Addis Ababa University's Quality Enhancement Action Plan

(2017-2022) (2009-2014E.C)

Developed by the Office for Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement, Addis Ababa University

January 2017

1. Introduction

This comprehensive **Quality Enhancement Action Plan** was developed based on the feedback and discussion results gathered from AAU's community discussion on academic quality, September 2016, in the presence of high-level Government Officials and AAU's Board Members and study papers and reflections made on the AAU's Educational Quality Consultative meeting held on 2nd November 2016. The draft of the document has gone through various phases of development incorporating comments and suggestions made to it by concerned directors and deans across the University before reaching this final shape.

Colleges, Centers, Institutes and Departments/academic units in AAU are required to implement this plan directly or by developing and implementing their own compatible quality enhancement plan hierarchically (based on this document/cascading /and the University's legislation) taking into due account their own disciplinary and working contexts and other contextual and global factors.

It is nowadays nearly becoming a common knowledge supported by a number of research findings in the area that quality in Ethiopian higher education is deteriorating. As a result voices of concern are being heard from academia and the Government regarding the issue. It was thus imperative for the Addis Ababa University to respond to the problem by developing and implementing this Quality Enhancement Plan in AAU in order to bring about quality in all its educational programs (undergraduate and postgraduate) and by being a role model to second and third generation universities in the country. The Office of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement (ASQE), AAU, by the University's legislative power vested into it in managing the quality of education, therefore, developed this quality enhancement plan and presented it for discussion, comments and approval to the University Community and the University leadership at various phases and finally managed to present the final draft in its current shape. The plan has thoroughly charted out salient activities of action that most of the University faculty have discussed and agreed upon at various forums. Those activities were thought to bring about educational quality in Addis Ababa University if they are implemented successfully and in due time. The activities charted out in this document are meant to be implemented on the basis of short-term (one to two years' time), mid-term (three to four years) and in the long term (five years' time). All activities will have been completely implemented the latest between January

2017 (2009 E.C) and December 2022(2014 E.C) depending on their level of urgency as planned below.

2. Short-term, mid-term, and long-term activities planned

Given the urgency of making effective interventions in order to improve the educational quality in all AAU's programs of study, it was found important to prioritize and categorize activities into three in the Plan of Action: short-term, mid-term and long term activities. Taking into due consideration the resource and logistics implications if all activities were to be implemented at the same time, this prioritization and planning based on time was also essential for feasibility rationales. All activities (64 total), key responsible agents for implementing the activities and major indicators for the successful implementation of those activities are outlined as follows.

A. Short-term activities

No.	Activities/Items	Responsible unit for implementation	Time frame	Indicator
1	All departments and academic units will set up testing and evaluating committees for courses taught by more than three instructors. The committee designated by the respective academic commissions will develop, monitor, and award grades after administering tests and all assessment procedures and not individual instructors awarding final grades.	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Testing and evaluation committees set up, a system where pool evaluation and awarding of final grades is made developed
2	All departments and academic units will plan their budget requirements well ahead of the upcoming academic year and ensure that any part-timer is employed based on	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Fiscal budgets developed ahead of academic year and ready for implementation

	the plan and the real need for employing the part-timer on behalf of the employing college or unit.; no causal employment of a part-timer teacher will be made .			
3	All departments and academic units will follow up the implementation of the day-one-class one principle and take immediate and corrective measures on faculty who fail to implement this in time; and report this measure to the AVP in writing in time.	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Day-one-class one implemented and monitored ; faculty failing to implement the day-one-class one penalized as per AAU's legislation
4	All departments and academic units must timely determine the academic status of their students at any level and inform the same to the concerned students, and in case some registrar units fail to do this, take the appropriate measures on those who fail to do this and inform the University leadership in writing the case.	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Students' academic status determined timely
5	All departments and academic units will increase annually the number of their graduates with the required quality and based on the needs of the country and as stipulated in the professional mix policy of the country.	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Number of graduates increased annually; national policy implemented
6	All departments and academic units will follow up strictly that their faculty undertake their duties	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	AAU's legislation fully implemented; corrective actions taken

