



**ACCRA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
(ATU)**

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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1. DEFINITIONS

The key terms in this policy have been defined as follows:

1.1 Assessment

In the context of quality assurance, assessment is the process of identifying and ensuring that appropriate internal procedures are in place and operational and that outcomes of academic programmes and activities are in line with established standards.

1.2 Audit

Audit is a process of identifying and ensuring that appropriate internal quality assurance processes are in place and operational.

1.3 Programme Review

Programme review is a process of holistically appraising programmes and resources, aiming at its further evolution, and improvement.

1.4 Quality control

This is the process whereby outcomes are assessed to determine whether they are of the prescribed standard.

1.5 Quality Management

Quality management refers to all the processes in place to facilitate achievement of quality in an institution.

1.6 Stakeholders

The term stakeholders include agencies (government and private) that control Institutions, individuals, or groups that participate in or have responsibilities towards High education in Ghana.

1.7 Quality

ATU's Graduate School defines quality as systems, procedures and actions with an aim to ensuring the prompt delivery of innovative technology and practiced-based skills, competencies and attitudes to benefit its key client, i.e., the graduate student and all other relevant key stakeholders.

1.8 Quality Assurance

QA is best described as making promises and providing evidence of keeping them. It refers to the process of assessing the extent to which units in the institution deliver on their promises. It is what the Graduate School and its stakeholders enjoy quality control which is effectively applied in the work of the organization.

This refers to operational techniques, procedures and objectives that are used to fulfill the requirements of quality. The overall aim is to deliver the best service possible and to ensure continuous improvement. The assurance of quality is fundamental for all work undertaken by the Graduate School and should be implemented by all staff and stakeholders in their work. To that effect, ATU Graduate School shall maintain consistency in work methods in accordance with already set policies, procedures, regulations and codes of practice of ATU without significant deviation.

1.9 Quality Assurance Policy

ATU Graduate School Quality Assurance policy is a document promulgated to maintain an effective and efficient quality assurance process designed to eliminate deficiencies and inaccuracies and to ensure high quality standards. The intended goal of this Quality Assurance Policy is to affirm ATU Graduate School's commitment to maintain a high standard of quality in the delivery of services, relationships with staff and stakeholders and ensure continuous improvement, best value and hence best quality of outputs and outcomes.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DGS: Dean of Graduate School

GS: Graduate School

DRIPPT: Directorate of Research, Innovation, Publication and Technology Transfer

HoDs: Head of Departments

ATU: Accra Technical University

QA: Quality Assurance

QAAPD: Quality Assurance Unit

QAAPD: Quality Assurance and Academic Planning Directorate

GTEC: Ghana Tertiary Education Council

2. POLICY

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

The University is committed to the implementation of a QA system that would enhance the GS as an outstanding and internationally recognised School committed to promoting excellence and innovation in teaching, research and community and extension service.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

The main purpose of the policy is to implement systematic and sustainable protocols for assuring the quality of GS education delivered through quality data and analysis of same. The school intends to achieve this purpose by ensuring quality in recruiting and retaining staff of the highest qualifications and other creative endeavors striving for excellence and promoting quality assurance in all its activities.

2.3 POLICY SCOPE

The quality assurance (QA) policy of the Graduate School (GS) of Accra Technical University (ATU) refers to the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that aims at prevention of inefficiency in the delivery of services. The QA activity is therefore a continuous process. It is hoped that lessons learnt during the implementation of this policy will feed into laid down mechanisms to ensure that the mission of the Graduate School is achieved.

Improving the quality of teaching and research is at the heart of ATU Graduate School and will be of crucial importance for the School's strategic growth compared with other traditional and technical universities in Ghana and the sub region. This policy focuses on the need to promote a culture of quality at the institutional level. The establishment of a quality culture is crucial as it ensures the commitment of students, faculty, and administrative staff alike.

The School shall operate an integrated system for quality assurance and enhancement, and contribute effectively to the achievement of the ATU's Strategic pillars, which underpin its vision and mission. The ultimate aim underpinning this system is the School's commitment to produce the best possible student experience. Such a system must be sufficiently robust to safeguard the standards of academic awards and clearly articulate the Graduate school's policy. The School understands the importance of keeping abreast of best practices in higher education and sees this as part of being a self-critical academic community, which evaluates and enhances its quality assurance procedures.

The School shall subject itself to recurring quality audits and scrutiny from a wide range of professional and statutory regulatory bodies. The School shall also commit itself to further changes and enhancements in years to come. The key quality principles set out

below, are important as a guide to staff and students in their endeavour to secure high standards of the awards and a high-quality student experience.

