions.
- Higher education academic programmes offered by foreign providers inside Namibia, even if the programmes are subject to quality requirements in their countries of origin.

[28] Special requirements for certain programme types (for example, professional programmes) or modes of delivery (for example, distance education) are indicated, where necessary.

10.4 Requirements of other stakeholders

In addition to meeting NCHE's criteria, higher education academic programmes have to meet the following requirements of other stakeholders before they can be offered:

(i) The qualification that the programme leads to has to be registered on NQF.
(ii) The requirements of the relevant statutory councils (professional programmes).
(iii) The requirements of the ACTET or its successor (teacher education programmes).
(iv) Registration by the Registrar (Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Education) private higher education institutions.
(v) Programmes should be in line with national development goals, imperatives and aspirations, for example, the goals of ETSIP within the context of *Vision 2030*.

10.5 Classification of criteria

The criteria for the accreditation of new programmes are classified into the following themes that cover the most important programme areas.[29]

Theme 1: Aims and objectives.
Theme 2: Curriculum.
Theme 3: Assessment.[30]
Theme 4: Staff.
Theme 5: Facilities and support.
Theme 6: Internal quality assurance.
Theme 7: Financial resources.

The same themes are used in the case of the criteria for the accreditation of existing programmes, except that Theme 7 refers to the programme outcomes.

[29] The classification of themes and their sub-areas makes use of the classification of themes and sub-areas in the NVAO's frameworks in an adapted form.
[30] Although assessment forms part of the curriculum, it is treated here as a separate theme in view of its importance.

The *aims and objectives* of a programme signify the learning outcomes that the programme intends the student to achieve during his/her studies. These outcomes have to be in line with the institution's mission and general strategic direction, and link with national needs and goals. The outcomes also have to be in line with national and international subject- or discipline-specific requirements and/or professional requirements, depending on the nature of the specific programme.

The *curriculum* is a core indicator of quality with respect to meeting the needs of the target student intake, enabling achievement of the programme's intended learning outcomes through its contents and structure within the set time, ensuring appropriate teaching and learning methods, providing opportunities for staff to upgrade their methods and skills, and enabling articulation with other programmes.

Assessment is a key indicator of achievement of a programme's intended learning outcomes, and provides valuable information about the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and learner support. The assessment policies and practices of a quality programme make provision for appropriate modes of assessment, capacity development of staff, and measures for ensuring the integrity of the assessment process.

Staff is the most important learning resource for students. Academic staff in a programme of good quality is sufficiently qualified and experienced to perform their teaching, assessment and research duties, and the administrative and technical support staff are qualified and experienced to support the activities of the programme. The number of staff are sufficient to perform all the required activities in the programme.

Physical *facilities*, such as lecture rooms, libraries, laboratories, computing facilities, etc., are important to support teaching and learning, and research, and should be appropriate to and adequate for the programme's needs. Human *support* in the form of tutors, counselors, etc. is an important resource in student learning. The type of support should

be fit for purpose and accessible to students. *Programme administrative services* provide relevant information to students on programme aspects and include mechanisms to identify non-active and at-risk students.

An effective *internal quality assurance system* provides a formal framework within which programme quality can be monitored and improved. Such a system includes mechanisms for programme design and approval, programme reviews, feedback and monitoring. Stakeholders like staff, students, and the relevant professional field, where applicable, have a key role in the internal quality assurance of programmes.

Sufficient *financial resources* are indispensable for the implementation and running of a quality programme, the remuneration of staff, and provision of the required infrastructure. The resources should be planned for by the institution and made available through its resource allocation processes.

The ultimate indicator of quality is whether the intended learning outcomes of a programme have been achieved by students. This presupposes that the intended learning outcomes are of a good quality compared to similar programmes at the national and international level.

10.6 Criteria for accreditation of new programmes

The focus in the accreditation of new programmes is on evaluation of their capacity or potential to meet NCHE's quality requirements within a specified period of time. Consequently, the evaluation focuses on the quality of the policies, strategies, procedures, curriculum, etc. that have been developed for the new programme. In the case of existing programmes, the focus is more on evaluation of implementation aspects and the achieved learning outcomes.

The criteria for accreditation of new programmes are as follows.

10.6.1 Theme 1: Aims and objectives[31]

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Institutional vision, mission, and national or regional needs	1. The proposed programme's intended learning outcomes and goals are clearly formulated, and are in line with the institution's vision, mission and general strategic direction. 2. The proposed programme's intended learning outcomes are linked to Namibia's national needs and goals (for example, as expressed in ETSIP within the context of *Vision 2030*), and/or regional needs.
(ii) Subject- or discipline-specific requirements and programme level	3. The proposed programme's intended learning outcomes are: (i) comparable with subject- or discipline-specific requirements that generally apply nationally and inter-nationally in the same subject or discipline and/or professional practice at the same level (for example, at the level of a bachelor's degree, undergraduate diploma, etc.). (ii) aligned with recent developments in the subject or discipline and/or professional practice.
(iii) Additional requirement for professional programmes	4. In professional programmes, the intended learning outcomes of the proposed programme are: (i) based also on the professional requirements of the relevant profession. (ii) aligned with recent developments in the relevant profession.

[31] Some of the criteria in Sub-sections 10.6.1 and 10.6.2 that relate to intended learning outcomes and to competences acquired through the curriculum, were adapted from the corresponding criteria in the NVAO frameworks. The same applies to Sub-sections 10.7.1 and 10.7.2.

10.6.2 Theme 2: Curriculum

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Intended learning outcomes and the curriculum	5. The proposed curriculum is balanced and coherent with regard to contents, structure, credits, etc. and enables achievement by students of the intended learning outcomes of the programme within the set time. (i) In professional programmes, the proposed curriculum: - is aligned with current professional practice and enables development of the required professional competences. - makes provision for work-based learning as an integral part of the curriculum. (ii) In subject– or discipline-based programmes, the proposed curriculum: - is aligned with current developments in the relevant subject/discipline and enables development of the required knowledge and skills and/or research competence. - links with current professional practice, where applicable. (iii) In career or vocation-focused programmes, the proposed curriculum: - is aligned with current technical and career requirements and paths. - links with the latest developments in the technical roles of the particular career or vocation.
(ii) Needs of stakeholders	6. The proposed curriculum: (i) is responsive to the learning needs of the target student intake with respect to its intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, modes of delivery, modes of provision, learning materials, etc. (ii) is responsive to the national, labour-market, or socio-cultural needs in Namibia, and/or regional needs. (iii) was developed with close involvement of all the relevant stakeholders.

(iii) Teaching and learning strategy	7. A teaching and learning strategy is in place for the new programme that will ensure that: (i) the teaching and learning methods of the programme are appropriate for its institutional type, mode of delivery, mode of provision, etc., and will facilitate achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ii) learning opportunities are provided which facilitate achievement of the intended learning outcomes, for example, formal lectures, group work, service learning, online learning, etc. (iii) the quality of the learning experience is comparable on all the campuses and tuition centres where the programme will be offered. (iv) the quality of the teaching and learning process is continuously monitored and improved, where necessary.
(iv) Student enrolment	8. With regard to student enrolment: (i) strategies, policies and arrangements make provision for marketing, recruitment, admissions, selection, registration and student information. (ii) admission requirements are in line with the proposed programme's academic demands and the qualifications of the incoming students. (iii) selection procedures are such that the proposed programme will be able to provide all the students who are selected with education of a high quality. (iv) in selection procedures for professional programmes, the needs of the professional field are taken into account.
(v) Articulation	9. The contents and structure of the proposed curriculum enable articulation with other programmes nationally and internationally.
(iv) Postgraduate programmes	10. Criteria 5-9 above apply to postgraduate programmes as well. In addition: (i) students in postgraduate programmes will: - have the opportunity to develop research competence. - undergo training in research skills. (ii) the policy for the appointment of supervisors for dissertations or theses in postgraduate programmes: - ensures that well-qualified and experienced persons will be appointed who are respected researchers in the relevant field. - stipulates their roles and responsibilities clearly in relation to those of the students.