	and responsibilities as stipulated in the contractual agreement the respective faculty entered with the University and as per the AAU's legislation and guidelines to undertake academic responsibilities such as teaching, research and community services; in cases where faculty fail to discharge their responsibilities as charted out in AAU's legislation, academic units must be able to take corrective actions and measures to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in AAU.			on faculty who fail to discharge their legislative duties and responsibilities
7	All departments and academic units will ensure that their students at any level and programs have full access to all kinds of student services provided by the departments and academic units and any kind of academic information and information related to student support services such as dormitories, health facilities, libraries, reading rooms, laboratories, student cafes, etc.	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	All types of access to student services provided to students;
8	All departments and academic units are required to set up a course or module team for courses taught for more than three instructors in all programs. This committee/team will discuss and gauge the progress of teaching a course by conducting	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs		Course/module team set up; courses progress and offering monitored properly; day-one-class one and last-day-last implemented and monitored.

	regular weekly meetings and exchange ideas and opinions, innovative techniques in teaching that particular course and proceed until the end of the course or module, monitors also day-one class-one and last day-last class principles. Unless and otherwise there exists an extremely compelling situation and scarcity of skilled human power, no course or module shall be taught by an individual instructor. All courses and modules have to be team-taught.			
9	Performance evaluations of faculty by students, colleagues, and department chairpersons will be conducted electronically (on-line) by semester intervals or module intervals as the case may be. This might alternatively done using the BSC automation software to be developed for this purpose by the University or any other relevant software to be developed for this purpose..	Departments and academic units offering courses and programs	Short-term	Faculty and student evaluation electronically conducted by semester; BSC implemented alternatively
10	All departments and academic units will follow up the strict implementation of the University Senate legislation, guidelines and procedures of the University for thesis supervision and examination; institute fair and just grievance	Colleges or faculties and departments and academic units	Short-term	University rules and regulations strictly implemented; grievance handling systems instituted.

	handling system and procedures for exam complaints and handle properly and timely staff and student grievances and complaints.			
11	All colleges are required to develop their own procedures and ways of mitigating the problems of academic plagiarism in a manner that does not violate the University's rules and regulations for the same. The AVP office should finalize the process started in this regard or look for other options of procurement of the software for controlling plagiarism or academic offence.	AVP, colleges, departments and academic units	Short-term	Plagiarism controlling mechanisms put in place
12	All colleges and departments/ academic units will implement the active learning methods where group/cooperative learning and peer learning strategies are systematically organized, institutionalized, and monitored within the context of their own profession or disciplines.	AVP, colleges, departments and academic units	Short-term	Active learning methods/cooperative and peer learning implemented and monitored.
13	All colleges will apply the team teaching methods and team/group research methods in most of their courses or modules as a requirement for all their programs approval and based on the nature of the courses and modules they offer in their programs.	Colleges, departments/academic units	Short-term	Team teaching and team research systems put in place in all programs

14	University will develop tougher rules and regulations for academic misconduct including plagiarism, and exam cheating benchmarking best practices from universities overseas and enforce the implementation of it in the University by making it legislative rule.	AAU, AVP	Short-term	Tougher rules issued on miscellaneous academic misconduct and implemented/existing rules improved.
15	All academic units particularly colleges, should improve the classrooms; maintenance and renovation and furnish the same with the necessary facilities to make attractive classrooms for teaching learning.	College deans, departments	Short-term	Classrooms and auditoriums refurbished with the state-of-the-art instructional technology and related facilities
16	University will monitor through the Office of ASQE that all colleges have internal quality audit systems set up and will make this a requirement for all colleges to operate. ASQE Office will share expertise with academic units in developing internal quality assessment mechanisms, and may designate educational quality coordinators at college levels for this and other educational quality matter management reasons.	AAU, AVP, ASQE Office	Short-term	Internal quality audit systems developed by all units and educational quality coordinators assigned to each college or academic unit
17	All departments and academic units are required to develop regular and standard exit exams for their students/graduates in collaboration with the national agency that	Colleges, departments	Short-term	Exit exams developed and administered for all graduates from AAU.