An integrated system of quality assurance for the Graduate School is a comprehensive framework designed to ensure the continuous improvement and maintenance of academic standards across all programmes and activities. It combines internal and external evaluation processes, including rigorous curriculum reviews, faculty assessments, student feedback mechanisms, and accreditation compliance. This system will foster a culture of excellence by aligning educational outcomes with institutional goals, enhancing student-learning experience, and ensuring that the school meets both national and international standards of higher education.

This policy seeks to ensure that an appropriate quality assurance system (a set of quality assurance policies, procedures and performance indicators) is in place to realize the vision and mission of the GS.

3.0 POLICY PRINCIPLES

The main principles underpinning the School's Quality Assurance policy are:

- a) quality assurance and enhancement is best achieved through fostering of an ethos of critical self-reflection in partnership with students;
- b) the academic community, individuals and groups have the responsibility of enhancing the quality of teaching, learning and research at the Graduate School.
- c) academic excellence and rigorous external peer review are vital means to identify areas for improvement, to foster collaboration and the exchange of best practice.
- d) the benchmarking of academic standards is the heart of the School's procedures.
- e) it is desirable to promote consistency and standardization wherever possible.
- f) quality assurance unit in the GS should be mindful of the challenges that confront the School and hence ensure the interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum, and strong links with professions, industry and government agencies.
- g) students and other stakeholders are key contributors to the shaping of GS policies and mechanisms in the areas of quality and standards.
- h) all policies and procedures relating to quality and standards should be subject to regular review to ensure their ongoing fitness for purpose in a rapidly changing internal and external environment.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES

Internal quality assurance mechanisms shall be departmentally generated and shall be continuous. The mechanisms shall be coherent with the quality assurance framework approved by the Academic Board and shall include mechanisms to assess the following areas:

- a) Quality of Programmes and Courses
 - b) Quality of Academic Staff
 - c) Quality of Teaching and Learning Experience
 - d) Quality in Students' Assessment (Internal Moderation)
 - e) Quality in Support Services
 - f) Quality of Resources and Facilities
 - g) Quality of Research
 - h) Quality of Programmes Review Process
1. Course assessment: Refer to the Policy on Assessment, Grading and Certification of Graduate Programmes
 2. Student assessment of teaching and courses: Refer to the Policy on Student Assessment of Teaching and Courses
 3. Internal quality audit (including quality of teaching and non- teaching staff). This shall be done at the end of the academic year and shall be based on the institution's quality benchmarks.
 4. Peer observation of teaching and learning: refer to the policy on peer observation of teaching and learning
 5. Supervision, assessment and validation of the conduct of examinations refer to the rules and regulation for invigilators and students.
 6. Graduate admissions regulations and processes refer to the graduate admissions policy. In addition, the admissions board shall review the admission requirements for various programmes and submit same to Academic Board.

7. Administration of examinations and assessments.

The processes involved in the administration of the papers are covered in the guidelines on the administration of examinations and assessments):

- a) setting of questions and marking schemes
- b) moderation of submitted questions and marking schemes
- c) administration of questions to candidates
- d) marking of scripts and submission of marks
- e) vetting of marks and marked scripts
- f) the pro vice-chancellor shall write to the appropriate departments to submit the names of three (3) internal examiners

8. Competency-based approach to postgraduate studies

A competency-based paradigm requires that the effectiveness of education be assessed by the use of objective metrics to measure acquired skills. It is expected that all postgraduate students will significantly improve their cognitive knowledge, experiential knowledge and technical (psychomotor) skills in their area of study. The procedure for assessing the effectiveness of CBT in a postgraduate programme is provided for in the CBT Guidelines on Postgraduate Studies.

4.2 EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

To ensure that high quality standards are maintained, the following external mechanisms shall be utilized. Quality of educational programmes shall be assured through External Review by any of the following:

- a) External Examiners
- b) External Professional Bodies
- c) External Accreditation Agencies
- d) Employers/Industries
- e) Alumni
- f) Collaborating Universities

The procedure for External Review is detailed in the Guidelines on the Administration of Examinations and Assessments.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY GUIDELINES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

After its establishment, the GS is expected to undergo rapid expansion in terms of staffing, student enrolment and new academic programmes. An effective teaching and learning policy is a precondition for social change and economic development. The scope of operations of the QA policy shall cover the following aspects.

5.2 QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING AND RESEARCH

The School shall ensure an environment that meets students and staff academic needs through good planning and evaluations. This is based on the need to focus on best practices, results, performance and outcomes of both students and staff, and provide leadership and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to support staff development, career progression and high completion rates.