10.6.3 Theme 3: Assessment

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Intended learning outcomes and assessment	11. The proposed assessment methods (diagnostic, formative, or summative): (i) are appropriate for their purpose. (ii) will effectively measure progress towards achievement of the programme's intended learning outcomes.
(ii) Marking, assessment and moderation, validity and security	12. The proposed assessment policy and procedures: (i) have clear criteria for marking which are/will be published. (ii) comprise a system of internal assessment by academic staff that teach the programme. The system includes internal moderation. (iii) include external moderation on the exit level of the programme by moderators who are well qualified in relation to the programme, and are appointed and perform their duties according to clear guidelines. (iv) have criteria for the assessment of work-based learning, where this forms an integral part of the curriculum. (v) have clear regulations for dealing with mitigating circumstances like student absence, illness, etc. (vi) contain measures to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of assessment methods and inferences made from the assessment results. (vii) contain measures to ensure that assessment events on all campuses meet the same requirements. (viii) contain measures to ensure the accuracy and integrity of certificates issued by the institution, including accurate and secure data capturing and management, regular internal software control procedures, and security measures to avoid fraud..
(iii) Assessment and staff	13. Students in the proposed programme will be assessed by staff who: (i) are well qualified and experienced in relation to the programme. (ii) understand the function of assessment in measuring achievement of the intended learning outcomes in the context of the programme.

(iv) Information to students	14. Students in the proposed programme will be provided with clear information on: (i) the intended learning outcomes of the programme (or its courses/subjects) that will be assessed. (ii) the assessment methods that will be used.
(v) Dissertations and theses	15. Policies for the assessment of dissertations or theses include the following: (i) In addition to an internal examiner(s), at least one examiner external to the institution who has a proven research record and is acceptable to the research community in the same field, is obligatory. In the case of doctoral programmes, at least one external examiner should be from abroad. (ii) Examiners' reports are considered and decisions taken by high-level committees whose members are well qualified and experienced for the task.

10.6.4 Theme 4: Staff[32]

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Qualifications and experience	16. Academic staff should be well qualified and experienced in relation to the proposed programme. In the case of professional programmes, relevant professional experience is also required. The following minimum qualifications are applicable to academic staff: (i) Undergraduate programmes; A qualification higher than the exit level of the programme, but at least a degree. (ii) Postgraduate programmes; A qualification at least at the same level as the exit level of the programme. For the majority of staff in the programme, qualifications higher than the exit level of the programme.[33]

[32] The criteria for staff make use of some features of the HEQC's *Criteria for Programme Accreditation*, Section 3.2.3, in an adapted form. The same applies to the corresponding criteria in Sub-section 10.7.4

[33] This is not applicable to doctoral programmes, or to master's programmes in certain fields of study, for example medicine, where a master's degree is regarded as sufficient.

	17. Academic staff that teach on the proposed programme will have – (i) the necessary skills and experience to pass on their knowledge effectively to students in the different modes of delivery and provision of the programme. (ii) at least the minimum necessary level of teaching competence prior to appointment. Teaching in professional programmes will be mainly done by staff who can link the programme to professional practice.
	18. Academic staff; (i) in the proposed programme will have research experience, some of which will be relevant to the programme. (ii) involved in postgraduate programmes will have also recognised research outputs. 19. Administrative and technical support staff will be sufficiently qualified and experienced to support the activities of the proposed programme.
(ii) Number of staff	20. A sufficient number of staff (in terms of the staff: student ratio, full-time: part-time, etc.) will be available to start the proposed programme and continue with it.[34]
(iii) Staff development	21. Development opportunities will be available for staff to improve their knowledge and skills.[35]

10.6.5 Theme 5: Facilities and support

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Physical facilities	22. Adequate physical facilities, such as lecture rooms, libraries, workshop rooms, laboratories, computing facili-ties, etc., where applicable, will be available for the pro-posed programme's needs.

[34] The actual availability of staff at the start of the programme and thereafter needs to be verified by the review panel.
[35] This applies to competence in assessment as well – see Criterion 13 (Sub-section 10.6.3).

(ii) Support	23. Efficient academic support services will be available to support the quality of academic outcomes and enhance student success in the proposed programme. This includes provision for: (i) academic support services to enhance the academic skills of students, where necessary. (ii) student counselling services. A sufficient number of tutors, counsellors, etc. should be available to provide support to students, where necessary.
(iii) Programme administrative services	24. Programme administrative services will provide reliable information on: (i) aspects of the proposed programme such as venues, timetables, staff consultation times, etc. (ii) student records. NOTE: The institution should provide proof that the required facilities and support are likely to be in place in time.

10.6.6 Theme 6: Internal quality assurance system

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Internal quality assurance system	25. The institution has a formal policy and associated procedures in place for the quality assurance of programmes that actively involve staff, students, and the professional field, where applicable. Formal mechanisms exist for: (i) the design and approval of programmes. The proposed programme has been approved by the relevant institutional structures. (ii) periodic programme reviews, the results of which feed back into the programme for improvement purposes, and monitoring. The reviews are linked to user surveys and impact studies, and include foreign expertise. 26. Mechanisms are in place for the periodic review of the institution's quality assurance policies for programmes, their implementation, and feedback mechanisms.

10.6.7 Theme 7: Financial resources

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Institutional planning and resource allocation processes	27. Provision has been made for the proposed programme in the institution's planning and resource allocation processes.
(ii) Adequacy of funds	28. The allocated funds are adequate to start the proposed programme, and continue it on a long-term basis. This includes also funds for the facilities and support services of the programme.

10.7 Criteria for further (re-)accreditation of existing programmes

Existing programmes have to meet NCHE's criteria for further reaccreditation and the requirements of other stakeholders as well, in order to be continued.[36] In the case of existing programmes, the focus of the (re-)accreditation is on implementation aspects of a programme and achieved learning outcomes, i.e. the outcomes that a graduate has actually acquired during his/her studies.

NCHE's criteria for the (re-) accreditation of existing programmes are applied in the following cases:

1. In (re-)accreditation by NCHE of programmes that were offered by higher education institutions in Namibia prior to implementation of NCHE's quality assurance system.[37]
2. In the case of new programmes that were accredited by NCHE, in concurrence with NQA. These programmes are required to be evaluated at the institutional level within two years subsequent to the first cohort of students completing the programme. This comprises an internal self-evaluation against NCHE's criteria for further (re-) accreditation of existing programmes, followed by a validation by peers.

[36] See Sub-section 10.4.

[37] These programmes are as a rule not accredited (or re-accredited) by NCHE in the first cycle of activities (2011-2016), except where this is deemed necessary by NCHE.

3. Institutions are expected to undertake a systematic self-evaluation of all their existing programmes during NCHE's first quality cycle. The self-evaluation is done against NCHE's criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes.