	regulates and sets the Certificate of Competence Examinations.			
18	All departments and academic units running graduate programs should be prepared and work towards accreditation (both national and international accreditations as the case may be gradually) of their programs.	Colleges, departments/academic units	Short-terms	National and international accreditations earned by all programs
19	English language improvement training will be given to all level students and the AAU junior teaching faculty based on needs assessment and entrance examinations results the University currently administers on-line.	Center or teaching and learning, ELIC, departments	Short-term	ELIP set up, English language training conducted for students and junior faculty
20	All departments and academic units will assign academic advisors for all their students in pipeline and monitor the implementation of the same and take due administrative measures on those faculty who fail to properly advise their students timely and professionally.	Colleges and departments/academic units	Short-term	Academic advisors assigned for all students in pipeline in all programs.
21	All academic staff/faculty should post consultation hours on their offices for their students and be available in their offices during those consultation hours; deans should monitor this and take measures in case some failures are reported.	Deans, departments	Short-term	Office hours of faculty notified to students and colleagues; measures taken on faculty who fail to do so.
22	Senior essays, thesis, and	Deans, department	Short-	Students' progress in

		heads, supervisors	term	thesis work reported by advisers regularly both orally and in writing to departments.
	dissertation supervisors/advisors should report the progress of their advisee/s to the departments on regular basis; oral and written feedback for their students work and projects should be given on time and the departments should monitor the entire process of this.			
23	External examiners for thesis and dissertation should provide written feedback on candidate's performance and program to the department immediately after examinations are conducted.	Departments, external examiners	Short-term	Written feedback on exams submitted by external examiners to departments.
24	All departments and academic units are required to develop their own CPD plans and implement it regularly and communicate the same to the AVP of the University for Endorsement and follow-ups.	Departments, CPD units, Center for teaching-learning	Short-term	CPD plans developed and implemented regularly by all academic units.
25	ASQE Office will publish annually regularly a bulletin/information abstract containing statistical data on AAU's academic community and issues related to quality assurance and management and research outcomes related to quality enhancement issues in higher education.	AAU, ASQE Office	Short-term	Annual bulletin published regularly on educational quality issues in AAU.
26	AAU in collaboration with colleges and departments will regularly conduct series of awareness raising conferences/meetings, workshops	AAU, AVP, ASQE Office	Short-term	Awareness raising conferences and meeting conducted to different stakeholders

	and seminars on educational quality in AAU addressing the interest of different stakeholders such as students, faculty, the support staff, and employers.			on quality matters.
27	ASQE Office will revise its Organizational Structure in the University and introduce a more accessible and transparent and a more powerful structure in order to address educational quality issues all along the different systems of the University and in all academic programs.	AAU, AVP, ASQE Office	Short-term	Revised more powerful and effective organizational structure for quality assurance put in placed in AAU.
28	AAU will create a system wherein prolific professors teach not only in graduate programs but also in the undergraduate programs as prolific scholars are a good prototype to young scholars or undergraduate students.	AAU, Colleges, departments	Short-term	Professors taught undergraduate program students as well
29	AAU will issue an intellectual property right policy and get it approved and implemented.	AAU, AVP	Short-term	Intellectual property right policy issued and implemented
30	AAU will introduce essay type of exams and project-based assessment methods along with other exam types and include the same in its legislation for better educational quality in all its academic programs.	AAU, AVP	Short-term	Essay type of exams introduced; project-based assessments launched; such modalities became legislative
31	AAU will strive to minimize awarding Assistant Professorship	AAU, Colleges	Short-term	Promotions request to the rank of assistant

	titles without demanding PhD research works; and instead encourage faculty to seek promotion to assistant professorship based on PhD works.			professorship without doing PhD works discouraged .
32	AAU will develop a holistic capacity building strategy and implement to improve the leadership and managerial capability and competences of directors, deans, department chairs, school and center heads on a regular basis.	AAU, VPs	Short-term	Holistic capacity building strategy developed for AAU's leadership hierarchically and implemented on regular basis.
33	The AVP will run for all AAU's faculty through the office for teaching and learning capacity building bi-annual training on learning assessments and student evaluation.	AAU, AVP	Short-term	Training on learning assessment and student evaluation offered to all faculty biannually
34	Departments and academic units will organize tutorial classes for their students regularly based on the need of their students.	Departments/academic units	Short-term	Regular tutorial classes run for students
35	All departments and academic units will upload and regularly update course materials/modules on the University website.	Departments/academic units	Short-term	Courses and modules uploaded on website and regularly updated.
36	All colleges/academic units will organize annual workshops on educational quality issues and quality improvement mechanisms on their specific disciplines	Colleges, departments/academic units	Short-term	Annual educational quality workshops run on specific disciplines.
37	Departments/schools/centers will	Colleges,	Short-	Regular research

