

THEME :ACADEMIC PROGRAMME DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Sub-Theme:

*The Role of the Academic Registrar in Programme Development, Scheduling and
Coordination; and Strategies for Ensuring Academic Integrity Across
Programmes*


Presented by:

**Dr.Maria Nakachwa Ssemakula
Principal Higher Education Officer**




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**Uganda Vice Chancellor's Forum
July, 2025**

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 Principal Higher Education Officer for Programme Accreditation - NCHE

A distinguished educationist who has excelled in:

-  Program Formulation
-  Assessment
-  Monitoring
-  Accreditation



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Presentation Agenda

1. Definitions for Key Terms
2. Mandate of NCHE as a Quality Assurance Agency
3. Roles of Academic Registrar
4. Elements of the Programme
5. Programme Development and Implementation Cycle
6. Roles of the AR in Programme Development
7. Roles of the AR in Scheduling and Coordination
8. Strategies for Ensuring Academic Integrity and Why it is Important
9. ARs interface with Higher Educations QA Systems?
10. Stakeholders Expectations
11. Conclusion
12. References

Definitions for Some Key Terms

An academic programme: is defined as a combination or collection of courses and related activities organized to achieve specific learning outcomes, typically leading to a degree, certificate, or other formal educational award.

Academic programme Design: is the deliberate and strategic process of creating a structured *learning experience* by defining the scope, sequence, and content of courses or modules aimed at enabling learners to acquire specific knowledge, skills, and competencies. It ensures coherence and progression across the curriculum with clear learning objectives, appropriate *course sequencing, and resource allocation*, ultimately providing a logical and purposeful educational pathway within a particular field of study.

Academic programme development: systematic process of planning, designing, reviewing; and revising academic programmes to ensure they meet educational needs, institutional goals, and *quality standards*.

Scheduling and coordination in academic environments: the processes of organizing class times, faculty assignments, rooms, and related resources to create an efficient and conflict-free timetable that meets the curricular needs of students and academic departments.

Ensuring academic integrity: involves embedding the principles and practices of *academic honesty, fairness, and ethical behavior* consistently throughout an entire academic programme.

Mandate of NCHE in Programme Development

NCHE is mandated to among other things:

- **Section 4(d) (ii)** accredit the academic and professional programmes in consultation with professional associations and regulatory bodies
 - **Section 4(i)** Ensure minimum standards for courses of study and the equating of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by the different public and private institutions of Higher Education.
 - **Section 4(m)** Certify that an institution of Higher Education has adequate and accessible physical structures and staff for the courses to be offered by it
 - **Sect 128:** The NCHE shall, by regulations set institutional standards governing the performance, operations and general conduct of Universities and Tertiary Institutions.
- *Admission Requirements (SI 63/2007)*
 - *Physical Infrastructure and Curriculum (SI 85/2005)*
 - *Grading and Classification of Degree and Diplomas (SI 21/2015),*
 - *Naming and Renaming of HEIS (SI 01/2007)*
 - *Honorary Degrees (SI 50/2010)*
 - *Checklist of Quality and Universities Capacity Indicators for Assessment of Universities and Programmes (SI 80B/2005)*

Role of the AR stated Cap.262

- **Section 34**

- (1) There shall be an Academic Registrar for each Public University appointed by the University Council, on the recommendation of the Appointments Board, on such terms and conditions as the University Council may determine.
- (2) The Academic Registrar shall be responsible to the Vice-Chancellor.
- (3) The Academic Registrar shall assist the first Deputy Vice-Chancellor in *the administration and organization of all academic matters including admission, undergraduate studies, postgraduate studies, examinations, research and publication.*

Explicit Roles of the AR from Charters

Broadly, the roles of the AR encompass leadership and management of academic administration to ensure smooth running of academic programmes and related processes. Key responsibilities include:

- **Curriculum development coordination:** Planning and overseeing the development, review, and implementation of academic programmes and courses across faculties.
- **Academic policy enforcement:** Coordinating and implementing academic policies and regulations approved by university governing bodies such as the Senate and Council.
- **Student admissions and registration:** Managing admissions processes, ensuring applicants meet qualifications, and overseeing student registration at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- **Examinations management:** Organizing examinations, coordinating setting, marking, moderation, and maintaining examination integrity by preventing malpractice.

Roles of the AR Ctnd

- **Student academic records:** Safeguarding and managing the student records system, including enrollment, progression, assessment results, transcripts, and certificates.
- **Academic ceremonies:** Planning and organizing events such as graduations and convocation to formally award qualifications.
- **Secretarial duties:** Serving as Secretary to the Senate and its committees, supporting governance and academic decision-making.
- **Quality assurance and compliance:** Ensuring adherence to academic standards, reviewing curricula and examination results before approval and release.
- **Stakeholder liaison and collaboration:** Engaging with internal stakeholders (faculties, departments) and external bodies (accreditors, partner institutions) to align academic activities with institutional priorities and regulatory requirements.
- **Alumni and convocation coordination:** Managing activities related to university alumni and convocation associations.