The following are the criteria for the (re-)accreditation of existing programmes.

10.7.1 Theme 1: Aims and objectives

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Institutional mission and national/regional imperatives	1. The programme's intended learning outcomes and goals are clearly formulated, and are in line with the institution's vision, mission and general strategic direction. 2. The programme's intended learning outcomes are linked to Namibia's national needs and goals (for example, as expressed in ETSIP within the context of *Vision 2030*), and/or regional needs.
(ii) Subject-/discipline-specific requirements and programme level	3. The proposed programme's intended learning outcomes: (i) are comparable with subject- or discipline-specific requirements that generally apply nationally and inter-nationally in the same subject or discipline and/or professional practice at the same level (for example, at the level of a bachelor's degree, undergraduate diploma, etc.). (ii) are aligned with recent developments in the subject or discipline and/or professional practice.
(iii) Additional requirement for professional programmes	4. In professional programmes, the intended learning outcomes of the proposed programme: (i) are based also on the professional requirements of the relevant profession. (ii) are aligned with recent developments in the relevant profession.

10.7.2 Theme 2: Curriculum

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Intended learning outcomes and the curriculum	5. The curriculum is balanced and coherent with regard to its contents, structure, credits, etc., and enables achievement by students of the intended learning outcomes within the set time. (i) In professional programmes, the curriculum: - is aligned with current professional practice and enables development of the required professional competences. - has work-based learning as an integral part thereof. (ii) In subject– or discipline-based programmes, the curriculum: - is aligned with current developments in the relevant subject/discipline and enables development of the required knowledge and skills and/or research competence. - links with current professional practice, where applicable. (iii) In career or vocation-focused programmes, the curriculum: - is aligned with current technical and career requirements and paths. - links with the latest developments in the technical roles of the particular career or vocation.
(ii) Needs of stakeholders	6. The curriculum: (i) provides in the learning needs of the student intake with respect to its intended learning outcomes, teaching and learning methods, modes of delivery, modes of provision, learning materials, etc. (ii) provides in the national, labour-market, or socio-cultural needs in Namibia, and/or regional needs. (iii) was developed with close involvement of all the relevant stakeholders. (iv) is continuously renewed in order to remain responsive and relevant to the needs of the stakeholders, and to ensure academic integrity and currency with new knowledge.

(iii) Teaching and learning	7. In the programme: (i) appropriate teaching and learning methods facilitate achievement of the intended learning outcomes. (ii) appropriate learning opportunities facilitate achievement of the intended learning outcomes, for example, formal lectures, group work, service learning, online learning, etc. (iii) the quality of the learning experience is comparable on all the campuses and tuition centres where the programme is offered. (iv) the quality of the teaching and learning process is continuously monitored and improved.
(iv) Student enrolment	8. In the enrolment of students for the programme: (i) the following aspects are handled effectively; marketing, recruitment, admissions, selection, registration, and student information. (ii) admission requirements are in line with the programme's academic demands and the qualifications of the incoming students. (iii) the number of students selected are such that all the students are able to receive education of a high quality. (iv) the needs of the professional field are taken into account in the selection of students for professional programmes.
(v) Programme coordination	9. The programme is effectively coordinated by an academic, with participation and inputs from students as well. In work-based learning in professional programmes,– (i) effective coordination takes place through agreements between the students, the institution and employers. (ii) an effective communication system between the parties concerned is in place. (iii) a student mentoring system is in place.
(vi) Articulation	10. Articulation takes place between the programme and other programmes nationally and internationally.

(vii) Postgraduate programmes	11. In addition to criteria 5-10: (i) students in postgraduate programmes develop research competence, and undergo training in research skills, where necessary. (ii) postgraduate supervisors for dissertations or theses are appointed according to the prescribed requirements, and they carry out their specified roles and responsibilities effectively.

10.7.3 Theme 3: Assessment

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Intended learning outcomes and assessment	12. The different assessment methods used in the programme effectively measure students' progress towards achievement of the programme's intended learning outcomes.
(ii) Marking, assessment and moderation, security and certification	13. In the programme, - (i) the criteria for marking are clear and published, and are adhered to by academics in the programme. (ii) internal assessment is done by academic staff that teach the programme, and includes internal moderation. (iii) external moderation takes place on the exit level of the programme by moderators who are well qualified in relation to the programme. Moderators are appointed and perform their duties according to clear guidelines. (iv) criteria for the assessment of work-based learning, where this forms an integral part of the curriculum, are effectively applied. (v) regulations for dealing with mitigating circumstances like student absence, illness, etc., are effective and are adhered to. (vi) measures ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of assessment methods and inferences made from the assessment results. (vii) measures ensure that assessment events on all the campuses meet the same requirements. (viii) measures ensure the accuracy and integrity of certificates issued by the institution, including accurate and secure data capturing and management, regular internal software control procedures, and security measures to avoid fraud.

(iii) Assessment and staff	14. Assessment of students is done by staff who: (i) are well qualified and experienced in relation to the programme. (ii) have a good understanding of the function of assessment within the context of the programme.
(iv) Information to students	15. Students have clear information on: (i) the intended learning outcomes that are assessed in the programme (or its courses/subjects). (ii) the assessment methods that are used.
(v) Assessment of dissertations and theses	16. In relation to dissertations and theses: (i) in addition to an internal examiner(s), at least one examiner external to the institution is used who has a proven research record and is acceptable to the research community. In the case of doctoral programmes, at least one external examiner is from abroad. (ii) examiners' reports are considered and decisions taken by high-level committees whose members are well qualified and experienced for the task.

10.7.4 Theme 4: Staff

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Qualifications and experience	17. Academic staff in the programme have sufficient qualifications and experience that are relevant to the programme. In professional programmes, academic staff also have relevant professional experience. The qualifications of academic staff comply with the following minimum requirements: (i) In undergraduate programmes, all staff have qualifications higher than the exit level of the programme, and have at least a degree. (ii) In postgraduate programmes, all staff have qualifications at least at the same level as the exit level of the programme. The majority of staff have qualifications higher than the exit level.[38]

[38] This does not apply to doctoral programmes and master's programmes in certain fields, for example, medicine, where a master's degree is regarded as adequate.

	18. Academic staff that teach on the programme – (i) Have the necessary skills and experience to pass on their knowledge and skills to students and do so effectively. (ii) had the minimum necessary level of teaching competence prior to appointment. Teaching in professional programmes is mainly done by staff who link the programme to professional practice. 19. All the academic staff have research experience, some of which is relevant to the programme. Academic staff in postgraduate programmes also have recognised research outputs. 20. Administrative and technical support staff are sufficiently qualified and experienced and support the activities of the programme effectively.
(ii) Number of staff	21. The number of staff (in terms of the staff: student ratio, full-time: part-time, etc.) is sufficient to perform all the activities in the programme.
(iii) Staff development	22. Development opportunities exist for staff to improve their knowledge and skills.[39] Staff make use of these opportunities.

10.7.5 Theme 5: Facilities and support

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Physical resources	23. Adequate physical resources (for example, lecture rooms, libraries, workshop rooms, laboratories, computing facilities, etc.), where applicable, are available for the programme's needs.
(ii) Support	24. Efficient academic support services are available to support the quality of academic outcomes and enhance student success in the programme. This includes provision for: (i) academic support services to enhance the academic skills of students, where necessary. (ii) student counselling services. A sufficient number of tutors, counsellors, etc. are available to provide support to students, where necessary

[39] This applies to competence in assessment as well. See Criterion 14 (Section 10.7.3).