	organize regular research seminar series for academic staff/faculty and graduate students on regular basis.	departments/academic units	term	seminar series held in every department or college/center.
38	Administrative assistants will be employed to all departments/schools/centers running many educational programs and having large number of student population.	AAU, Colleges	Short-term	Administrative assistants employed and deployed to every highly populated department/center
39	Departments and academic units will conduct quarterly performance evaluation/ review meeting on the implementation of their programs with their students and faculty.	Colleges, departments/centers	Short-term	Quarterly performance evaluation / review meetings held with faculty and students on every college and department.
40	ASQEO will develop standards for academic staff/faculty, facilities and others as measure of quality indicators.	ASQE Office	Short-term	Faculty, facility and service standards developed and implemented
41	AAU will devise a system where it can monitor and follow up departmental academic councils and college academic councils meetings and approve or disapprove where appropriate non-legislative decisions and actions.	AAU, AVP, Colleges	Short-term	System designed to monitor academic council meetings to ensure the proper implementation of the AAU's legislation.

B. Mid-term activities

No.	Activities/items	Responsible unit for implementation	Time frame	Indicator
1	The Office of the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement (ASQEO) will develop its internal capacity by both employment of requisite experts from diverse disciplines and by training existing experts both locally and internationally in the areas of quality assurance and quality enhancement on a regular basis.	AAU, AVP, ASQE Office	Mid-term	Internal capacity of ASQE Office developed
2	ASQEO will run large-scale surveys on service satisfaction on a number of stakeholders both within and outside the University for Quality Assurance Purposes.	AAU, AVP, ASQEO	Mid-term	Large scale service satisfaction surveys conducted on different stakeholders.
3	Baseline assessment to be made on quality of education in the University.	AVP, ASQEO	Mid-term	Baseline assessment made on quality of education in AAU.
4	All colleges will certify their teachers through the University and in accordance with national teacher development polices, guidelines, and laws issued by the country and teacher certification and licensure will regularly be updated based on regular courses and professional development trainings.	AAU, Colleges, departments	Mid-term	Instructors certified and certifications renewed based on training on regular basis
5	AAU will empower its faculty through continued professional	AAU	Mid-term	Faculty empowered through continued

	capacity development training and dialogue to the full so that they exercise free teaching and imparting of knowledge to their students.			professional capacity development and dialogue to the full exercise of their professional career
6	AAU will strive to its level best to minimize and finally eliminate local brain drain by paying salary and incentives to its faculty and support staff in commensurate with their qualifications and services.	AAU	Mid-term	Local brain drain minimized and finally eliminated
7	AAU will encourage the participation of professional associations such as teachers' association and the think-tank groups in new program approvals and evaluations of existing programs and in setting academic standards.	AAU, Colleges, departments	Mid-term	Participation of professional associations and think-tank groups in AAU's educational practices encouraged and promoted
8	AAU in collaboration with colleges and academic units will set standards for a number of critical issues in the academics such as class size, student-teacher ratios, and lab set ups in science laboratories and qualification mix of faculty in graduate and undergraduate programs.	AAU, ASQEO	Mid-term	Standards set for academic issues such as class size, student-teacher ratio, etc.
9	Robust multi-media feedback systems to AAU's services will be introduced in all colleges in the University in order to get more	AAU, Colleges, departments	Mid-term	Multi-media feedback systems to AAU's services including on-line feedback systems

				introduced.
10	Student Integrated Management and Information Services including service provisions using electronic IDs to be made 100 percent on-line and human physical interference to be minimized in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness in student management and quality management as well.	AAU, Registrar, AVP, departments	Mid-term	Student Integrated Management and Information Services made hundred percent on-line; human interference minimized.
11	AAU will engage its own faculty to be engaged more in its internal consultancy services and national and international research projects than expatriate staff for several reasons of effectiveness and management.	AAU, Colleges	Mid-term	Local faculty deployed for AAU's internal consultancy services instead of expatriate staff

