Executive Summary
of the
NQA and NCHE Institutional Audit
of the
UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

UNAM Main Campus
Windhoek

SEPTEMBER 2025

1. Introduction

The University of Namibia (UNAM) was established in terms of Section 2 of the University of Namibia Act, Act 18 of 1992. It is the oldest and largest university in Namibia, operating across twelve (12) campuses nationwide. In 2025, the University had a student enrolment of 26,444 and a total staff complement of 2,452, comprising academic and administrative staff.

The University's mandate includes the provision of higher education, undertaking research, advancing and disseminating knowledge, providing extension services and contributing to Namibia's social and economic development. Since its establishment in 1992, UNAM has expanded its academic offerings and institutional structures. The University currently comprises four (4) faculties and seventeen (17) schools, offering programmes across various fields of study.

The NQA-NCHE Joint Institutional Audit and Accreditation of UNAM was conducted from 08 to 11 September 2025 at the UNAM Main Campus in Windhoek. The audit was undertaken in accordance with the Higher Education Act, Act 26 of 2003, the Namibia Qualifications Authority Act, Act 29 of 1996 and the Quality Assurance System for Higher Education in Namibia of December 2009.

The main purpose of the audit was to assess the policies, procedures, strategies and resources in place at UNAM to ensure the quality of its academic activities. Following the University's submission of its Institutional Portfolio (IP), a four-member Audit Panel was appointed to conduct the review.

The audit involved validating the Institutional Portfolio against the NCHE/NQA Integrated Accreditation Standards and Criteria, interviewing various categories of institutional stakeholders, reviewing relevant documents and conducting physical tours of the Main and some other campuses in Windhoek (Hage Geingob Campus, Neudamm Campus and the Veterinary Academic Hospital). The exercise concluded with the formulation of findings and an oral presentation to the University Management and the NQA/NCHE Secretariats. The findings and recommendations relating to the other nine UNAM campuses which are not covered in this Institutional Audit Executive Summary, are presented in their respective campus accreditation reports.

The Audit Panel consisted of:

1. Prof Mwenda Gideon Ntarangwi, Management and Governance Expert and Chairperson, Vice Chancellor, United States International University-Africa, Kenya;
2. Dr Nita Lawton-Misra, Management and Governance Expert, Registrar, University of the Western Cape, South Africa;
3. Prof Obert Sifile, Finance Expert, Associate Professor, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe; and
4. Prof Emmanuel Chabata, Quality Assurance Expert, Executive Director: Quality Assurance and Professional Development, University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe.

2. Audit Commendations

The following are commendations for good practice:

STANDARD 1: Statement of Goals and Objectives

None

STANDARD 2: Governance and Management

(i) The University is on track with its governance structures, processes and practices. It has the requisite policies, which are aligned with the relevant Acts and Statutes.

(ii) Members of the Council are commended for possessing the necessary skills and experience for conducting their fiduciary duties of governance oversight.

(iii) The University is commended for the existence of numerous policies and procedure documents made available across all areas of learning, teaching, research, and administration.

(iv) The University is commended for having clear and well-documented terms of reference guiding the composition of the Council and its committees, the Senate and its committees, as well as the joint committees.

(v) The University is commended for maintaining a strong hold on its governance and management responsibilities, a feat that should be sustained to safeguard the institution's growth and quality.

STANDARD 3: Course Design and Documentation

(i) The University is commended for having a variety of policies that direct its programme development, implementation and documentation.

(ii) The University is commended for facilitating student participation in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), which is essential for acquiring practical skills and competencies.

(iii) The University is commended for its Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Policy, which clearly outlines the processes and procedures.

STANDARD 4: Entry and Access by Learners

(i) UNAM is commended for the ample evidence of the support available to students, as demonstrated through the documents provided, campus visits and interviews.

(ii) The admission of a diverse range of students is commendable.

(iii) The University is commended for the availability of support to students with disabilities, with specific provision made for those with visual and physical impairments.

(iv) Keeping in mind that UNAM is a relatively young university, it is commended for having established itself as a fierce competitor in the higher education landscape.

(v) The University is commended for its career fairs and related initiatives that introduce students to industry, reflecting positively on its relationship with prospective employers.

STANDARD 5: Staff Appointment and Development

(i) UNAM is commended for the recruitment process which is widely regarded as fair, transparent and merit-based. The process entails advertising on media accessible by potential applicants, shortlisting by the department requiring the staff, panel interviews with the applicants, checks on potential recruits, and appointments are made on merit.

(ii) UNAM is commended for having a performance appraisal system in place, reflecting its commitment to staff development and accountability. .

(iii) Existence of staff development and training programmes at the University is commendable.

(iv) The University is commended for being perceived by staff as a caring institution.

STANDARD 6: Learning Facilities, Resources and Contexts

(i) The University is commended for having state-of-the-art learning and teaching facilities at the Main Campus, Neudamm Campus, the Veterinary Academic Hospital and the School of Medicine at Hage Geingob Campus, among others.

(ii) The University is commended for having laboratories that are ISO-certified, a testament to training practices that align with global standards.
(iii) The University is commended for providing extra-curricular activities to students and maintaining sporting facilities that are accessible and well managed.; and
(iv) The University is commended for ensuring that assessment facilities are well managed and secure.

STANDARD 7: Delivery of Courses

None

STANDARD 8: Learner Guidance, Welfare and Support

(i) The University is commended for offering support to students through various modes of learning.
(ii) Leadership training provided for students in governance structures is commendable.
(iii) The University is commended for engaging students in civic responsibilities within communities, thereby fostering awareness of the value of collective action in solving societal problems.
(iv) The University is commended for the services provided by the Disability Services Unit to students with disabilities.
(v) The University is commended for providing resource material to aid in the application, selection of programmes, and website content, thereby enabling students to make informed decisions regarding their studies.