(iii) Administrative services	25. Programme administrative services provide reliable information: (i) to students on programme issues. (ii) on student records.

10.7.6 Theme 6: Internal quality assurance system

Sub-area	Criteria
Internal quality assurance system	26. The following institutional quality assurance procedures have been/are applied to the programme: (i) The programme was designed and approved according to stipulated procedures. (ii) The programme is subject to/has been subjected to periodic reviews (which are linked to user surveys and impact studies and which include foreign expertise). Feedback from the reviews was used to improve the programme. Monitoring of programme quality takes place on a regular basis. (iii) Students, staff, and the relevant profession, where applicable, are actively involved in the quality assurance of the programme. 27. The institution's quality assurance policies for programmes and their implementation are periodically evaluated, and the results are used to effect improvement in the internal quality assurance system.

10.7.7 Theme 7: Outcomes

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Achieved learning outcomes	28. The learning outcomes achieved by students that graduate from the programme correspond with the programme's intended learning outcomes.
(ii) Student retention and throughput rates	29. With regard to student success: (i) student retention and throughput rates in the programme are comparable to those of similar programmes nationally and internationally. (ii) remedial measures have been taken to rectify unsatisfactory retention and throughput rates, where necessary.

C The Institutional Audit System

11. Introduction

This section sets out NCHE's institutional audit system. The term "institutional audit" is defined as follows:

> Institutional audit focuses on an institution's policies, systems, strategies and resources for quality assurance of its academic activities. The quality of academic activities *in itself* is not evaluated. Audit panels, comprising experts in higher education issues, conduct evaluations using NCHE's audit requirements as benchmarks. Institutional audits are improvement oriented, but accountability aspects are also integrated into the system.

NCHE's programme accreditation and institutional audit systems are both evidence-based, i.e. reports, statements, etc. need to be substantiated by documentary proof or otherwise.

12. Principles and objectives of the institutional audit system

The following *principles* underpin NCHE's institutional audit system:

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for quality and the assurance thereof. NCHE's audit system complements institutional quality assurance mechanisms by setting and monitoring national benchmarks against which institutional quality assurance mechanisms are evaluated.
- The institutional audit system should improve the quality of higher education by evaluating institutional quality assurance systems against national requirements, and through fostering a culture of continuous, systematic and responsive quality assurance in higher education institutions.
- The institutional audit system supports ETSIP as the blue print that will guide strategic interventions aimed at responding to the obligation placed on the sector by Vision 2030, namely that of guaranteeing Namibia's transition to a knowledge-driven economy and the attainment of equitable social development.

C The Institutional Audit System *(continued)*

- The institutional audit system should be fully contextualised within Namibia's specific circumstances and needs, and should be in congruence with the country's legislative and policy frameworks for higher education.
- The institutional audit system is applicable to public and private higher education institutions and all sites of delivery, as part of a coordinated higher education system.
- The institutional audit system should be fit for its purpose: it should entail appropriate and necessary mechanisms for achieving its objectives.
- The institutional audit system should be transparent, user-friendly, and adaptable.
- The institutional audit system should be manageable in the context of the capacity and resources available in higher education for this purpose. The need for ongoing capacity development at national and institutional levels, as well as the need for adequate resourcing, are acknowledged.

The *objectives* of the institutional audit system are to:

- set national requirements for institutional mechanisms for assuring quality, to validate whether the requirements are met, and to recommend appropriate improvement measures, where necessary.
- stimulate the development and enhancement of institutional mechanisms for quality assurance and improvement.
- ensure efficient institutional mechanisms for assuring the quality of academic programmes.
- enable students and other beneficiaries of higher education to have confidence in the quality of learning opportunities offered by higher education institutions.
- provide to the public independently verified information about institutions and their mechanisms to secure and promote quality.

13. Scope of institutional audit activities

Institutional audits include evaluation of institutional quality assurance mechanisms in the three core areas of higher education, namely, teaching and learning, research and community engagement, against NCHE's audit criteria. Issues such as governance, management, support services and finances are only considered in relation to their impact on the quality of the core areas. NCHE may decide to limit the scope of particular audits to one or more of the core areas.

The following aspects of institutional quality assurance mechanisms are evaluated during audits:

- Institutional policies, systems, strategies and resources for assuring quality, the implementation of those policies, systems and strategies, and their results.
- Implementation of action plans in response to outcomes of reviews of institutional policies, systems, strategies and resources for assuring quality.
- Triangulation of the outcomes of user surveys and impact studies with established benchmarks and the implementation of improvement plans therefrom in order to assure and promote quality.

The effectiveness of institutional quality assurance mechanisms are evaluated within the context of the institution's mission, type (university, polytechnic, etc.), objectives, level of development, and regional and national priorities.

The evaluation of quality assurance mechanisms for academic programmes constitutes an important part of institutional audits, where applicable. The effectiveness of institutional quality mechanisms for short courses is also monitored during institutional audits.

Higher education institutions are subject to NCHE's audit requirements for local as well as off-shore academic activities. Foreign providers that operate inside Namibia are subject to the same requirements, even if they have to meet quality assurance requirements in their countries of origin.

14. Procedures for institutional audits

14.1 Preparing for the institutional audit

Institutions should commit themselves to developing a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, and should strive for continuous quality enhancement. As far as possible, preparations for an institutional audit should be integrated into the life of the institution to foster the development of a self-critical, reflective institution.

On receiving confirmation from NCHE of the date of the audit, this information should be disseminated widely across the institution and to the Council. Consequently, the institution should articulate a critical path for the development of the institutional audit portfolio and the approval thereof by Senate and the Council.

14.2 The institutional portfolio

The compilation of a self-evaluation report, together with clearly referenced supporting documentation, is referred to as the institutional portfolio, and is the first step in the process of preparation for the audit. The self-evaluation report is an exhaustive critical appraisal of the institution's quality assurance mechanisms against NCHE's audit criteria.[40]

In order to facilitate the development of the report, it is necessary for the institution to appoint a team/committee that will oversee the process and ensure that the critical

[40] For the audit criteria, see Section 16 below.

path is adhered to. This committee will appoint individuals or groups of individuals who will have responsibility for addressing specific criteria and writing an evaluative report pertaining to the same. The committee will also identify a two-person team who will be responsible for triangulating all the reports and supporting documents, and writing the final self-evaluation report.

The overseeing committee provides guidelines for the submission of reports and for the referencing of supporting documentation. On receiving all the reports from the various individuals and/or groups, the committee collates the information and the appointed team begins to write the self-evaluation report. The report and the relevant supporting documents (evidence) are bound into one portfolio. The portfolio should first be approved by the Senate (or similar body) of the institution and then the Council, before it is sent to NCHE.

14.3 Appointment of the audit panel by NCHE

The composition and size of the audit panel are critical to the process. NCHE appoints an independent audit panel that comprises experts in higher education issues. Experts are drawn from other higher education institutions in Namibia, the SADC countries, AAU, or other countries. The panels also include a student member.[41] The size of the panel should not be so large that it overwhelms the institution.

Panel members should be appointed on the basis of their expertise and experience in higher education nationally and internationally. Such expertise should include teaching and learning, quality management, research, governance and management, and community engagement.

Audit panel members will be trained by NCHE to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the audit. NCHE will develop a database of trained auditors who could serve on audit panels.

