



BRAINAE UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC QUALITY MANUAL

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PREAMBLE

It is required that all teaching and research activities in support of student learning offered under the auspices of the institution be subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures.

This Quality Manual has been developed to give support to lecturers in the delivery of their courses and to ensure that the student learning experience is placed at the centre of all activities.

The collection of information to support evidence of good practice is designed to be an integral part of the management of the learning experience. The process enables performance to be measured against standards.

Quality assurance system facilitates ownership and accountability at the point of activity with each step of the teaching and learning process being seen as an opportunity for evaluation through both course review and self-assessment. This review process results in action plans and the setting of targets to facilitate systematic improvement. The process is designed to encourage lecturers to be self-critical through collating and analyzing evidence to support the achievement of standards. In addition, internal inspections provide another valuable mechanism for identifying good practice for dissemination and areas for improvement.

Students' views of the University's provision are regarded as essential to the quality assurance process and a range of mechanisms are used to obtain student feedback including focus groups and questionnaires. Student feedback questionnaires are included in this Quality Assurance Manual.

Within this academic quality manual, the University is committed to the maintenance of the standards and continuous improvement of the quality of all the activities within BRAINAE UNIVERSITY. As indicated in the higher education teaching, learning and assessment document, this document sets out the process and procedures used by BRAINAE UNIVERSITY to ensure the maintenance and continuous improvement of:

- the Quality and standards of the taught academic provision at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY,
- the student experience on taught programmes;
- the research and scientific practical skills of students.

The process and procedures are required for two reasons:

- To assure both BRAINAE UNIVERSITY and the Rwandan Government that the quality of the academic provision and the standards of the awards are being safeguarded and enhanced,
- To promote and enhance academic culture within the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY which leads to the continuous improvement of provision and hence the improvement of the student experience.

I INTRODUCTION

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY is one of the Rwandan and global Higher Learning Institutions. Hence, it works under the national and international context for learning and teaching so that its outputs may be acceptable and adapted to the national and international labor market requirements.

The following are the national benchmarks for higher learning and teaching:

- Increased demand for external accountability, with the establishment of the National Higher Education Council and the expectation that BRAINAE UNIVERSITY degrees will be benchmarked to international standards,
- A growing emphasis on flexibility and lifelong learning;
- Structural changes to academic programmes arising from the development of a credit framework;
- Increasing focus upon the development of personal and transferable skills, including employability and entrepreneurial skills, to ensure that our graduates have the competence that employers are entitled to expect from them;
- New forms of learning arising from developments in ICT and other technologies – distance learning and blended learning;
- The need to increase the provision of part-time, community and work-based learning, including students learning off campus.

1.1 Objectives of the Quality Management Process

The Quality Management Process has the following objectives:

- To integrate the quality management and continuous quality improvement processes,
- To assure the quality and standards of the student experience;
- To assure the quality and standards of academic awards;

- To assure the quality and standards of research, knowledge transfer, continuing professional development (CPD) and other commercial work undertaken by academic and other staff ;
- To assure the quality and standards of the work undertaken by support departments via a review process;
- To focus on the production of action plans for continuous quality improvement;
- To integrate the Quality Management process with the planning process so that continuous quality improvement is central to the whole work of the Institution.

1.2 Principles of the Quality Management Process

The principles of the Quality Management Process are as follows:

- An emphasis on Continuous Quality Improvement,
 - The placing of responsibility for quality management as close to the point of delivery as practical;
- A harmonised system with no unnecessary duplication of efforts;
- A system based on reflective practice;
 - A whole institutional approach that recognises that the core business of the Institution is the production and transfer of knowledge to students, employers and other clients;
 - That all units, academic and support, are subject to review and ensure they are continuously improving the quality and standards of the service they provide;
- The use of students' feedback to its full potential;
 - An approach which values and recognizes the key role of individual academics in achieving success;
 - All cross-faculty programmes will be the administrative responsibility of each faculty;

- All students will be allocated to an academic unit which will be responsible for the oversight of their programme of work and providing academic guidance.