5.2.1 Teaching and Learning

In order to ensure quality in the area of teaching and learning, The GS shall ensure quality assurance through:

- a) Periodic review of teaching programmes to confirm the extent to which:
 - Programmes are meaningfully structured and organized;
 - The goals and learning objectives are achieved;
 - Programmes not only meet student needs but actually provide an experience that lives up to their highest expectations;
 - Programmes help in the attainment of the College's academic vision and mission;
 - Teaching and learning constantly address critical national human resources requirements;
 - The quality and quantity of available human, material and financial resources meet the programme requirements; and Programmes are both viable and relevant.
- b) Ensuring that establishment and running of teaching programmes/units proceed on the principle of equitable use of resources and cost effectiveness;
- c) Regularly arranging for external evaluation of the quality of the teaching programmes offered by its units in terms of their contents, delivery methods and internal assessment processes;

- d) Involvement of professional bodies, potential employers and other relevant sections of the society in reviewing and evaluating academic programmes through curriculum review workshops, tracer studies and other appropriate mechanisms;
- e) Ensuring that all major curriculum reviews or introduction of new programmes are informed by stakeholder inputs; and
- f) Every programme shall undergo at least one review within a span of two years.

5.2.2 Research

In fulfilling the obligation to ensure high quality in the various research undertakings carried out in its directorate, faculties and departments, the GS shall consistently monitor and evaluate the quality and quantity of the research activities conducted, with specific focus on:

- a) Relevance and appropriateness of the set priorities;
- b) Adequacy of financial allocations to research activities;
- c) Proper structuring of research projects/programmes to ensure relevance in graduate teaching and training of junior staff;
- d) Adequacy in quantity and quality of research outputs;
- e) Effectiveness of dissemination channels and impacts of research results;
- f) Adherence to existing DRIPPTT regulations and procedures relating to research and publications; and
- g) Integration of research outputs into teaching/learning.
- h) Supporting staff to solicit research funds

5.3 OUTREACH PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Ensuring the dissemination of good practices within and from outside the School by upholding the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, gender mainstreaming, and equality for both students and staff.

5.4 COLLABORATION

The Graduate School shall strive to establish an effective liaison with stakeholders in offering professional services. The school intends to build and sustain productive relationships within, and with government departments, regional, international bodies,

and other universities while strengthening and promoting confidence in the public that the quality of provision and awards are safeguarded, enhanced and maintained.

5.5 COMMITMENT TO CHANGE & INNOVATION

Reaffirm commitment in promoting an innovative quality assurance culture and continuous improvement, building on the experiences of the past, seeking opportunities for needed change and pursuing and promoting creativity among staff and students within the School.

5.6 PUBLIC AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES

The GS shall constantly monitor and frequently evaluate the quantity and quality of public and consultancy services rendered by its staff and students, with a view to assuring the highest possible quality in terms of:

- a) Relevance of the priorities set institutionally and by individual units;
- b) Adequacy and quality of outputs in public service provision; and
- c) Overall impact of GS services to the public.

5.7 SUPPORT SERVICES

In discharging its responsibility to ensure quality in the area of provision of support services, the GS shall continually monitor and regularly assess the appropriateness and adequacy of support services provided for students and staff, especially in respect of adequacy and quality of: (i) Academic and social counseling services; (ii) Study materials, space and teaching/learning infrastructure; (iii) Social amenities, including accommodation, health, catering, recreational and other services.

5.8 LIBRARY SERVICES

5.8.1 Ensuring that the library supports advanced academic research and learning. This includes maintaining a comprehensive, up-to-date collection of relevant academic resources, including books, journals, and digital databases.

5.8.2 The library should provide efficient access to these materials, both on-site and remotely, and offer user-friendly tools for research, such as search engines and citation management systems.

5.8.3 Library should have qualified staff available to assist students and faculty with research inquiries, provide information literacy training, and ensure that the facilities are conducive to study and research, with appropriate technology and study spaces.

5.8.4 Regular assessments and feedback mechanisms should be in place to continuously improve library services and adapt to the evolving needs of the graduate school community.

5.9. QUALITY ASSURANCE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The GS shall utilize a variety of strategies and instruments to evaluate the implementation of its core QA activities. The main strategies include surveys of students, alumni, academic and administrative staff, employer and community satisfaction, as well as programme reviews, both external and internal.

5.9.1 STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS

The Quality Assurance unit (QAAPD) in the GS shall regularly and systematically organize student satisfaction surveys annually. These surveys will aim at giving the students an opportunity to provide feedback on their experience with individual modules, courses and teaching programmes as a whole.