[41] Criteria and procedures for the appointment of audit panels are specified in the *Manual for Institutional Audits* (NCHE, 2010).

14.4 The site visit by the audit panel

Prior to the site visit, the audit panel will convene a meeting to discuss the institutional portfolio and evaluate it against NCHE criteria for institutional audits. The panel will thus identify areas that it wishes to explore further and additional documentation that it requires from the institution.

During the site visit, the panel will verify, against the audit criteria, the statements made by the institution in the self-evaluation report. The strategy that will be employed will be a combination of document analysis and analysis of feedback from stakeholder interviews. The panel will triangulate the outcomes of these processes with the outcomes of the panel's initial discussion (prior to the site visit) and determine whether NCHE's criteria have been met.

14.5 The audit panel's report

On conclusion of its deliberations, the panel will write a comprehensive report on its findings that should meet international best practices for audit reports. The report should be clear and user-friendly, and should include the outcomes of evaluation against individual criteria. The report should clearly indicate the rationale for the conclusions and/or recommendations that are made and should document the evidence that was available or absent in support of the findings. This will facilitate the identification of errors of fact and errors of interpretation by the institution.

Panel reports contain a list of commendations and recommendations. In the case of serious issues, such recommendations could be linked to timeframes specified in the report.

14.6 The Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee

The audit panel's report is submitted to the NCHE's Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee, which forwards the report to the institution for comments. Such comments are restricted to the identification of factual errors, errors of interpretation, discrepancies and/or omissions. The audit panel report, together with the comments from the institution, is forwarded to the NCHE Council for approval.

The report is only deemed to be a report of NCHE when it has been approved by the NCHE Council, after which its Secretariat will forward it to the institution as the final audit report. An executive summary is thereafter published on the NCHE website.

14.7 Post-audit requirements

Subsequent to the audit, NCHE requires the institution to develop a detailed improvement plan to address the recommendations in the report. The improvement plan has to be submitted to NCHE within 6 months after the final report has been received by the institution.

It is recommended that the audit overseeing committee be tasked with the responsibility for developing the improvement plan. The committee should undertake this task in a consultative manner that will facilitate the implementation of the improvement plan.

Prior to submission of the improvement plan to NCHE, it must be approved by the Senate of the institution and should also be forwarded to the governing body of the particular institution.

An institutional progress report should be submitted to NCHE within 2 years after submission of the improvement plan, or a period that the NCHE may deem fit.

15. Consequences of institutional audits

The focus of NCHE's institutional audit system is on quality improvement. Accordingly, institutional audits are not "passed" or "failed". The outcomes of an institutional audit are formulated as commendations and recommendations to the institution concerned.

16. The audit criteria

NCHE's audit criteria are of an internationally comparable standard, and were developed with due regard to Namibia's legislative policy framework for higher education, the prevalent quality of its institutions, and its societal and economic needs.

The criteria serve as benchmarks for institutional quality assurance in teaching and learning, research and community engagement, and signal to students and the general public the internal quality arrangements that are expected of higher education institutions with regard to assuring and improving the quality of their academic activities.

16.1 The nature of the audit criteria

The criteria are generic in nature and should be interpreted in relation to the institution's context, mission, type (university, polytechnic, etc.), objectives, level of development, and regional and national priorities.

This emphasises the importance of the quality of audit panels, and the need for careful selection of the panel members.[42] Audit panels are trained by NCHE in order to perform their duties effectively. At the institutional level, a structured capacity development programme forms part of NCHE's schedule of activities during the first quality assurance cycle. Part of the programme is directed at the training of institutional staff on NCHE's institutional audit system, which includes training in the application and interpretation of the criteria.

[42] Criteria and procedures for the selection of audit panels are specified in NCHE's *Manual for Institutional Audits*, 2010.

16.2 Classification of the audit criteria

16.2.1 Theme 1: Institutional vision, mission and goals; and general management processes

Sub-area	Criteria
(i) Institutional vision, mission and goals	1. The institution's vision and mission are responsive to the Namibian and international context and geared towards assurance of the quality of the academic outcomes. (i) The institution has a clear, widely consulted and formally approved strategic vision statement as the guiding concept of what it would like to be in the future and the role it intends to play in the longer term. (ii) The institution has a clear and formally approved mission statement that articulates the strategic vision, and expresses in a concise way the purpose and character of the institution. (iii) The vision and mission statements are shaped by relevant Namibian legislation and national policies, as well as by other relevant contextual forces and realities at local, national and international levels. (iv) The institution's vision and mission, as well as its governance and management processes, are geared towards assurance of the quality of the academic outcomes. (v) Progress towards achievement of the vision, mission and goals of the institution is monitored and evaluated in terms of agreed-upon performance indicators, and the institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified.

(ii) Institutional quality assurance management system (IQAMS)	2. An efficient institutional quality assurance management system is in place and it is continuously monitored and im-proved. (i) IQAMS is formally established, functions efficient-ly in the framework of approved policies, procedures and mechanisms, and is adequately resourced. (ii) The various forms of planning (strategic, institutional, academic, financial, etc.) are coordinated with a view to ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes. (iii) Continuous as well as periodic internal and external evaluations of the institution's academic and support functions by means of peer evaluation are an integral part of IQAMS.
(iii) Human resource management system	3. The management of human resources is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements for acquiring, deploying and utilising sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced academic and support staff in order to meet the human resource needs of the institution in such a way that the quality of academic outcome is ensured. (i) The human resources management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for recruitment, appointments, record-keeping, labour relations, employment equity, performance management, compensation and benefits, and training and development. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the human resources management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the human resources management system.

(iv) Financial resource management system	4. The management of financial resources is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its financial needs in such a manner that the quality of the academic outcomes can be assured. (i) The financial management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for budgeting, resource allocation, asset management, debt management and financial reporting. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the financial management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the financial management system.
(v) Facilities management system	5. The management of facilities is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its facilities needs in such a manner that the quality of the academic outcomes can be assured. (i) The facilities management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for facilities planning and acquisitions, the direction of design and construction activities, maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment, space assignments and utilisation, and real estate management. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the facilities management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the facilities management system.

16.2.2 Theme 2: Teaching and learning

(i) The teaching and learning planning system

Sub-area	Criteria
(a) Planning and approval of academic offerings	6. There is an efficient system for the planning and approval of new programmes and changes to existing programmes, courses and curricula. The system is geared towards aligning academic offerings with the institution's vision, mission and goals, and ensuring the quality of academic outcomes. (i) This system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - development and institutional approval of new qualifications and programmes in order to set appropriate academic standards, and to ensure that all the relevant legal requirements (including accreditation requirements set by relevant authorities) are met. - continuous curriculum renewal to ensure the academic offering's academic integrity, alignment with new knowledge and skills, and responsiveness and relevance to the needs of the students and the country. - development and institutional approval of academic partnerships with institutions within and outside Namibia. This includes joint offerings, external moderation and examination, joint/ double degrees, recognition of credits, etc. - development and institutional approval of short courses. - effective and reliable central management of information on the institution's academic offerings (qualifications, programmes, courses, modules, short courses, partnerships, etc). (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the system for planning and approval of academic offerings with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes, in order to continuously improve the system for planning and approval of academic offerings.

