

8 Internal Quality Enhancement System and Framework

(Revised based on UGC Circular No. 09/2019)

General

The University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka hereby adopts this Policy as approved by the Council of the University at its 410th meeting held on 28th May 2016, amended by the Council of the University at its 454th meeting held on 09th June 2021 and revised by the Council of the University at its 459th meeting held on 27th November 2021.

Preamble

Ongoing changes in higher education, in the context of national educational reforms, UGC directives and challenges posed by globalization require the University of Jaffna (*hereinafter referred to as "the University"*) to actively engage in the development and implementation of quality assurance standards in key performance areas. The University of Jaffna, in order to enhance quality, and ensure and sustain academic standards, has developed its Internal Quality Enhancement System (IQES) and established an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) as per the UGC Circular No. 04/2015, which was renamed as Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA) as per the UGC Circular No. 09/2019, at University level and Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) at Faculty level to institutionalize enhancement and sustenance of quality in all key areas of delivery.

The following Quality Assurance Principles, Policy and Quality Enhancement Framework have been approved by the Council with the aim to empower the CQA and IQACs in their engagement in fostering quality enhancement within the university and ensuring their active involvement in higher management to institutionalize a culture of quality.

Norms of Quality Assurance

The following principles inform the approach of the University to quality assurance:

1. Quality assurance shall not detract from or become a substitute for quality.
2. Quality assurance shall operate at the levels of the University, Faculty, Department, Centre and Unit, with the responsibilities that it entails within the broader context where the Senate, Faculty Boards and Management Committees, take collective responsibility for the academic standards of the University.
3. Quality assurance and enhancement processes shall rely on credible and relevant internal evidence, including student opinion, external examiners' reports and student performance data.
4. The findings of quality assurance shall be made public in ways that allow sharing of different good practices and innovations across departments and assure students that quality is taken seriously by the University.
5. The teaching, learning and assessment practices shall be subject to review by an internalized periodic review process periodically conducted by the CQA and also externally by the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC.

Quality Enhancement Policy

The University is committed to quality enhancement (QE) in all spheres of activity including governance and management, academic development and planning, teaching and training, assessments and awards, student support and welfare, research and innovation, scholarship, and outreach activities. For this purpose, the University is committed to the following:

1. achieving QE goals through institutionalizing quality culture within the University as a whole and specifically within the Faculties, Centres and Units by establishing and implementing the internal quality assurance (IQA) system, whose functions will be complimented by external quality assurance (EQA) implemented by the national quality assurance system, namely the QAC of UGC;
2. facilitation of quality enhancement through the Standing Committee on Quality Assurance (S/C on QA), with the CQA as its apex unit along with the IQACs serving as its sub-units at Faculty/Centre/Unit levels;
3. internalization of best practices among individuals and in all spheres of governance and management of academic administration of the University to promote continuous quality enhancement, through the CQA & IQACs;
4. empowering the IQES through the By-law to maximize its performance by designing and introducing best practices and standards for key elements, procedures and guidelines for academic development and planning, teaching and training, assessment and rewards, student support, welfare, research and development, and outreach activities; and
5. ensuring compliance of all stakeholders with guidelines issued by the IQES, and their full participation in CQA and IQACs driven activities, including training programmes and workshops, implementation and monitoring processes, and addressing of shortcomings, highlighted by regular internal quality review processes.

Quality Enhancement Framework

1. The IQES shall be under the purview of the Vice Chancellor and shall be assisted and guided by the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance (S/C on QA).
2. The CQA shall be under the preview of the Vice Chancellor and receive administrative and logistic support from the Academic Affairs Department of the Central Administration.
3. The CQA, as the nodal point of the IQES, shall drive the internal quality assurance system centrally as well as through IQACs at Faculty/Centre/Unit levels.
4. The IQACs shall be under the purview of the respective Deans of Faculties.
5. The IQES shall perform the following two broad functions:
 - promoting adoption and internalizing of new trends and technologies in higher education; and
 - internalizing quality principles and culture in all spheres of university activity.

6. In performing its functions, the IQES shall be guided by the S/C on QA, and where necessary the CQA and the IQACs.
7. The first function of promoting adoption and internalizing new trends in higher education shall be performed in liaison with University Curriculum Evaluation Committee, and Faculty-level Curriculum Development, Revision and Monitoring Committees. Responsibilities include, among others, enabling the adoption of the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework and implementing the principles of outcome-based education and student-centred learning (OBE-SCL) in curriculum development and teaching and learning, and assessments as well as encouraging the use of ICT-based methods to promote blended teaching and learning.
8. The second function shall be performed in liaison with the Faculty level IQACs and includes enabling the adoption and internalizing of quality principles and culture in keeping with the guidelines and best practices prescribed in the relevant UGC adopted QA Manuals and through conducting periodic internal quality reviews. This Centre shall also assist the higher management and faculties to address the weaknesses identified by the external quality assurance reviews by developing and implementing action plans for the recommendations proposed.

