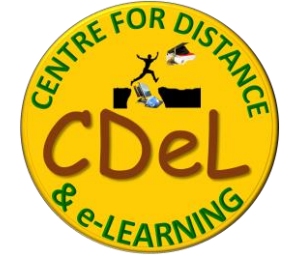




**UNIVERSITY OF NIERIA, NSUKKA
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND e-LEARNING**

... distance learning designed around you!



**TRAINING WORKSHOP ON
OVERVIEW OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING
(ODL): FOUNDATION AND BASICS**

Tuesday, 11th – Thursday 13th July 2017

Quality Assurance in ODL

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Quality Assurance in ODL

Concept:

The issue of Quality has ha been a matter of concern in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) over the years. Since the 1990s, quality assurance in distance and higher education has gained serious attention by institutions, stakeholders, and scholars. In response to Quality Assurance (QA) line of inquiry, institutions have begun to re-define and re-orient their institutional missions and strategic visions to incorporate and address quality issues. Numerous reports have been published to share ideas, experiences, and articulate the 'how and how not to' and 'best practices' of QA implementation in Distance Education (DE) contexts from around the world (Deshpande & Mugridge, 1994; Tait, 1997).

Stakeholders interested in ODL have become increasingly interested in quality assurance issues. Learners are demanding better quality educational services and provisions. This means ODL providers must pay close attention to quality in terms of products, processes, production, delivery systems, and philosophy (COL, 1997). The 'total quality' approach, which covers not only products but services and processes as well, is a very useful methodology that holistically examines the process of ODL as an integrated whole (Zuhairi, Purwanto & Isman, 2002).

Quality Assurance in ODL

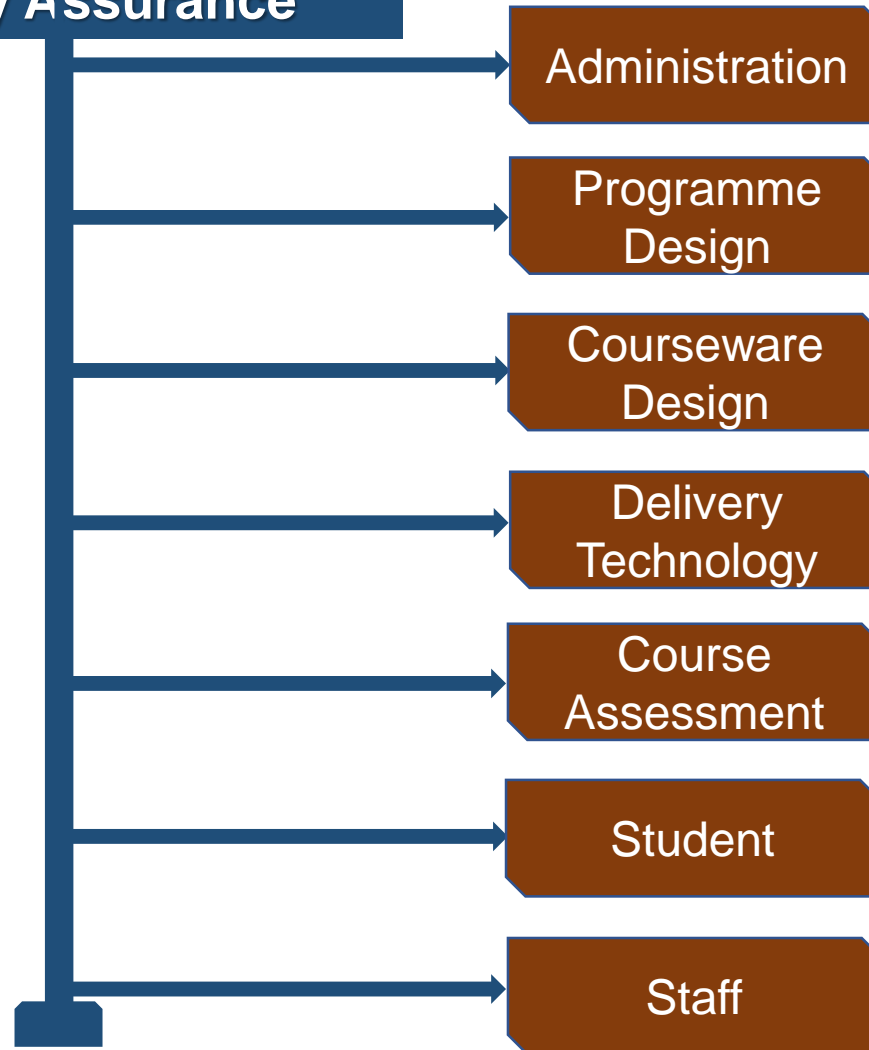
Definition:

Quality Assurance (QA) has been literarily defined as the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by means of paying attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production of such service or product.