(b) Enrolment planning	7. There is an efficient system for planning the number of students to be enrolled in the different programmes/ courses. The system is geared towards aligning the institution's size and shape with its vision, mission, goals and capacity, and ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes. (i) The enrolment planning system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - the gathering and interpretation of accurate and up-to-date information on institutional capacity and historical trends to inform the planning process. - internal and external approval of enrolment targets by the relevant authorities. - tracking and reporting on enrolments. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the enrolment planning system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve enrolment planning.

(ii) The teaching and learning management system

Sub-area	Criteria
(a) Student enrolment management system (SEMS)	8. There is an efficient student enrolment management system that is geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes. (i) The SEMS includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - marketing (information on the institution, the programmes / courses on offer, financial support, housing, etc), recruitment (including outreach to schools and other target markets). - admissions. - selection (where appropriate). - registration. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the student enrolment management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the student enrolment management system.
(b) Academic support services	9. The institution provides efficient academic support services geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes and enhancing student success. (i) Student support services include strategies, policies and arrangements for: - academic development services geared towards the enhancement of academic skills. - student counseling services. - access to academic information and learning materials through efficient library services and information technology centres , enabling students to meet their learning objectives. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the student support services with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the student support services.

(c) Facilitation of learning	10. The institution has efficient systems in place to ensure that teaching and learning leads to quality academic outcomes and student success. (i) The institution's activities to facilitate learning include strategies, policies and arrangements for: - ensuring that a range of learning opportunities appropriate to the learning outcomes are deployed, including, for example, formal lectures, group work, service learning, etc. - ensuring that staff are competent to teach the programmes/courses allocated to them and offering staff development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and competences in learning facilitation. - ensuring that the quality of the learning experience on satellite campuses and tuition centres is comparable to that on the main campus. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the learning facilitation activities with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes, in order to continuously improve its learning facilitation activities.

(d) Assessment and certification of student learning	11. The institution has an efficient system to assess student learning that is geared towards ensuring the quality of the academic outcomes and enhancing student success. (i) The system for assessment of student learning includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - regulations and procedures related to student assessment, including, for example, the security of test and examination papers, composition and calculation of marks, supplementary/ special assessment opportunities, disciplinary and appeals procedures, internal and external moderation and examinations, etc. - ensuring that staff are competent to conduct student assessment in the programmes/ courses allocated to them and offering staff development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and competencies in student assessment. - ensuring that the assessment events on satellite campuses and tuition centres meet the same requirements as those on the main campus. - the effective and reliable central management of the students' marks and learner records that guarantees the security of the data. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the assessment system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the system for the assessment of student learning.
	12. The accuracy and integrity of all the certificates issued by the institution are guaranteed. (i) The certification system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - accurate and secure data capturing and management. - regular internal software control procedures. - security measures to avoid fraud.

	(ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the certification system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the certification system.
(e) Tracking, review and feedback systems	13. There are effective systems to track student performance, gather student feedback, review programmes and courses, gather feedback from stakeholders and provide feedback on learning and teaching matters to students, staff and other stakeholders. (i) The tracking, review and feedback systems include strategies, policies and arrangements for: - the tracking of student performance (including success rates, throughput rates, graduation rates), with regular reports enabling appropriate interventions by all the parties concerned. - regular opportunities for student feedback on the quality of their programmes and courses, learning opportunities, teaching, and the total student learning experience. - internal and external review of programmes/ courses with a view to continuous quality enhancement. - surveys of stakeholders (graduates, employers, etc) aimed at the enhancement of institutional insight with a view to the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the tracking, review and feedback systems with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the process of the tracking, review and feedback systems.

(f) Management of postgraduate studies	14. The management of postgraduate studies is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of postgraduate studies can be assured. (i) The postgraduate studies management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements for: - the design, approval, offering, evaluation and continuous improvement of postgraduate programmes contributing to the high level human capacity and skills required by the development needs of Namibia. - criteria and processes for the approval of research proposals for masters and doctoral studies, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of postgraduate research projects with the needs of Namibia. - the support and development of postgraduate students, including support in the development of research projects, research methodology, etc. - requirements and codes of conduct for supervisors and postgraduate students. - the assessment of postgraduate study projects (including assignments, theses, dissertations, etc). - the effective and trustworthy central management of postgraduate student information. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the postgraduate management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately on the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the post-graduate management system.

16.2.3 Theme 3: Research

(g) The research management system	15. The management of the institution's research is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of the research activities can be assured. (i) The research management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for: - a shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of research at the institution. - criteria and processes for the approval of research proposals, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of research projects with the needs of Namibia. - the support and development of the capacity of new and established researchers. - the management of research partnerships and research contracts. - the handling of intellectual property and the commercialisation of research. - the effective and trustworthy central management of research information. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the research management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately on the risks, gaps and challenges identified through the monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the research management system.

16.2.4 Theme 4: Community engagement

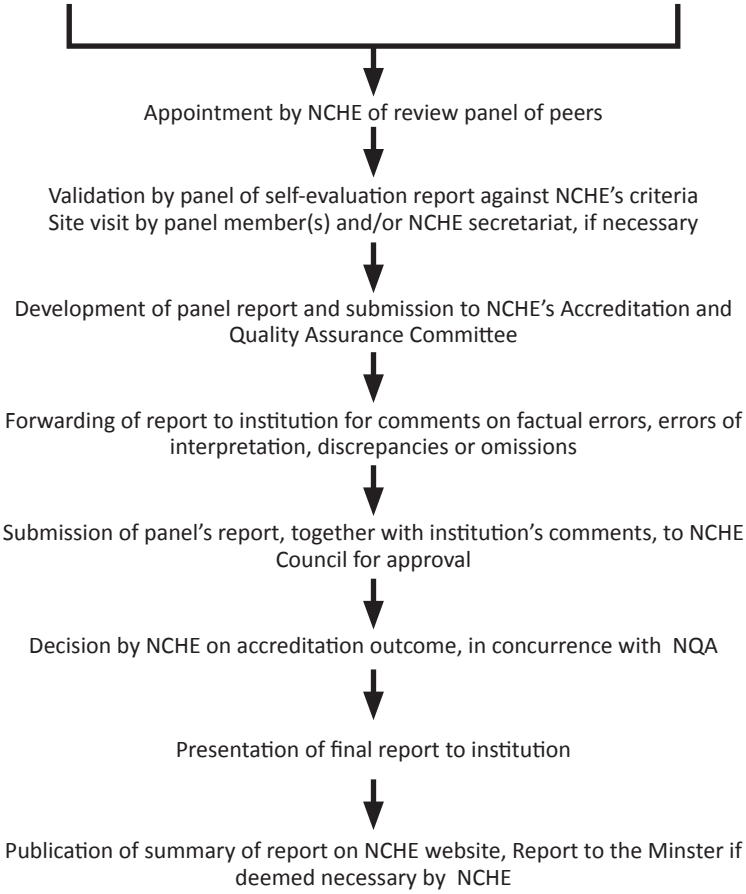
Sub-area	Criteria
(h) The community engagement planning and management system	16. The management of the institution's community engagement activities is conducted within an approved framework of institutional strategies, policies and arrangements to enable the institution to meet its needs in such a manner that the quality of the community engagement activities can be assured. (i) The research management system includes strategies, policies and arrangements providing for - - a shared understanding of the nature, role and goals of community engagement by the institution. - criteria and processes for the approval of community engagement projects, including criteria that will enhance the alignment of these projects with the needs of the students and communities, and the needs of Namibia. - the support and development of community engagement activities conducted by staff and students. - the management of partnerships with communities. - the effective and trustworthy central management of information related to community engagement activities. (ii) It is standard practice to monitor and evaluate the approach, deployment and results of the community engagement management system with reference to international best practices. (iii) The institution acts appropriately to address the risks, gaps and challenges identified through monitoring, evaluation and benchmarking processes in order to continuously improve the community engagement management system.