1.3 Features of the Quality Management Processes

The features of the Quality Management Process are as follows:

- An emphasis on collegiality, consultation and consensus,
- Institutional wide procedures governing the key processes of programme approval, academic unit review; the operation of programme boards; the consideration of external examiner reports; students' complaints and appeals;
- A focus on academic staff and facilities as the means by which quality is both maintained and enhanced, and on the Deans of Faculties as the academic leaders through whom the institution's intentions are realized;
- A chain of accountability from academic staff to the Rector, via Head of Academic Departments and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic affairs;
- A committee structure providing links between quality management, enhancement and control;
- Recognition of the need for partnership between academic units and professional support units in ensuring, maintaining and enhancing the quality and standards of the student experience;
- A means to ensure that any failure in the maintenance of quality or standards is quickly identified, as a basis for ensuring rapid action to improve them, incorporating an action improvement plan;
- The ongoing provision of evidence bases in support of the institution's responses to the external requirements;
- Quality Management is used as a term to encompass quality assurance and continuous improvement;

- A clear separation of roles and responsibilities between responsibility for policy development, sustainability and improvement, and operations;

II MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC QUALITY

The Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the advancement of learning and knowledge by teaching and research and enabling students to obtain the advantages of learning, but the Board of Directors delegates its responsibility to the Academic Senate.

2.1 Executive Responsibilities

The Rector is responsible for the top organization and management of BRAINAE UNIVERSITY. He/she chairs the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Executive Council and Academic Senate and has the right of attendance at all Councils and Senate standing Committees. The Vice Chancellor is supported by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic affairs and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic affairs is responsible for the oversight of the development of strategic and academic policies, their implementation, monitoring and evaluation. He/She is a member of the Executive Council, and Vice-Chair of the Academic Senate with the right of attendance at Faculty Councils and Directorate Boards. He/She is responsible for developing strategies and policies that can be implemented by Faculties, the implementation of strategies and policies and monitoring and evaluating the implementation of these strategies and policies.

2.2 BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Directorate of Academic Quality and its responsibilities

The Directorate of Academic Quality is responsible for advising as appropriate on the development, implementation, operation and monitoring of the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY's procedures for the approval and ongoing evaluation of its programmes study.

In particular, the directorate is responsible for, at the institutional level, the co-ordination of a number of activities designed to both ensure and

enhance the quality of provision, including research, and knowledge transfer.

Its specific responsibilities are as follows:

- Administering the process for the approval of External Examiners for both taught programmes, research and learning contracts;
- Providing advice and guidance to staff, both academic and administrative, on all aspects of the quality assurance procedures;
- The periodic review of all Faculties and Units and the monitoring of the implementation of the action plans derived from the reviews.
- Drafting proposed changes to Academic Regulations.
- Being responsible for the collation of information on quality matters for the consideration by the Academic Senate.
- Ensuring continuous improvement of learning and teaching in all academic units, focused through the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Action Plan.
- Having responsibility for staff development in learning and teaching, including the training of new staff and the development of experienced staff in all areas of support for the learning process, including the supervision of students' research and staff development for research, enterprise and consultancy;
- Advising the Academic Senate on the appointment, promotion and discipline of academic staff;
- Working with the service in charge of research to assure the quality of research, consultancy and community engagement.
- Holding responsibility for other quality matters, which are considered by the Academic Senate;
- Developing and reviewing of policy and procedures for quality management, including the Quality Assurance Architecture (QAA).
- Monitoring and reviewing the quality and standards.
- Organising reviews and approval events.

- Preparing and organizing reviews by the Higher Education Council.
- Oversight and organisation of approval for new programmes and review of existing programmes including home and overseas collaborations.
- Oversight of the appointment of external examiners and for the scrutiny of external examiners reports, including those for postgraduate research students.
- Maintenance of the Module Catalogue.
- Keeping the academic community informed about external developments and coordinating responses to external consultations on matters relating to quality and standards.
- Specification of module evaluation and the production of overview reports.
- Monitoring progression and retention on undergraduate programmes of study.
- Maintaining the Quality Website - including programme specifications, regulations, and the publicly available information provided to the QAA.

2.3 Academic Administration Responsibilities

- Ensuring that the Academic Senate, Senate Standing Committees, Validation Teams, and Assessment Boards act in accordance with the academic regulations.
- Acting as final arbitrator in case of dispute as to the interpretation of the regulations. The member of the Directorate of Academic Quality is representing the Head of Academic Administration (of Academic Registrar). This ensures independent advice and provides assurance to the Board of Directors and the Academic Senate that the regulations are being correctly implemented.

- Providing a secretariat service for the Senate and Senate Standing Committees; i.e Organising election of committees, arranging the calendar of meetings of the Senate and Senate Standing committees, agreeing the agenda with the Chair, and distributing the papers to the members of the committee, as well as servicing the committee, ie taking minutes, assisting with the preparation of papers, obtaining information as requested by the committee and informing and advising the Chair and committees of any regulatory matters.
- Providing a secretariat service for the approval of new programmes, the review of existing programmes, external reviews, (QAA Institutional Review) the responsibility for process and outcome being with the Director of Quality.