Organizational Structure and Management of IQES

The IQES is a system designed to promote internalizing and institutionalizing national guidelines prescribed by the UGC and the MHE and quality dimensions, namely best-practices and standards, as prescribed by the QAC of UGC, and is operated by the CQA functioning as the catalytic centre in liaison with the IQACs at Faculty/Centre/Unit levels.

1.1. Functions of IQES

1. Developing an Action Plan for the coming year clearly identifying the actions, responsibilities for their completion and target dates.
2. Monitoring the progress of implementation of University Policies and Regulations and facilitating the process of implementation as necessary.
3. Reviewing progress of implementation of Subject Benchmark Statements, SLQF Guidelines and OBE-SCL approach in curriculum development.
4. Monitoring transformation from teacher-centred teaching and training to student-centred teaching and learning, and implementation of blended multimode delivery methods including computer-aided teaching and training methods.
5. Evaluating in liaison with CQA and IQACs the effectiveness of the internal review system for quality assurance and the extent to which academic departments adhere to enhancement plans.
6. Improving the quality of educational programmes by identifying good practices as well as learning deficiencies and obstacles, and assisting systematic review and development of processes for establishing effective policies, strategies and priorities with a view to support continuing improvement.

7. Making proposals for the improvement of the process of self-evaluation and annual reporting and offering constructive comments on templates and guidelines supporting reviews at Course, Programme and Faculty levels.
8. Identifying programmes with high rates of retention and progression, causative factors and features of good practice that could be replicated in other programmes while proposing remedies and enabling remedial measures for programmes with disappointing retention and progression or fall short of reference standards.
9. Reviewing the progress of academic reforms and assist Faculties to keep abreast of trends in higher education.

1.2. Senate Standing Committee on QA

The Management Committee of IQAU, which was established in terms of UGC Circular No. 04/2015 of 05.05.2015, has been made a Standing Committee of the Senate of the University in terms of UGC Circular No. 09/2019 of 07.10.2019 and in accordance with provisions stipulated in Section 46(6)(vii) of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 (as amended).

The objective of this Standing Committee is to guide the quality monitoring and enhancement system comprising CQA and IQACs to internalize and institutionalize national guidelines prescribed by the UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education and quality dimensions prescribed by the QAC of UGC.

1.2.1. Composition

1. Vice Chancellor (Chairperson)
2. Deputy Vice Chancellor (if relevant)
3. Rector of Campus (if relevant)
4. Deans of Faculties
5. Registrar or his/her representative
6. Librarian or his/her representative
7. Bursar or his/her representative
8. Director of Centre for Quality Assurance (Secretary)
9. Directors of Centres and Units
10. Coordinators of Internal Quality Assurance Cells of Faculties/Units
11. Any other member recommended by the University Council

The Head of Academic Affairs and Publication Division shall function as the Convener.

1.2.2. TOR of the Senate Standing Committee on QA

The Terms of Reference for the Senate Standing Committee on QA are as follows:

1. Design and develop By-laws for Governance and Management of the IQA system, including the management CQA & IQACs.

2. Develop and prescribe institutional By-laws, guidelines and manuals for academic development and planning, teaching and learning, assessment, learner support services, research and innovations and community outreach and promote the adoption of such By-laws/guidelines/ manuals.
3. Promote adoption of QAC of UGC prescribed quality dimensions (best practices & standards) at all levels of operations for reaching the national standards/benchmarks.
4. Review progress of adoption of University-wide academic reforms and internalizing quality principles and quality culture.
5. Liaise with the QAC of UGC to implement external quality assurance reviews (Institutional and Study Programme reviews).
6. Review EQA Review (Institutional and Study Programme Reviews) and IQA Review reports, and design and adopt action plans for quality enhancement, based on recommendations of the reports.
7. Monitor progress of implementation of annual quality enhancement work plans, at University and Faculty levels.
8. Guide and assist the Director/CQA in executing his/her duties.