Appendix A

SUMMARY OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

New programmes
Application by institution to NCHE for accreditation of programme:
(i) Application and supporting evidence
(ii) Implementation Plan
(iii) Institutional review arrangements

Existing programmes
Submission of self-evaluation report and supporting evidence



Appendix B

SUMMARY OF THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROGRAMMES WHERE NO STATUTORY COUNCILS ARE INVOLVED

Programmes where no statutory councils are involved

Submission of self-evaluation report to NCHE. For new programmes, application, implementation plan and institutional review arrangements

↓

Appointment by NCHE of review panel of peers

↓

Validation by panel of programme self-evaluation report against NCHE's criteria

↓

Development of panel report and submission to NCHE's AQA Committee

↓

Forwarding of report to institution for comments on factual errors or omissions

↓

Submission of panel's report, together with institution's comments, to NCHE's Council for approval

↓

Decision by NCHE on accreditation outcome, in concurrence with NQA

↓

Presentation of final report to institution

↓

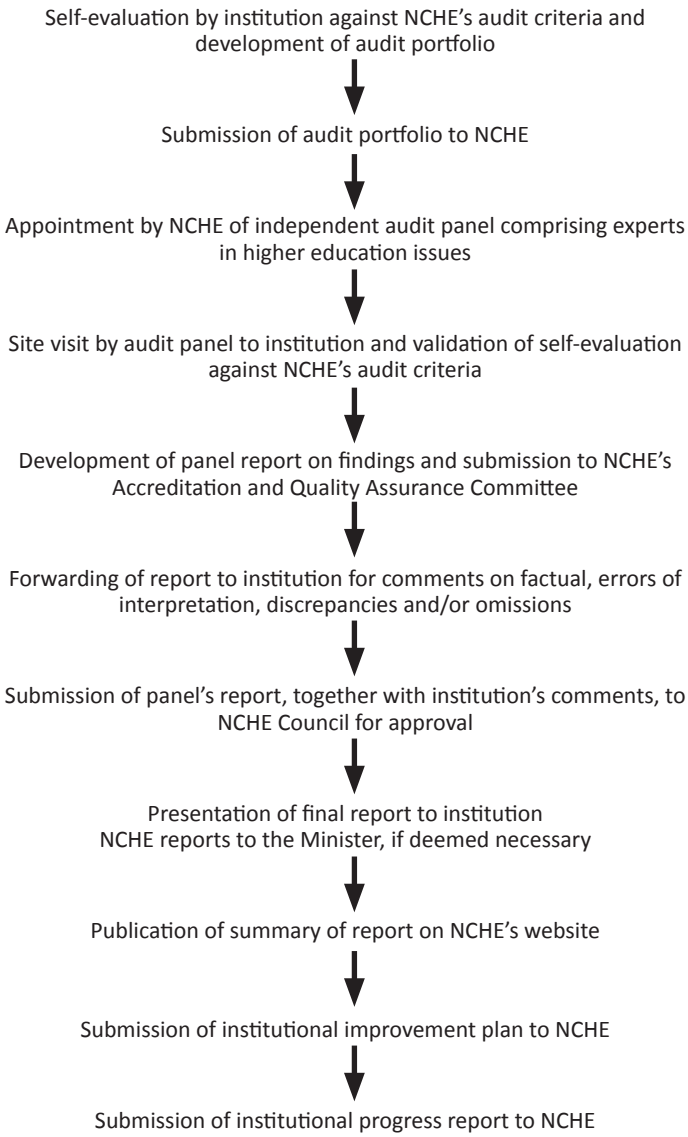
Publication of summary of report on NCHE's website

Professional programmes

Processes and requirements as specified in cooperation agreement between NCHE and statutory council

Appendix C

SUMMARY OF THE INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT PROCESS



Appendix D

Appendix D: SUMMARY OF PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION AND INSTITUTIONAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES IN NCHE'S first QUALITY ASSURANCE CYCLE

(q) Institutional audits of all public and private higher education institutions.
(r) Accreditation of new programmes.
(s) (Re)-accreditation of existing programmes, when deemed necessary by NCHE.
(t) Self-evaluation of academic programmes at public and private higher education institutions.
(u) Training of auditors and programme evaluators on an ongoing basis.
(v) Capacity-development of institutional staff with respect to NCHE's audit and programme accreditation systems (policies, procedures, criteria, self-evaluation, etc.)

Glossary

Accreditation	Formal recognition by NCHE, in concurrence with the NQA, that specified quality standards have been met by a programme. Accreditation is valid for a stipulated period of time.
Achieved learning outcomes	Outcomes a graduate has actually acquired during his/her studies.
Audit	See Institutional Audit.
Audit criteria	NCHE's requirements for an institution's policies, systems, strategies and resources for quality assurance of its academic activities.
Audit panel	External panel of experts in higher education issues that are appointed and trained by NCHE to conduct institutional audits.
Audit portfolio	A report containing an institution's self-evaluation of its quality assurance mechanisms against NCHE's criteria for institutional audits, together with clearly referenced supporting documentation.
Audit visit	Visit by an audit panel to an institution during which the institution's self-evaluation of its quality assurance mechanisms against NCHE's criteria is validated. The strategy used by the audit panel is a combination of document analysis and analysis of feedback from stakeholder interviews.
Commendations	Used with reference to issues identified in panel reports as good practices that support or enhance the quality of a programme.

Community engagement	Application of a higher education institution's expertise in teaching and learning, and research, to relevant issues in its community.
Diagnostic assessment	Used to predict students' aptitude and preparedness for a programme.
Existing programme	A programme that was offered by higher education institutions in Namibia prior to implementation of NCHE's programme accreditation system. Some existing programmes have been registered on NQF and/or are accredited by NQA.
Formative assessment	Used for developmental or formative purposes to inform and strengthen learning and teaching. Serves needs intrinsic to the educational process.
Institutional audit	An evaluation that focuses on an institution's policies, systems, strategies and resources for quality assurance of its academic activities. Audit panels, comprising experts in higher education issues, conduct evaluations using NCHE's audit requirements as benchmarks. Institutional audits are improvement oriented, but have also accountability aspects.
Intended learning outcomes	Outcomes that a programme intends a graduate to acquire during his/her studies.
New programme	A new programme is one that has not been previously offered in Namibia or abroad by the higher education institution that is applying for accreditation. An existing programme becomes a new programme if more than 40% of the contents of the curriculum are changed, and / or when the programme is offered at a new site of delivery.

Potential learning outcomes	Outcomes that a student could potentially achieve in the programme as it is offered.
Professional programme	A coordinated set of study elements that lead to a recognised professional qualification and have to meet the requirements of statutory councils.
Programme	A purposeful and coherent combination of learning experiences that lead to a qualification. This applies at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and includes postgraduate research programmes.
Programme accreditation	An evaluation that focuses on the quality of higher education academic programmes. Programmes are evaluated against NCHE's programme accreditation requirements by review panels comprising subject- or discipline- specialists. Programmes that meet the requirements are accredited for a specified period of time. Accreditation is accountability oriented, but has also improvement aspects.
Recommendations	Used with reference to issues indicated in panel reports as needing improvement and requiring action on the part of the institution. Institutions are required to develop a detailed improvement plan with timeframes for addressing these issues.
Self-evaluation	Within the context of programme accreditation, a critical appraisal by an institution of an academic programme(s) against NCHE's programme accreditation criteria. Within the context of institutional audits, a critical appraisal by an institution of its quality assurance mechanisms against NCHE's criteria for institutional audits.