2.4 Faculties

Faculties are responsible for ensuring the implementation of policies and procedures for quality assurance and enhancement, monitoring their implementation and the production of improvement plans to continuously improve quality including the quality and standards of the student experiences, the review of staff performance and facilitating necessary staff development. The scope of the faculty work includes all the activities necessary for the development and delivery of the Faculty's academic programmes of study.

The Dean of the faculty may be supported by a Vice - Dean, who if appointed will work as part of a team convened by the Director of Academic Quality and by central support units on behalf of the Dean.

2.4.1 The role of Faculties with respect to programmes

- Faculties are responsible to the Senate for ensuring the effective implementation of the processes and procedures to review, monitor and enhance the quality and standards of their academic provision

and for the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy.

- The specific responsibilities of faculties are (for programmes organised out-with a Faculty, these responsibilities will be undertaken by the relevant unit).
 - the implementation of Institution processes and procedures to monitor, review and enhance the quality and standards of all of their academic provision, mainly at programme level, in accordance with University policy;
 - to be responsible to the Senate for the development, approval, review and maintenance of all programmes, suites of programmes and frameworks offered by the Faculty;
 - to take full cognizance of the requirements of the higher education in providing robust evidence on the quality and standards of all academic provision, principally at programme level, embraced by the Faculty;
- to ensure where relevant, the involvement, as far as possible, of appropriate employers/ Professional Council in the associated quality assurance activities;
- to provide sufficient resources, human and physical, to ensure the maintenance of standards within all programmes and modules;
- to ensure that an adequate infrastructure for the support of Faculty programmes is provided and to draw the attention of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic affairs to any shortfall in this support;
- to appropriately consider the academic and financial implications of all proposed collaborative arrangements;
- to review research and staff development strategies within the faculties, through the appropriate faculty, for the purpose of ensuring that all programmes and modules are underpinned by relevant scholarly and professional activity.

Quality Assurance in a modular framework requires regular and effective communications between Programme Boards and faculties involved in delivering the programme. The relationship between these bodies must ensure high levels of mutual understanding and a firm commitment to act co-operatively. In the event of tensions emerging amongst Faculties, Programme Boards and Programme Development Boards, the matter will be referred to the Director of Academic Quality to attempt to resolve the issue. If this is not possible, then matters of quality assurance will be referred to the Senate and matters of resourcing will be referred to Pro the Vice-rector, Academics.

2.4.2 The role of Faculties with respect to Modules

Faculties are responsible for the development, maintenance and monitoring of all modules within their subject area remit.

Specific responsibilities of faculties are:

- developing new and updating existing modules within the relevant discipline areas of the Faculty, including the determination of appropriate standards in relation to the level of the module, and subsequent updating of the module catalogue;
- developing appropriate learning, teaching and assessment strategies for each module, consistent with the learning objectives of the programme (s) to which the modules are delivered;
- identifying the continuing professional development and training needs for staff involved in the development and delivery of learning outcomes and instruments of assessment;
- monitoring the delivery and enabling the enhancement of the quality and standards of the modules within their remit;
- undertaking an annual analysis of a range of performance indicators;
- ensuring the academic health of all modules for which the unit has responsibility;

- ensuring all proposed changes to modules are fully discussed with appropriate Programme Boards and due regard is given to their view prior to approval;
- considering in good time the external examiners' reports insofar as they affect their modules;
- implementing the objectives of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy for which the Faculties are responsible;
- where, appropriate, working with Programme Boards to ensure that quality assurance and academic standard activities pursued at the subject level are informed by the requirements of Professional and Statutory Bodies;
- monitoring research and scholarly activities designed to underpin the programmes to which their modules contribute;
- ensuring the appropriateness of the human and physical resources underpinning the quality and standards of the academic provision within their constituent disciplines;
- Ensuring that the provision they develop and offer is consistent with the academic policy and programme strategy of the Faculty and University .

2.5 Programme Boards

Programme Boards are responsible to the Faculty which hosts the programme for all aspects of quality assurance related to the programmes or suite of programmes under their jurisdiction. A Programme Board shall be established for each programme or suite of programmes. The Programme Boards will comprise programme officers; nominated representatives, normally from each department; and nominated student representatives from the department and level.

Alternatively, PBs may make other arrangements, which will be documented, to ensure that the views of local community are considered at the Programme Boards and have an appropriate impact on the programme.