1.3. Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA)

The CQA is the nodal agency for ensuring total quality management by ushering in innovations that lead to achieving excellence and adoption of intervention strategies to monitor successful implementation of policy. The CQA functions to assure institutional accountability with probity to all the stakeholders and funding agencies, the UGC and the Ministry of Higher Education (MHE) in particular, and the society as a whole. Thus the CQA and IQACs adopt the Institutional Review Manual and the Programme Review Manual as adopted by the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and the UGC and assist with external and internal reviews of the programmes and the Institution. The implementation of the action plans developed based on the recommendations of the review reports will be monitored and reported to the Senate by the CQA and to the respective faculty boards by the IQACs. Administratively, the CQA should function as part of the Academic Branch of the University.

1.3.1. Recommended Objectives and Functions of CQA

1. The CQA should seek to:
 - a) institutionalize a culture of quality assurance in accordance with national guidelines and international practices;
 - b) ensure that the university procedures are aligned with UGC guidelines and national requirements; and
 - c) develop and maintain favourable public perception of the University, through improved quality of education based on consistent practice of quality assurance procedures.

2. In order to achieve these objectives, the major functions of the CQA shall include:
 - a) Supporting the University and its programme offering entities in preparing for external quality assurance assessments and accreditation requirements;
 - b) Offering guidance and assistance to programme offering entities in defining programme objectives and outcomes, graduate profiles, and course curricula in accordance with national reference points such as the Subject Benchmark Statements (SBS) and Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF);
 - c) Supporting the establishment and effective functioning of Faculty IQA cells;
 - d) Promoting and coordinating all quality assurance related activities within the University, through the conduct of workshops and seminars, development of manuals, and other appropriate capacity building activities;
 - e) Liaising with the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC, other external quality assurance agencies and relevant international agencies; and
 - f) Developing, reviewing and revising by-laws and standard operational procedures for the governance and management of the CQA

1.4. Director of CQA

The Director of CQA should be free of other major administrative responsibilities in order to implement QA processes effectively. Since academic auditing is a part of internal quality assurance, the Director should not be a Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dean or an administrative Head of Department in order to maintain the transparency of the QA process.

The Director should be a senior academic or Professor with a minimum of three years experience in administration as well as in the QA processes and possess a thorough knowledge of the external review process, since the Director bears important responsibilities in this process. Where the Director of CQA is not a Professor, he/she should be an invited member of the Senate. The Director of CQA should be appointed for a period of three years in the first instance with the concurrence of the UGC. He/she shall be eligible for reappointment for not more than one more term of three years.

1.4.1. Duties and Responsibilities of the Director of CQA

The duties and responsibilities of the Director of CQA fall into three categories.

(a). Coordination of Academic related Activities

1. Enable adoption of guidelines and benchmarks prescribed/adopted by the University in academic development and planning in accordance with guidelines of the UGC and Ministry of Higher Education.
2. Enable adoption of University-prescribed By-laws, guidelines and manuals for the use within the University.
3. Enable adoption of blended teaching and learning such as using ICT tools with conventional pedagogical methods.

4. Enable inter-faculty credit transfer, synchronization of academic programmes, and inter-faculty cooperation & resource sharing.

(b). Coordination of Quality Assurance related Activities

1. Function as Officer-in Charge of the CQA of the University and hence coordinate all IQA related activities within the University in liaison with the IQACs of Faculties, Centres and Units.
2. Regularly brief the University Senate and Council and UGC Standing Committee on QA through written submission on progress made by Director of CQA in internalizing quality culture within the University and across Faculties, Centres and Units
3. Develop By-laws for the operational aspects of the Internal Quality Enhancement System that empower the CQA and IQACs to annually review University-wide operations and operations at the level of Faculties, Centres and Units.
4. Enable adoption of quality enhancement mechanisms to internalize quality principles and culture, promote adoption of best practices and standards with respect to the criteria in the IR Manual, conduct regular IQA Reviews, and design and commence succeeding quality enhancement cycles based on previous IQA review findings.
5. Liaise with the UGC through the QAC and other external agencies to conduct external reviews and QA activities.
6. Coordinate and assist with preparation of Institutional Self-evaluation Report (SER) for External QA Reviews and Manuals on QA aspects.
7. Provide advice and guidance on QA matters, including preparation of SERs for External Programme Reviews, proposals for new degree programmes, to all Faculties, Centres and Units.
8. Develop a 3-year strategic plan for the CQA and obtain approval from the University Senate and Council and concurrence of the QAC of the UGC before implementation.
9. Develop the annual work plan for the CQA and obtain approval from the University Senate and Council at the commencement of each calendar year.
10. Develop the annual budget estimate for QA activities in the university and obtain the recommendation of Finance Committee and approval of the Council.
11. Ensure the establishment of a webpage for the CQA in the university website and regular updating of the CQA webpage.