STANDARD 9: Assessment of Learner Performance

The University is commended for its comprehensive policies and procedures for conducting its examinations and other forms of assessment.

STANDARD 10: Learner Records and Reporting

The University is commended for separating data sets for security purposes and has continued to maintain backups that ensure business continuity in case of any disaster involving data breach or interruption.

STANDARD 11: Research

(i) The University is commended for having research policies in place and academics continuously attending workshops and supporting research.
(ii) The University is commended for having academics with grantsmanship skills.

(iii) The University is commended for its state-of-the-art laboratory facilities and equipment.
(iv) The University is commended for its partnerships that help to improve research through collaboration.

STANDARD 12: Collaborative Arrangements
None

STANDARD 13: Review Processes
None

STANDARD 14: Achievement of Goals and Objectives
The University is commended for the vast amount of documentation provided for the audit. These were comprehensive and well-crafted. They provided confidence that proper consideration is given to governance, as could be inferred from the policies and other documents.

3. Audit Recommendations

Key recommendations for improvement

STANDARD 1: Statement of Goals and Objectives
None

STANDARD 2: Governance and Management
(i) It is recommended that vacancies on the Council be filled as soon as possible with individuals possessing skills that are currently deficient in the structure.
(ii) The University must ensure that an integrated talent management strategy is developed, and that staff retention and succession planning become priorities.
(iii) A more consultative and less hierarchical/autocratic culture is necessary. Bi-annual meetings with the middle layer of managers, as well as students (undertaken separately), will go a long way in obtaining buy-in and support for the institution's strategies and practices;
(iv) It is recommended that the University establish a central policy library and implement a regular review cycle to ensure that policies remain current and relevant.
(v) To align with the goals of the new strategy, there is a need for the university to work intentionally to build more cross-unit and multidisciplinary

collaborations, and it is recommended that interdependencies across portfolios be identified and mapped to allow for seamless and efficient provision of services to students.

STANDARD 3: Course Design and Documentation

None

STANDARD 4: Entry and Access by Learners

(i) It is recommended that better coordination be established among various stakeholders to enhance enrolment and orientation processes, thereby ensuring that first-time entry students receive the orientation necessary for a smooth transition into the University.

(ii) It is recommended that social media platforms be utilised to promote the University's achievements and important events.

(iii) It is recommended that the University consider investing in the construction of a hall for graduations and other important events. Such a facility could also serve as a source of income if rented out during off-peak periods.

STANDARD 5: Staff Appointment and Development

(i) It is recommended that communication from management regarding the performance appraisal system be strengthened and made pervasive across all levels of staff, as the benefits of the system are not apparent to some employees.

(ii) It is recommended that the current paper-based appraisal system be replaced with an online system to reduce administrative burden and benefit both staff and management.

(iii) It is recommended that the University review the bonding period, as the current duration is considered too long.

(iv) It is recommended that the institution allow workers' committees to operate with the institution's support.

(v) It is recommended that consultations between the Executive and all staff members be held consistently during both favourable and challenging times.

(vi) It is recommended that UNAM support sabbatical leave, attendance at conferences, and the publication of journal articles and books.

STANDARD 6: Learning Facilities, Resources and Contexts

(i) Provision of universal access for people with special needs is essential, and textured walkways for visually impaired people must be incorporated into the general environment.

(ii) Students with visual impairments must be exposed to computer literacy to supplement Braille, as once the graduates enter the workplace, they will be expected to work using a computer (with adaptive software).

(iii) It is recommended that the clinic's facilities be strengthened both in terms of the services provided and the adequacy of human resources.

(iv) It is recommended that the number of bathrooms in student hostels be increased as the current ratio of 2 bathrooms to 37 students is not ideal.

(v) It is recommended that, in addition to the existing CCTV cameras in the Examinations Strong Room, further measures be introduced to restrict entry strictly to authorised individuals. The University may consider implementing a biometric access control system, and authorised staff should be vetted for potential conflicts of interest. These measures will enhance security and reduce the risk of breaches.

(vi) The University is encouraged to enter into agreements with accommodation service providers to ensure that standards are regularly monitored and maintained.

STANDARD 7: Delivery of Courses

(i) It is recommended that the University ensure that all campuses' academic staff are conversant with learning management platforms.

(ii) It is recommended that the University ensure sufficient bandwidth to support seamless delivery of virtual lectures.

STANDARD 8: Learner Guidance, Welfare and Support

(i) It is recommended that the University should strive to provide equitable services and support across all campuses.

(ii) It is recommended that the University should consider investing in online systems (e.g. WYSA – a mental health app) that offer this service. Research on the benefits, implementation, and risks must, however, be conducted before any acquisition is considered.

(iii) It is recommended that the University should encourage senior students to form buddy systems with first-time entry students to help them navigate their first year at the University.

(iv) It is recommended that the University should have a structure that anchors student services at the executive level and will provide a more robust service and attention to students as key stakeholders in the University.

STANDARD 9: Assessment of Learner Performance

The University should consider options of conducting some online examinations and assessments.

STANDARD 10: Learner Records and Reporting

None

STANDARD 11: Research

(i) It is recommended that the University implement a clear incentives system to motivate publishing staff.

(ii) A balance between administration and research tasks is recommended to prevent overloading lecturers with administrative issues and affording them time to carry out research.

STANDARD 12: Collaborative Arrangements

It is recommended that, although the University has existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with partner organisations, deliberate efforts be made to expand partnerships with a wider range of relevant stakeholders in order to strengthen collaborative initiatives across various areas.

STANDARD 13: Review Processes

None

STANDARD 14: Achievement of Goals and Objectives

None