2.5.1 Key responsibilities of Programme Boards

The specific responsibilities of Programme Boards, in liaison with appropriate faculties, as necessary, are:

- the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards within their programme area;
- the quality of the student experience within their programme area;
- the academic coherence and development of their programme;
- the creation and maintenance of Programme Specifications;
- the maintenance of relationships with Professional teams within their programme area;
- the consideration in good time of external assessor reports;
- the establishment of Student Staff Consultative Groups (SSCG) under the terms of the guidelines agreed by the Senate;
- where appropriate, to maintain effective links with relevant Professional and Statutory Bodies and to ensure that quality assurance and academic standards activities at the programme level are informed by the requirements of these bodies;
- the production of an Annual Programme Analysis for consideration by the Faculty Board.

2.5.2 Composition of a Programme Board

For every approved programme, there is a corresponding Programme Board. Each Programme Board, which may represent a single programme or a suite of programmes, is responsible to the appropriate Faculty Council for implementing the policies of the Academic Senate.

Programme Boards are expected to meet at least once a Semester and a minimum of three times per academic year. The minutes of Programme Boards will be forwarded to the Directorate of Academic Quality.

The composition of the Programme Board is as follows:

- Vice-Chancellor

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs
 - Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Finance
 - Dean of the Faculty in which the programme is located
 - Head of Department
 - Librarian
- One registered student to be elected by and from the registered students on each level of each programme or suite of programmes, save that in the case of one-year programmes two such students shall be so elected, the election and method of appointments to be in accordance with such regulations made by the Students' Union. The representatives in this category will normally be members of the appropriate Student/Staff Consultative Group.
- The Programme Board must include external members who represent appropriate professional, industrial or commercial interests. Such representation should not exceed fifteen per cent of the full membership of the Programme Board.
 - Programme Boards may invite other relevant persons to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis and in a non-voting capacity.

Note:

- The Deans of Faculties which provide substantial levels of teaching shall receive agenda, supporting papers and minutes and shall be entitled to attend meetings in a non-voting capacity unless otherwise a full member/full members of the Programme Board.
- The Chair shall be appointed by the Programme Board, from among the members of the Programme Board.
- The quorum for Programme Boards is 50% of the membership. (The Rector and Vice Rectors are excluded from the quorum).

2.6 Methods of getting information

For effective management of the academic quality, different parts involved in this management should have information relating to QAA. Hence, the methods of getting information on quality and standards of the Academic provision and the quality of the student learning are:

- to have in place a system of in going self-assessment on the faculty, department, directorate and service level,
- to have a communication system within top management and down management levels
- to have a system of collecting information of different indicators such as students' recruitment and admission, students assessment and performance, external assessment, evaluation of lecturers by students, internal and external efficiency, teaching and learning, implementation of programmes, staff and students conduct, etc.
- to have a system of monitoring and enhancement of teaching (courses or module) and administration process

2.7 Process for improving quality

The Manual requires all course and module providers to:

- Set and achieve targets
- Collate records and evidence to support the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY quality standards
- Monitor and review their own performance through critical self-assessment
- Devise appropriate action plans to address weaknesses
- Seek and evaluate students 'view
- Record and analyze specified performance indicators and subject team profile information
- Participate in the Observation, Monitoring and Support of Teaching
- Prepare an annual Course and Module Review
- Prepare an annual Sector Subject Self-Assessment Report
- Provide evidence of continuous quality improvement

2.8 BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Quality Assurance System Design The manual is designed to be rigorous and effective in:

- Ensuring continuous improvement in all aspects of our students needs and expectations
- Raising students' achievement
- Informing the University planning
- Fulfilling the requirements of external stakeholders

Quality improvement is a continuous process at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY and should be integrated into the normal delivery of the learning programme.

III. ISSUES OF RELEVANCE AND ACADEMIC QUALITY

Discourses and commentaries on higher education have been focused on four critical issues namely, access, equity, relevance and quality. The issues of access, equity, relevance and quality have in general underpinned BRAINAE UNIVERSITY efforts to provide quality education and learning opportunities for students. Current curricular provision and the objectives of the Strategic Plan attest to this assertion. Being a member of global academia, BRAINAE UNIVERSITY is obliged to strike a balance between national needs or demands and regional expectations in regard to teaching – learning and research.

The changing global environment is expected to impact on the local situation and circumstances. The world over economies and societies are becoming knowledge-based with tremendous effects on knowledge generation and application. The new Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are dictating the pace on how work ought to be done and how learning interactions could be organised.

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Strategic Plan and operational plans address these and other issues to ensure that the Institution fulfils its statutory mandate at an optimal level of quality.

This chapter offers proposals for quality assurance. It consists of proposals for Academic improvements. It substantiates the legal and policy context which provides the operational framework for executing the functions of the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY.

3.1 Conceptualizing Quality Assurance

Academic Quality Assurance is a collection of systematic evaluation processes to monitor and review performance, identify quality outcomes,

and recommend improvement of the academic units and programs within the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY.