Elements of a Programme

A. Introductory Information

1. **Cover page should contain:** Name of the Institution, Logo, Name of the proposed programme and submission date.
2. **Introduction:** Background of the institution, Vision, Mission, Core values and Objectives of the institution.

B. Detailed Information

1. Programme Name and Duration (the corresponding award.)
2. Programme Description
3. Programme Development Process.
4. Programme Rationale / Justification,
5. Programme Objectives and
6. *Programme Learning Outcomes,*
7. *Admission Requirements,*
8. Programme Regulations,
9. Available and proposed human resources,
10. *Mode of Delivery and Mode of Assessment*
11. Infrastructure facilities clearly demarcated for the studies
12. Curriculum Structure
13. Detailed course descriptions.

Programme Development and Implementation Cycle

Stage	Description
1. Analysis/Planning	Needs assessment, goal setting, resource evaluation, and scope definition
2. Design	Defining learning objectives, content selection, instructional strategies, and assessment planning
3. Development	Creating lessons, materials, and resources aligned to objectives
4. Implementation	Delivering the curriculum, instructor preparation, resource management
5.Evaluation/Validation	Assessing curriculum effectiveness, gathering feedback, and revising accordingly

Role of the AR in Programme Development

- Planning and coordinating curriculum development for all programmes and courses .
- Collaborating with faculty to design, review, and update curricula to *meet academic standards and quality assurance*.
- Ensuring compliance with university, national, and accreditation policies in programme content.
- Facilitating smooth approval processes through Senate and academic committees.
- Supporting the alignment of programme outcomes with institutional strategic goals .

Role of the AR Scheduling and Coordination

- Overseeing preparation of timetables for teaching and examinations across faculties and campuses .
- Managing academic calendars and sessional planning to optimize resource use and student learning experiences .
- Coordinating registration and enrolment to ensure smooth student progression .
- Organizing academic events such as graduations and Senate meetings, serving also as Secretary to Senate .
- Leading the maintenance and development of student records and database systems to support academic processes .

Strategies to Ensure Academic Integrity Across Programmes

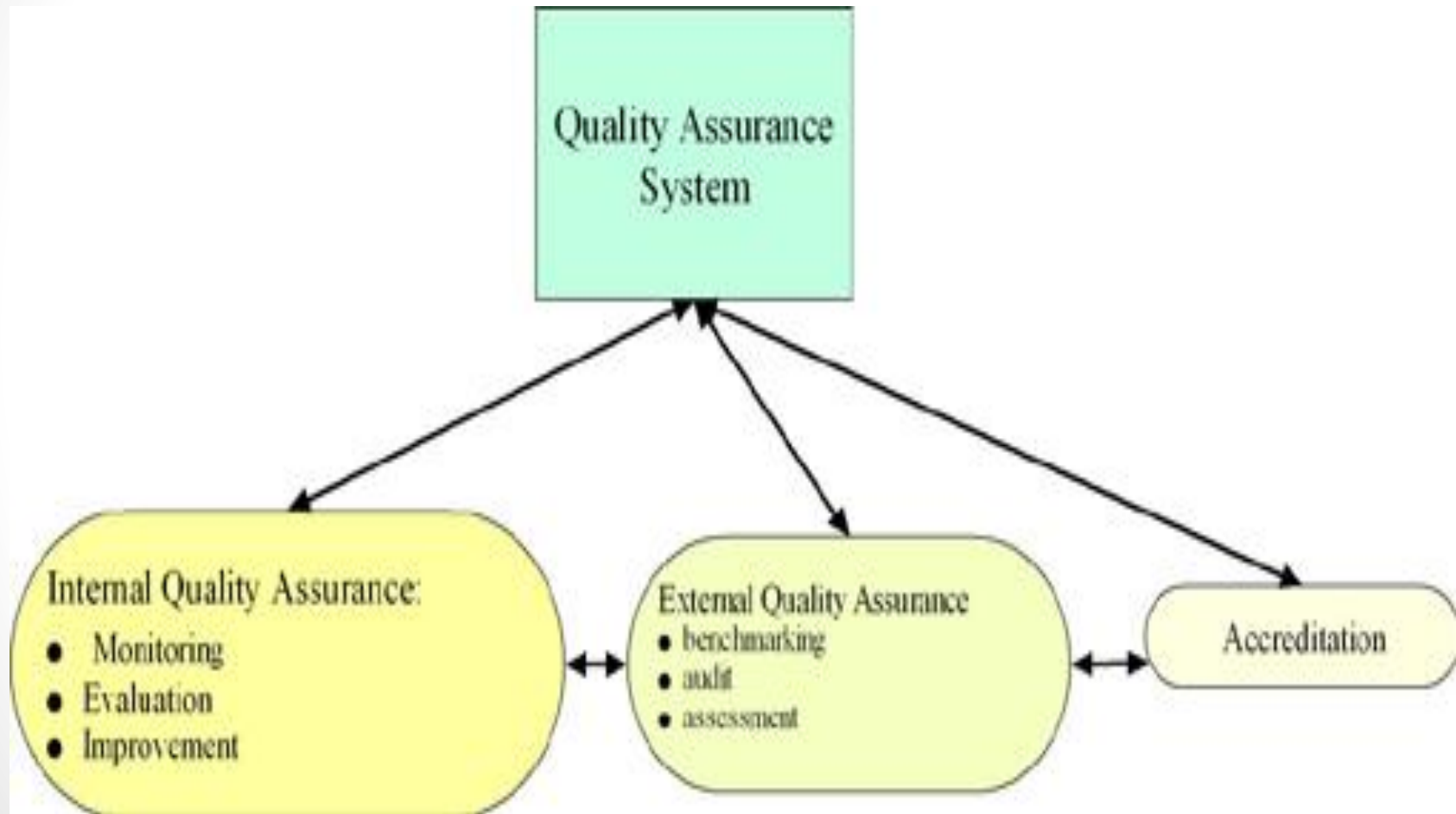
- a) Developing, reviewing and enforcing academic regulations and policies that promote honesty and fairness .
- b) Coordinating the preparation, setting, moderation, and secure administration of examinations to prevent malpractice and ensure fairness .
- c) Ensuring quality oversight and approval of all academic results before release .
- d) Supporting academic governance through secretarial work for committees addressing student discipline and academic misconduct .
- e) Promoting transparency and consistency in assessment scheduling to reduce opportunities for dishonesty.
- f) Integrating programme reviews and continuous improvement mechanisms to uphold academic standards.