C. Long-term-activities

No.	Activities/items	Responsible unit for implementation	Time frame	Indicator
1	AAU will work with the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia (MoE) and concerned government ministries to influence the improvement of national and regional polices such as the change of self-contained teaching system, the free-pass system, and the improvement of pre-school curriculum in primary schools system and the introduction of local languages as a medium of instruction in higher education based on research and feasibility.	AAU	Long-term	National educational policies at all levels improved; local languages considered as medium of instruction in higher education
2	All colleges and academic units will carry out tracer studies by their own to limit the fate of their graduates at least in five years' time interval.	Colleges, departments/academic units	Long-term	Tracer studies conducted every five year by all departments.
3	AAU will strive to its level best for a better academic and professional autonomy and for its full exercise in the University.	AAU	Long-term	Better academic and professional autonomy granted to AAU
4	AAU will influence the concerned government bodies and policy makers so that universities will avoid harmonious curricula and strive for competition and specializations in different areas of training and education.	AAU	Long-term	National harmonious or uniform curricula in higher education minimized and specializations in disciplines among universities encouraged and competitive working conditions created.
5	AAU will undertake a survey	AAU, departments	Long-	Surveys conducted to

	research to assess the relationship between the quality of life of its graduates and the quality of education and degrees they earned from universities.		term	determine the relationship between quality of life of graduates from AAU and the type of qualification they earned from AAU.
6	AAU will establish and run a model comprehensive school from pre-primary to secondary school where the Community's families learn and where innovative teaching methodologies and ideas are incubated, practiced, shared, and scaled up.	AAU, VPs	Long-term	Comprehensive model school established and served as center of excellence.
7	AAU will emphasize more on team publications or authorship than individual or solo publications, and team publications or multiple authorship will be encouraged as a matter of policy.	AAU, AVP	Long-term	Team publication encouraged and practiced in a wider scale.
8	AAU will strive to its level best to ensure that universities are purely secular and free of any political domination.	AAU	long-term	Purely secular and politically free national universities emerge
9	AAU will work together with concerned government ministries, parent and professional associations and civic societies to overcome the problems of substance abuse, use of drugs in higher education and in the entire school system in Ethiopia and problems related to sex education and follow up of parents.	AAU, Government, civic societies, MoE, schools	long-term	Higher education and the school system liberated from all forms of abuse such as substance abuse, sexual violence, etc.

10	AAU will work to ensure sound diversity management all along its systems (teaching, research, community services) and faculty and support staff development, motivation and retention systems and processes.	AAU, Colleges	long-term	Sound diversity management system instituted all along the University's systems and processes.
11	AAU will play a part in the move towards setting up a new Ministry of Higher Education as the number of universities in Ethiopia is currently rising and as effective efficient and lean management of those universities will play a part in maximizing quality of education.	AAU, Government	Long-term	Ministry of Higher Education set up
12	AAU will conduct a large-scale tracer study in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs at least in a five-year time interval and disseminate the findings to the wider public and national and international stakeholders.	AAU, VPs	Long-term	Large scale university-wide tracer study conducted and findings disseminated to public.

3. Implementation modalities and management

The activities charted out in this Quality Enhancement Plan will be implemented over the coming five years as indicated above by the various parties of the University led by the University's leadership and coordinated by the ASQE Office of the University in collaboration and close partnership with public institutions and civic societies and non-government organizations as well. The sheer commitment of all colleges and departments/ academic units, all faculty and support staff members is immensely required in the move. It is only then, when we as a University are able to fully and effectively implement this action plan that we will

achieve our stipulated missions and reach the vision we set in our legislation and thereby be able to see the realization of a model, successful world-class research university in few years time.

4. Conclusion

Quality enhancement in education especially higher education is these days a global concern of all stakeholders in the education sector and beyond.. The United Nations has given due attention to quality in its 17 Sustainable Development Goals set to be implemented globally by 2030. One of these, Goal Number 4 is about educational quality. The Ethiopian Government has excreted more commitment than ever before to quality in its higher education and general education as visibly witnessed in documents such as the GTP II and the ESDP V.

Thus, it is a high time for all of us now to rise together to bring about quality in Addis Ababa University's educational system as a starting point to the greater journey of achieving quality in the higher education system as a whole.

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