Hence, the Quality Assurance refers to mechanisms and processes for maintaining pre-determined standards in teaching, research and community engagement. It includes rigorous application of policies and rules of conformity to laid-down procedures. The mechanisms and processes are predicated on the need for high academic and ethical standards and professional excellence.

3.2 The Strategic Plan and its Implications for Quality Assurance

Transforming the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY into a world seat of learning, optimally equipped to foster high quality education, and relevant research is a major thrust of the Strategic Plan. The process of transformation is contingent on a number of quality factors including Curricula, Pedagogical, Policy, Administrative and Organizational. The interplay of these factors generates the requisite conditions for developing and sustaining effective and enduring mechanisms for quality assurance.

3.2.1 Theoretical Framework

The Education Production Function provides the theoretical framework for analysing the current situation and making proposals for a quality-assured situation at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY. The inputs and outputs processes are reconsidered within the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY context.

3.3 Legal and Policy Context

The functions of the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY are executed within the context of a number of policy and legal provisions. These are the Constitution of the Republics, regulations by the Ministry of Education through the higher education and conventions enacting at the UNIVERSITY.

3.3.1 Inputs

3.3.1.1 Students' Admission Policy

The policy on admission of students is contained in the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Students Recruitment and Admission Policy. Students are admitted to the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY in accordance with the following guiding principles:

- Provision of access to higher education for a wide spectrum of candidates.
- Ensuring maintenance of appropriate standards in admission to the various programs.
- Ensuring transparency and fair play in the admission of students. Candidates for admission must satisfy the General Institution Requirements for matriculation and the specific departmental requirements.

3.3.1.2 General University Requirements for Degree Programmes Level of Minimum Institutional Facilities Required for Effective Teaching, Learning, Research and Outreach Activities Physical Facilities

The courses in the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY are conducted with support of:

- Information and Communication Technologies Centre: This centre provides electronic library facilities and internet. The centre should be improved so that each student get access to computer and internet.
- Centre for Language Learning/Teaching and Improvement: This centre trains students and staff in foreign languages. Currently, the language of instruction is English. Therefore, students and staff ought to have in intensive training courses in English.

- Different laboratories.
- Centre for Development-oriented Research (CERID):

As indicated in the Research, Consultancy and publication Policy, the CERID is the instrument for regulating the conduct of research and publication within the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY. Research programs to ensure quality output in the academic research field. Development of high quality research practices will enhance the competitiveness of BRAINAE UNIVERSITY thereby expand the opportunity for it to become the best choice among research institutions.

The Policy is intended to be the principal means of clearly stating and informing the Institute community about best practices required to protect the interest of any academic institution. This will allow the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY to become a centre of excellence for agriculture, technology and education thus producing more competitive graduates at the labor market.

In this way, students and academic staff will develop knowledge and understanding of applicable and transferable scientific research skills.

Hence, each faculty is required to:

- ✓ ensure that staff and students in the faculty have adequate training in the ethical conduct of research.
- ✓ ensure that staff and students are aware of health and safety issues and insurance implications.
- ✓ all research requiring ethical clearance to the Research Ethics committee.
 - ✓ ensure that there are effective mechanisms to bring policies, guidelines and procedures to the attention of staff and students in the faculty.

Laboratories

Laboratories should be in the good conditions and respect required standards or norms. Laboratories for physical science-based courses and computer courses should be temperature controlled to enhance the safety and longevity of equipment and chemical materials.

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY should initiate partnerships with different institutions (national and international) which offer similar programmes. For example, at the national level, UR, RAB, IRST, INES, ULK, INATEK, UNILAC, Primary and secondary schools, etc.

Library

Regulations make provision for “functional library areas” with specified dimensional criteria, and library holdings in terms of books. Libraries should have designated areas for online facilities, which offer tremendous opportunities which should be optimally utilized by academic staff and students. The library should respect the Higher Education Council standards relative to the ratio of books per student.

Local environment and demonstration fields

As indicated in the mission of the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY, the Institute was created to help solve the crucial needs of Eastern province, the sub-region, and the country. Hence, programs taught at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY should offer opportunities to be used for local environment development. In this regard, BRAINAE UNIVERSITY has set up demonstration fields where students practice agricultural and farming techniques learnt, and therefore the local population gets models for their farming activities.

Classrooms, seminar rooms and offices

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY should respect all required standards as stated by and within key texts by the Higher Education Council.

Nonphysical facilities

One of the major non physical components in teaching, learning and assessment is made by human resources, in particular, lecturers.