(c). Coordination of other Activities

1. In liaison with the Strategic Planning and MIS Unit, conduct regular market survey tracer studies to appraise:
 - (i). manpower needs and trends;

- (ii). employer feedback on quality and performance of University graduates;
- (iii). emerging areas of activity that would need trained manpower; and
- (iv). tracer studies of University graduates.

and disseminate the findings of tracer studies to all stakeholders.

2. Promote new academic degree programmes, diploma and certificate courses to be offered through internal, open and distance education modes, and
3. Conduct public awareness and promotion campaigns through mass media about the University, University Programmes, and research and development.

1.5. Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)

The IQAC is a sub-unit of the IQES at Faculty or Unit level, headed by a Coordinator appointed from among senior academic staff (Senior Lecturer Grade I or above) by the Dean with the approval of the Faculty Board or the Head of the Unit with the approval of the Board of Management on part-time basis for a period of three years, with provision for extension. The Coordinator shall be assisted by the Committee of IQAC.

1.5.1. Composition of the Committee of IQAC

- Dean of the Faculty (Chair)
 - Heads of Departments/Units
 - Coordinator/ IQAC
 - Chairperson of Curriculum Development, Revision and Monitoring Committee
 - Chairperson of Higher Degrees Committee
 - Chairperson of Research Committee
 - Deputy Proctor (if any)
 - One Senior Student Counsellor (representing student counsellors),
 - Coordinators of relevant units such as Career Guidance Unit, CGEE, UBL, Well-Being, Sports Advisory, Welfare and English Language Teaching Sub-units
 - Senior Assistant Librarian/Assistant Librarian
 - Other members/nominees as appropriate and recommended by the Dean
- AR/SAR/DR of the Faculty/Centre/Unit shall function as the Secretary to the Committee.

1.5.2. Terms of Reference of the Committee of IQAC

1. Guide the IQAC in the adoption of relevant By-laws prescribed by the University for governance and management of the IQAC.
2. In liaison with the Curriculum Development, Revision and Monitoring Committee, enable adoption of guidelines and benchmarks adopted by the University for academic development and planning in keeping with the guidelines of the UGC and Ministry of Higher Education.

3. Guide the IQAC to internalize quality principles and dimensions prescribed by the QAC of UGC within the Faculty, Centre/Unit in the management, curriculum design and development, course design and development, teaching and learning, student support and services, assessments, and other allied functions and services of study programmes.
4. Guide the IQAC to design and implement regular internal quality reviews.
5. Study the reports of the EQA and IQA reviews and adopt action plans based on the recommendations of the reports.
6. Guide the IQAC to implement quality enhancement plans and monitor the progress of implementation of annual quality enhancement work plans.

1.5.3. Duties and Responsibilities of the Coordinator of IQAC

The duties and responsibilities of the Coordinator/IQAC fall into two categories:

(a). Coordination of Academic Affairs and related Activities

Liaise with Curriculum Development, Revision and Monitoring Committee in internalizing the following academic reforms:

1. Enable adoption of guidelines and benchmarks prescribed/adopted by the University in academic development and planning in accordance with guidelines of the UGC and Ministry of Higher Education;
2. Assist adoption of blended teaching and learning such as using ICT tools with conventional pedagogical methods; and
3. Assist adoption of Inter-faculty credit transfer, synchronization of academic programmes, and inter-faculty cooperation and resource sharing.

(b). Coordination of Internal Quality Assurance related Activities

Function as the officer-in charge of the IQAC of the Faculty/Centre/Unit and thus promote the following IQA related activities within the Faculty/Centre/Unit.

1. Adopting University approved By-laws for implementing the Internal Quality Assurance System to empower the IQAC to promote internalizing university By-laws/guidelines/manuals for curriculum development, teaching and training and assessments.
2. Adopting and implementing quality enhancement mechanisms for internalizing quality principles and culture.
3. Enabling adoption of University prescribed procedures within the Faculty.
4. Liaising with the CQA and QAC of UGC and other external agencies to facilitate external reviews.
5. Assisting the CQA in the preparation of Institutional Self-evaluation Report (SER) and Programme-specific SERs for External Quality Assurance Reviews.
6. Providing advice and guidance on QA matters to all Departments/Centres/Units.

The document UJ/R/PL/15/2021, *“Internal Quality Enhancement System and Framework”* was approved by the Council of University of Jaffna at its 459th meeting held on 27th November 2021 and subsequently amended according to the document UJ/N/OT/01/2022 *“Sub-Committees of the Council and the Senate and Management of the University”* which was approved by the Council of University of Jaffna at its 461th meeting held on 29th January 2022