In carrying out this task, the QAAPD shall design or adopt tools for collecting students' views, coordinating data collection activities, analyzing and disseminating the results. Capturing of student experiences and opinions may be done by the use of a questionnaire, a structured interview, focus group discussions or any other appropriate method.

The QAAPD shall eventually disseminate the survey results to teaching units and staff and shall coordinate the formulation and implementation of strategies to improve on problem areas revealed by the evaluation results.

5.9.2 SURVEYS OF ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF OPINIONS

The QAAPD shall also conduct academic and administrative staff opinion surveys, specifically aimed at assessing the level of satisfaction with the current quality of teaching and learning and support services at the School. The surveys will also collect suggestions on required interventions and possible improvement measures.

The QAAPD shall communicate the results of such surveys to individual units and Management, and shall coordinate discussions at both unit and administrative levels, aimed at streamlining improvement proposals and strategizing on implementation. The QAAPD shall also monitor the implementation of improvement strategies and report progress to the Pro Vice-Chancellor.

5.9.3 ALUMNI SATISFACTION SURVEYS

In addition to the employer satisfaction surveys, the QAAPD in collaboration with programme coordinators shall conduct alumni satisfaction surveys on a regular basis. The purpose of such surveys shall be to know from former students the extent to which their studies at ATU GS have been relevant to their post-graduation needs and challenges. Information from these surveys shall be used in curricula reviews and in improving approaches to teaching and applied research. Faculties and departments may conduct surveys more frequently, and the QAAPD may ask particular units to carry out alumni satisfaction surveys with respect to particular teaching programmes.

5.9.4 EMPLOYER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Departments, faculties, and Directorates, in collaboration with the QAAPD, shall conduct employer satisfaction surveys on regular basis. The surveys will provide vital information on the relevance of the teaching programmes on offer and on ways in which they can be made more responsive to the market needs.

The school-wide employer satisfaction surveys shall be conducted by every three years, but units may do their own surveys more frequently. QAAPD may equally ask particular units to carry out employer satisfaction surveys with respect to particular teaching programmes for specific reasons. For the purpose of monitoring and evaluation, these surveys shall feed into subsequent employer satisfaction surveys.

5.9.5 SURVEYS OF EXTERNAL COMMUNITY'S PERCEPTIONS (CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) IN ACTION)

The QAAPD shall run surveys once every two years to collect information from neighboring communities regarding their perception and attitudes towards the College. The exercise shall aim at assessing the general social acceptability of the GS by the broader society as well as identifying specific problem areas in the school-local

community linkage. The resulting data shall be used to improve the School and the University's CSR strategies and activities.

5.9.6 PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Whenever applicable, the GS curricula and teaching programmes shall be reviewed by qualified internal and external industry experts before submission for GTEC final approval. However, the internal procedures for such accreditation shall be coordinated and overseen by the QAAPD. In this context, the QAAPD shall require the concerned unit to prepare an application portfolio based on the guidelines given by the accrediting agency, and shall advise on proper filing of such applications.

6. FORMS AND TEMPLATES

6.1 Course Evaluation Form a template for collecting student feedback on course content, teaching methods, faculty performance, and overall learning experience. This form usually includes both quantitative ratings and qualitative comments.

6.2 Faculty Peer Review Form a structured template for peer faculty members to evaluate each other's teaching effectiveness, curriculum relevance, and engagement with students. This may include criteria such as course preparation, delivery, and use of instructional materials.

6.3 Student Satisfaction Survey A comprehensive survey designed to assess overall student satisfaction with various aspects of the graduate program, including academic advising, administrative support, library services, technology access, and campus facilities.

6.4 Library Resource Usage Survey A template for gathering data on how frequently and effectively students and faculty are using library resources, which can inform decisions on acquisitions and service improvements.

6.5 Alumni Feedback Form a form to collect feedback from graduates on the effectiveness of the programme in preparing them for their careers, including suggestions for curriculum updates and improvements.

6.6 External Assessor Review Template A structured document for external assessors to evaluate the programme's quality, providing an objective perspective on its strengths and areas for improvement.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Graduate School wishes to acknowledge the rich inputs and contributions made by the following internal stakeholders in the preparation of this policy document:

- a) The Governing Council
- b) Management
- c) Academic Board
- d) Quality Assurance and Academic Planning Directorate
- e) Directorate of Research, Innovation, Publication and Technology Transfer (DRIPTT)
- f) The Planning Committee
- g) Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments
- h) The Graduate School Committee

The School duly appreciates the immense contributions of all staff both administrative and teaching who contributed in diverse ways to make the formulation of this policy a success.

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