Lecturers should have qualification required by the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY and the Higher Education Council. The minimum Degree required for the lecturer is a Master's Degree in the relevant field of teaching. In total, 40% of staff should have minimum PhD and 60% of staff minimum Master's Degree.

3.4 Process of teaching, learning and assessment

3.4.1 Programme Development and Review

Academic programmes should be provided in conformity with the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Regulations. Hence, the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY is mandated to provide instructions in such programmes of learning as it may think fit and make provision for research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge in such manner as may be determined by it.

Programmes should be periodically reviewed given the dynamics of the socioeconomic environment, the impact of globalisation, and the changing curriculum needs of students, society and the labor market.

The Faculty and Programme Board are responsible for developing and reviewing programmes in respect with the Higher Education Council guideline requirements.

3.4.2 Monitoring of Classes

A policy of class monitoring should be instituted and faculties should act as monitors.

Monitoring could take the following forms:

Structured Pedagogical Monitoring

- ✓ Monitoring of Course/Module Outlines
- ✓ Monitoring of Lesson Delivery

- ✓ Monitoring of Assessment of Students' work
- ✓ Monitoring of teaching by evaluation of lecturers by students

Administrative Monitoring

- ✓ Monitoring of Class lists
- ✓ Monitoring of Lecturers' Class Attendance
- ✓ Monitoring of students' Attendance

3.5 Assessment of Students' Learning

A major objective of higher education is to facilitate learning. Assessment is part of integral to learning and teaching activities. The purposes of assessment are to help staff and students monitor and improve learning, to provide a measure of student achievement and to help assure academic quality and standards. The policy encourages a number of assessment methods.

- ✓ *Formative assessment* is designed to help learners learn more effectively through giving them feedback on their performance indicating how it can be improved.
- ✓ *Summative assessment* is used to indicate the extent of learner's success in meeting the intended learning outcomes of a unit of study or programme.

As prescribed within the Examination Policy, the Commission of examination should ensure that assessment is explicit, valid and reliable.

Core principles of assessment should be:

Assessment should be valid (assessment tasks will assess what is intended to be assessed and be fit for purpose). All Courses/modules have learning outcomes, which are what the assessment is to test. These learning outcomes cover knowledge/ understanding, cognitive skills, practical skills and personal/transferable skills. The Assessment for each course/module must cover all these objectives, and it must be clear what

a given assessment task covers and that it is appropriately designed to do so.

Assessment should be reliable (assessment processes and procedures will be accurate, consistent and trustworthy and their broad outcomes will have the full confidence of all parties). Internal and external moderation are important here.

Assessment should be proportionate. While assessment is essential to measure students' achievement care should be taken that students are not over assessed.

Assessment should be explicit (assessment tasks, processes and procedures will be accessible, clearly explained to and understood by all stakeholders including prospective and current students, academic and related staff, professional bodies and employers).

Forms of assessment that may be appropriate for different learning outcomes include but are not limited to:

- ✓ Tests, examinations, short written pieces (e.g. press releases) that elicit knowledge, understanding and the ability describe accurately;
- ✓ Essays, examinations and other kinds of writing (e.g. briefing notes for employers etc) that require students to produce evidence and make reasoned argument on the basis of it;
- ✓ Essays and examinations that require students to analyze a problem, diagnose the nature of a substance or complaint, plan investigation or propose solutions;
- ✓ Oral and other non-written forms of presentation of arguments or results (oral or poster presentations, websites) - including presentations with a role-play element, such as a presentation to a non-technical audience;

- ✓ Role-plays to explore and test decision-making or group-work skills, or diagnostic ability in medicine or chemistry;
- ✓ Performance: making prototypes, works of art; writing computer programmes, poems; presenting music, drama;
- ✓ Practical tasks: laboratory-based tasks; diagnostic tasks in chemistry; research projects;
- ✓ Reports on practical tasks or visits/placements: research reports, laboratory reports, reflexive accounts of placements etc;
- ✓ Plans for practical tasks or situations: proposals for research or social intervention/action or placement activity, plans for works of art or prototypes.

3.5.1 Setting and arranging Assessment

Written Examination Papers

The lecturer is responsible under the ultimate authority of the Head of department for preparing written examination papers. If other lecturers are involved, then papers should be written in consultation with those involved with the delivery of a course.

In general, questions should relate to the course and may include reference to material not taught in the classroom provided that they had been told explicitly that a particular subject would form part of the course and learning outcomes and that they are expected to undertake self-directed learning as far as the material is concerned.

Finalization of written examination papers

In finalizing the draft of written examination papers, the lecturer should ensure that:

- ✓ the material has not been previously assessed (e.g. in-course assignment, etc)
- ✓ there is no overlap/similarity in material being assessed where more than one written paper is being set for a particular course;

- ✓ questions are designed to allow students to demonstrate independent critical awareness and understanding of the subject, analysis and judgment, and not just rote learning.