Service learning	Applied learning that focuses on specific community needs and forms part of an academic programme and its curriculum.
Short course	A course that has less than 40 credits.
Summative assessment	Used to measure, record and report achievement at the end of a pro-gramme.
Work-based learning	Formal higher education learning that takes place in a work setting for a specified period of time and forms an integral part of a higher education academic programme.

Documents consulted

Advisory Council on Teachers' Education and Training. 2008. *Consultancy to develop guidelines on teacher education reform, including curriculum development and institutional development*. Final report of the consultancy team.

Bologna Process. 2009. (http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/).

Australian Universities Quality Agency. 2009. *Audit Manual*. Version 6.0.

Commission for Higher Education. 2007. (http://www.che.or.ke/mandate.html).

Commission for Higher Education. 2007. (http://www.che.or.ke/accreditation.html).

Commission for Higher Education. Undated. *Guidelines for Preparing Curriculum of Acade-mic Programmes*.

Commission for Higher Education. 2007. *Standards and Guidelines for University Libraries in Kenya*.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. 2007. *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

Higher Education Quality Committee. 2004(a). *Institutional Audit Framework*.

Higher Education Quality Committee. 2004(b). *Criteria for institutional audits*.

Higher Education Quality Committee. 2004(c). *Framework for programme accreditation*.

Higher Education Quality Committee. 2004(d). *Criteria for programme accreditation*.

Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology. 1999. *Investing in People, Developing a Country. Higher Education for Development in Namibia*.

Ministry of Education. 2006. *Regulations for the accreditation of persons, institutions or organisations: Namibia Qualifications Authority Act, 1996*.

Ministry of Education. 2007. *Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP): Planning for a Learning Nation*. *Programme Document: Phase 1:2006-2011*

National Assessment and Accreditation Council. 2007. (http://naacindia.org/aboutus.asp).

National Assessment and Accreditation Council. 2007. *New Methodology of Assessment & Accreditation*.

National Council for Higher Education. 2009. *Funding Framework Proposals for Public Higher Education Institutions in Namibia*. Workshop: 13 February 2009.

Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie (http://www.nvao.net/about-nvao). 2007.

Nederlands-Vlaamse Accreditatieorganisatie. 2003. *Handbook of Accreditation*.

New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit. 2007. *Academic Audit Manual for Use in Cycle 4 Institutional Audits*.

Polytechnic of Namibia. Undated. *Submission for the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme: 2008-2013*. *Sector: Tertiary Education and Training*.

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. 2006. *Handbook for institutional audit: England and Northern Island*.

Quality Assurance Council (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region). 2007. *Audit Manual*.

Republic of Namibia. 1992. University of Namibia Act, 1992, No 18 of 1992. *Government Gazette*, no. 105.
Republic of Namibia. 1994. Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994, No 33 of 1994. *Government Gazette*, no 991.
Republic of Namibia. 1996. Namibia Qualifications Authority Act, 1996, No 29 of 1996. *Government Gazette*, No 333.
Republic of Namibia. 2003. *Namibia Vision 2030: A policy framework for long-term na-tional development*.
Republic of Namibia. 2003. Teachers' Education Colleges Act, 2003, No 25 of 2003. *Government Gazette*, no 267.
Republic of Namibia. 2003. Higher Education Act, 2003, No 26 of 2003. *Government Gazette*, no 268.
Republic of Namibia. 2008. *Third National Development Plan (NDP3), 2007/2008 - 2011/12***,** vol. I, Executive Summary, Windhoek.
University of Namibia. 2008. *A critical review of the existing postgraduate programmes and support infrastructure for research at the University of Namibia*. Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research. Prepared by M L Mostert.

Internal documents supplied by institutions

(i) University of Namibia:

Report on current quality assurance arrangements at UNAM. Prepared by E Maass.
Feedback on confidential teaching evaluation.
Prospectus: General Information and Regulations 2009, including information on UNAM committees.
List of qualifications (certificates, diplomas, degrees).
Admission criteria (undergraduate)
Examination regulations.
UNAM Examinations (including various forms, conditions and set instructions to examiners and moderators, guidelines and instructions to invigilators, proposed regulations and procedures to external moderators).
Regulations for certificates.
Regulations for diplomas.
Regulations for bachelor degrees.
Regulations for postgraduate studies.

Regulations for Distance Education.
Information on scholarships and awards.
Information on the library and information services.
Office of the Dean of Students.
Postgraduate Student Guide 2009/2010, including information on admission criteria and procedures.
Course information for postgraduate qualifications.
Regulations for postgraduate training.
Guidelines on the writing of theses, dissertations.
Guidelines on teaching at postgraduate level.
Guidelines on supervision.
Regulations for the submission of theses and dissertations.
Regulations for postgraduate examinations.
Annual Academic Staff Appraisals.
Advertisement, recruitment and selection policy and procedure.
Guidelines on promotion of Administrative Staff.
Probation Guidelines.
Staff development policy (as amended by the Staff Development Committee on 8 April 2008).
Guidelines for determining teaching work loads.

(ii) Polytechnic of Namibia:

Organogram of committees.
Improvement plan of the Polytechnic.
Draft Quality Assurance Policy.
A guide to writing NQF aligned learning outcomes.
Policy and procedure for curriculum development and approval.
Checklist for new programmes and programme review approval.
Experiential learning policy.
Self-evaluation report for Institutional audit – November 2006.
List of institutional documents available to the Polytechnic of Namibia.
Statutory Committees of Council.

(iii) International University of Management

Examiners' and Moderators' Handbook. Revised Version, 2008.
Assessment and Awarding Procedures at IUM (Figure).
Appeals.
Regulations for the Management of University Examinations.
Bachelors degree projects guidelines – internal and external students.
Guidelines on project reports for bachelor's degree.
Faculty of Travel, Tourism and Hospitality: Faculty Policy Guidelines for Research Projects -Final Year Students.
Faculty of Information Technology: Guidelines for IT Projects - Final Year Students.
Guidelines on the Postgraduate Research.
Assignment guidelines for degree and non-degree students.
Learner-centred Result-driven Education System (LRES). Booklet.
Searching the World Wide Web.
Internet as a research instrument.
Questionnaire for the evaluation of lecturers.
Staff motivation/satisfaction survey results.
Quality assurance committee (list of members – 16 Feb. 2009).
Functions of the Quality Assurance Committee (one page document).

(iv) Colleges of education (national and internal documents)

BETD Moderation Report 2006. National Institute for Educational Development. October 2006.
BETD Pre-service Teacher Education. SBS moderation Report. 2007. National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).
BETD Pre-service: School based studies moderation. 2009. Explanatory notes to teacher educators and moderators
National Assessment Policy for Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD). 2008. Minister of Basic Education, NIED, Okahandja
National Professional Standards for teachers in Namibia 2006. Ministry of Education.
Windhoek College of Education. 2009. Lecturer evaluation questionnaire.
Ongwediva College of Education. Examination rules and regulations.

Notes

Notes