Why ensuring Integrity Across Programmes is important?

- a) **Guarantees Fairness and Equity** : Academic integrity ensures a level playing field for all students, allowing success to reflect genuine effort and ability instead of dishonest tactics.
- b) **Supports Meaningful Learning and Development** :When students submit original work, they fully engage with the material, develop critical thinking, and receive feedback tailored to their actual needs.
- c) **Enables Accurate Assessment**: Integrity in assignments and exams allows educators to accurately measure student progress and adapt teaching approaches as needed.
- d) **Builds Trust and Reputation**: A culture of integrity builds mutual trust within academic communities, between students, staff, and institutions
- e) **Prepares Students for Professional and Personal Life**: Maintaining academic integrity fosters essential values such as honesty, responsibility, and ethical decision-making.
- f) **Protects Against Misconduct and Scandals**: By reducing the risk of academic scandals, which can severely damage institutional standing and diminish the value of earned qualifications.
- g) **Encourages Respect for Learning**: Respecting the work of others through proper attribution and originality encourages a deeper appreciation of scholarship, fostering an environment where learning and research are valued for their own sake

Higher Education QA System

- The HE system has developed a QA over the period which covers Internal QA systems, External QA Systems and Accreditation



Source: IUEA, Roadmap to QA Volume 4

Higher Education QA System interaction with ARs

- The Quality Assurance system in Higher education has internal and external elements:

1. Internal QA System:

- Includes monitoring instruments, evaluation instruments and activities aiming at improvement.
- Quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institution itself.
- Whereas NCHE has a special responsibility regarding quality but it is the university (*and especially its staff and students*) that are responsible for providing and assuring quality.
- Therefore, it is important that each university develops an efficient Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system.

2. External quality assessment

- Including benchmark activities
- External audit or external quality assessment.
- A university is also accountable to the outside world.

3. Accreditation.

Accreditation is the coping stone of the QA system

Stakeholder Expectations

The AR is expected to be;

- a) Knowledgeable in institutional, regional and international policies
- b) Network and benchmark
- c) Capacity build self and your staff
- d) Counsel students, parents and your staff
- e) Be exemplary by word and deed
- f) Responsive

Conclusion

- a. Academic Registrars play a pivotal role in HEIs. The AR is a central coordinator who ensures effective programme development, scheduling, and academic integrity.
- b. Duties of the AR are key in maintaining the university's reputation and fostering a culture of honesty and quality education.

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THANK YOU