The external examiner is requested to approve the final paper and ascertain whether questions are fair and appropriate in relation to the course content and learning outcomes. Where all substantive changes requested by the external examiners have been incorporate into an examination paper, the Head of department or nominee may ratify the final version. Where a department does not act on all changes required by the external examiners, or makes additional substantive changes to the paper, it must be returned to the external examiner for final approval.

Oral Examinations

Oral examinations are conducted in order to provide an opportunity for a fairer and more complete assessment of the individuals and the cohort. There are two types of oral examination: compulsory and discretionary. Students may be invited to a discretionary oral examination because they are on a borderline or because they represent a typical degree classification. Where an oral examination is a compulsory component of the assessment for a course or program, all candidates registered for that program would be expected to attend an oral examination.

Oral examinations, where held, must take place within the published dates of term and must be conducted by at least two (and no more than three) Examiners: normally, one External Examiner and one (or two) Internal Examiner(s).

3.5.2 Marking and assessment procedure

Anonymous marking

- ✓ All written examination scripts must be anonymous, i.e. students should only be identified by candidate number. This is facilitated by the University's examination booklets requiring candidates to write

their student ID number on their scripts with their name being concealed in a sealable section.

- ✓ Where assessment is double - marked, lecturers should determine the final mark to be given.
- ✓ The results of all courses assessed at the end of the first semester must be approved by the Head of Department and be transmitted to the registrar's office.
- ✓ Only in exceptional circumstances should an External Examiner be asked to be the second marker.
- ✓ The signature of the Dean, Head of Department and Director of Academic Quality must be appended to the list of results as evidence that the marks and results are agreed and approved and that processes have been carried out in accordance with the convention of the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY.

3.5.3 Submission of Overall Results

Departments are informed by the Senate referring to the Academic Calendar on the deadlines for the latest submission of overall students' results as well as the period of internal and external examination.

Feedback to Students

Feedback is an important part of the learning process and can serve a dual purpose: it can confirm student's strengths and/or identify potential weaknesses, which may assist students to focus on their future learning requirements, thereby serving a formative function; and it can provide motivation for future learning and assessments. Timely and appropriate feedback should be provided to students. Students should be informed on the arrangements for the provision of such feedback.

Only marks on the Common Assessment Scale may be disclosed to students. Students expect to receive feedback on their performance in all written examinations. The mechanisms governing feedback on written examinations should be given in relevant handbooks.

3.5.4 External Examiners

External examiners should be appointed at the end of the semester to check the overall examination process just carried out by all institute internal parties. An external examiner should check all written examination scripts. It should be agreed that the Head of department makes a selection of scripts to be sent to the External Examiner, the principles for such selection should be agreed with the External Examiner beforehand.

The guiding principle for any selection of scripts is that External Examiners should have enough evidence to determine that internal marking and classifications are of an appropriate standard and are consistent. Therefore, External Examiners should see a sample of scripts from the full range of the exams. Furthermore, External Examiners have the right to see any work that contributes to the overall program assessment.

3.5.5 Assessment Offence and appeal

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Academic Regulations state that cheating in any assessment, whether formative or summative, may result in disciplinary action such as:

- ✓ Possession in any examination of material which has not been authorized in writing by the relevant Course unit /Module lecturer.
- ✓ Copying from another student in an examination;
- ✓ Removing an examination book from an examination room;
- ✓ Impersonating another candidate in relation to any assessment;
- ✓ Permitting another person to impersonate one's self in relation to any assessment;
- ✓ Paying or otherwise rewarding another person for writing or preparing work to be submitted for assessment;

- ✓ Colluding with another person in the preparation or submission of work which is to be assessed. This does not apply to collaborative work authorized by the relevant Course unit/Module lecturer.
- ✓ Plagiarism.

Where the major problems arise in the process of academic issues, the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Academic Regulations posit that a student may appeal against an examination mark but specific right of such appeals against a decision involving academic judgment are very limited. The Academic Senate convenes an ad hoc committee consisting of academic staff to address the substantive issues.

Assessment of lecturers by students

By the end of each academic year, preferably before the commencement of the second semester examinations, students should be given opportunities to assess their lecturers.

The assessment should cover the following:

- ✓ Adequacy and relevance of course content
- ✓ Delivery capacity of lecturer
- ✓ Class attendance by lecturer
- ✓ Assessment of students' work
- ✓ Information on course adequacy and relevance could be used for Programme/course review.

Reports on students' assessment should be part of the annual appraisal system.