Assuring the quality of education provision is a fundamental aspect of gaining and maintaining credibility for programmes, institutions and national systems of higher education worldwide. Despite a long and generally successful track record, ODL is still required to prove that the quality of student learning is *at least equivalent* to face-to-face teaching. A comprehensive QA system can help accomplish this.

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The 7 Elements of Quality Assurance



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ADMINISTRATION

- There should be a clear Mission Statement
- There should be a viable Strategic Plan
- There should be a provision for termination in the event of inability to continue
- There should be an effective and clear Administrative Structure
- There should be a clear allocation of tasks among the Administrative staff
- There should be well known and understood admissions criteria
- There should be someone or group responsible for conflict resolution

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PROGRAMME DESIGN

- The programme should be designed according to some commonly accepted criteria
- There should be a consultation of professional bodies that affect the decisions made for the curriculum
- The overall aims and objectives of the programme should be known
- The overall learning outcomes of the programme should be known
- The degree awarded should be known
- There should be a provision for those who could not complete the programme within the required time frame
- The regulations leading to the award of the degree should be clearly stated
- The difference between ODL programme design and the traditional mode should be seen to be clear

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COURSE DESIGN

- There should be a commonly accepted credit system
- The relationship between courses of the same programme should be known
- There should be a clear structure in the content of each course
- There should be a clear separation between course elements
- There should not be contradictory designs between various courses
- The difference between ODL course design and that of the conventional face-to-face (f2f) should be clearly seen

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COURSE DELIVERY

- There should be a commonly accepted policy on the method of ODL course delivery
- The process of selecting methods of delivery should be clearly known
- Such methods must effectively and efficiently exploit information technologies
- The ease or difficulty in following the selected method should be seen
- The method of delivery must contribute to the fulfillment of learning objectives
- There should be clear instructions for students concerning method of delivery

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COURSE ASSESSMENT

- There should be a commonly accepted policy on the method of ODL course assessment
- There should be a commonly accepted marking scheme
- The individual parts of assessment in each course should be clearly stated
- The process of selecting the appropriate assessment should be known
- Assessment must contribute to the fulfillment of learning objectives
- Assessment must correspond to workload (credits)
- There should be specific marking criteria for each individual piece of assessment
- The student should be informed about the assessment criteria and marking scheme
- There should be provision for timely feedback and the form of feedback known
- There should be clearly stated examination procedures
- There should be effective ways in place to identify impersonation and plagiarism

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STUDENTS MANAGEMENT

- There should be a commonly accepted policy on keeping student records
- Students should be well informed about the admissions criteria, award of degree, programme, courses, exam procedures, regulations, etc
- Students should get the appropriate support for course content and technological infrastructure
- Students should get the appropriate services in technology required and there should provision for the continuity of this support
- Students should get the appropriate service from the administration
- Students should, on regular basis, receive advise and encouragement
- There should be a provision for student representation
- There should be a complaint or appeal mechanism in place
- There should be a mechanism for student evaluation of courses and programme
- A clear method of monitoring the progress of students should be put in place

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STAFF MANAGEMENT

- There should be a commonly accepted staff recruitment policy
- There should be a commonly accepted staff development policy
- There should be a commonly accepted staff appraisal policy
- The criteria, characteristics and profile of academic staff selected to deliver ODL courses should be stated clearly
- The criteria characteristics and profile of technical staff selected to support ODL course delivery should be clearly stated
- There should be provision for continuous staff training
- The process for staff evaluation should be known
- There should be a provision for training of new staff
- Staff should be encouraged to improve own teaching, research and scholarship

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SUMMARY

Finally, it must be pointed out here that continuous assessment is central to QA. A regular CA process should be put in place to monitor the performance of the Individual units of an ODL Center so as to determine what works and what does not work well, and if they are meeting their goals. When units do not perform to a certain benchmark, the Centre can then undertake remedial actions to help that unit improve their performance.

The delivery of a quality education to learners is a task that must be done!

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THANK YOU

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