The Annual Staff appraisal at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY is a systematic process of determining the effectiveness and efficiency of academic staff in teaching, research, publication and community service. The staff appraisal form provides the basis for an objective appraisal of staff. The criteria for appraisal coincide with those on which staffs are scored for promotion by the scoring committee.

Students' projects

All students will take a Project Dissertation/module in the final year of a Honour's degree. Students on a major/minor programme will normally undertake a Project in their major subject. Students on a joint or triple minor programme will undertake a Project which either specializes in one of the subjects they are studying or draws on two or more of them.

The supervisor should provide 20 minutes by week for each student supervised and the maximum of students to be supervised is 5.

3.6 Outputs

Students who successfully complete their programs of study at the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY will be awarded degrees. Degrees are used by their holders to seek employment or opportunities for further studies at home and abroad.

According to the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY, the purpose of tertiary education focuses on the following points:

- ✓ Provision of specialisation in one or more disciplines of knowledge and skills.
- ✓ Acquisition of knowledge – skills and attitudes for self-enhancement and to earn a living.
- ✓ Development of students in all facets of knowledge (cognitive, affective, psychomotor).
- ✓ Acquisition of positive values towards Rwanda.
- ✓ Provision of opportunities for academic staff to do research.

The BRAINAE UNIVERSITY graduates are expected to be knowledgeable across a number of academic subject disciplines with the following competencies:

- ✓ Critical thinking capacity.
- ✓ Analytical ability.
- ✓ Interpersonal, communication and decision-making skills.

- ✓ Capacity in the use of information technology.
- ✓ Entrepreneurial Skills.
- ✓ They should be functionally versatile and adaptable to new and changing work situations.

3.6.1 Degrees to be awarded

The following degrees should be awarded by the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY:

- Doctor of Philosophy
- Doctorate
- Masters of Philosophy
- Masters
- Bachelor
- Diploma

3.6.2 Academic Audit

The internal academic audit will be provided by the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY Academic Quality Committee in collaboration with Deans and Head of departments and academic services. A systematic process of academic audit should be instituted within faculties, departments and the Academic services. The internal audit report should be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic affairs and transmitted and discussed in the Academic Senate meeting.

The feedback should be done by the Academic office for each service concerning the results. The Academic Quality should provide for each year 2 academic audits (one by semester) and produce final academic year report.

IV. CONCLUSION

This policy has been developed in order to set up guidelines for better academic quality assurance within the BRAINAE UNIVERSITY. It remains very important for everybody responsible for its implementation to be aware of everything stated inside. Academic organs within the university should play the foremost role for it to be effective. Moreover, this plan should be integrated into the institution general framework of teaching, research and services to the community. It suffices to stress that more suitably the policy will be implemented, better outcomes will result.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. - Module Evaluation Form

MODULE EVALUATION FORM Module _____

Date _____

	STRONG LY DISAGREE	DISAGR EE	NEITHE R	AGREE	STRONG LY AGREE	N/A
LECTURES						
The aims of lectures are clear	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lectures are well prepared	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lectures are well structured	1	2	3	4	5	6
Lectures are clearly presented	1	2	3	4	5	6
The content is interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6
The content is useful	1	2	3	4	5	6
The content relates to assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
The lecturer is punctual	1	2	3	4	5	6
The lecturer is enthusiastic	1	2	3	4	5	6
The lecturer is readily available for questions and advice	1	2	3	4	5	6
SEMINARS						
The aims of seminars are clear	1	2	3	4	5	6
Seminars are well prepared	1	2	3	4	5	6
The use of time in seminars is good	1	2	3	4	5	6
The seminars involve useful active	1	2	3	4	5	6

learning/group work						
The content is interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6
The content is useful	1	2	3	4	5	6
The content relates to assessment	1	2	3	4	5	6
OTHER RESOURCES						
The library is adequately stocked for this module	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have had good advice about reading for this module	1	2	3	4	5	6
The additional material which was supplied was useful	1	2	3	4	5	6
The laboratories are adequate	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have adequate access to computers	1	2	3	4	5	6
Visits/field trips have been helpful	1	2	3	4	5	6
ASSESSMENT						
The assessment is appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6
The assessment is fair	1	2	3	4	5	6
The level expected is achievable	1	2	3	4	5	6
WORKLOAD						
There is enough time to complete all the	1	2	3	4	5	6

work on this module						
The module is not too difficult	1	2	3	4	5	6
The module is not too easy	1	2	3	4	5	6

What are the three best things about the module?

1

2

3

What are the three worst things about the module?

1

2

Is there anything missing from the module that you think ought to be there?