



INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

BENCHMARKS FOR BACHELOR OF BUSINESS RELATED STUDIES

June 2013



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ACRONYMS

BBS	Bachelor of Business Related Studies
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer system
CUE	Commission for University Education (Kenya)
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Services
DIES	Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies
EABC	East African Business Council
EAC	East African Community
EAQF	East African Qualifications Framework
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
FIBAA	Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HRK	German Rectors Conference
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
IUEA	International University of East Africa
IT	Information Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
MNC	Multinational Corporation
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NRAs	Higher Education National Regulatory Agencies
QA	Quality Assurance
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TCU	Tanzanian Commission for Universities
UDSM	University of Dar as Salaam
USIU	United States International University

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The National Commissions/Councils of Higher Education of the EAC Partner States are highly acknowledged for their instrumental contribution in spearheading and coordinating the processes in their respective countries. The East African Business Council (EABC), which is an umbrella organization of the private sector in East Africa, is highly commended for their invaluable support to this process, which is a clear testimony of their commitment to the established academia-industry partnership. The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors Conference (HRK) through their DIES programme, are immensely appreciated for extending their collaborative, generous technical and financial support to facilitate this process

It is my expectation that these benchmarks will provide an important building block of harmonization of education as we strive to develop a common East African Higher education Area and therefore all stakeholders will use them in the various intended purposes such as curriculum development and review, assessing graduates competencies, and comparability, among others.

Prof. Mayunga H.H. Nkunya,
IUCEA, Executive Secretary

Kampala, June 2013

FOREWORD

The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is a strategic institution of the East African Community (EAC) responsible for the development and coordination of higher education and research in the region. The EAC considers higher education as critical for the attainment of socio-economic development and regional integration. As such, after having been recognized as the surviving institution of the former Community responsible for coordinating the networking of university institutions in the region, IUCEA has assumed a broader role as a building block for the achievement of sustainable socio-economic development and regional integration. In that regard, the mission of IUCEA now focuses on the promotion of strategic and sustainable development of higher education systems and research for supporting East Africa's socio-economic development and regional integration. The IUCEA has set its vision to become a strategic institution of the East African Community responsible for promoting, developing and coordinating human resources development and research in the region.

Hence, in 2006 IUCEA initiated a process aimed at harmonizing regional quality assurance by establishing a common East African quality assurance framework, regional quality assurance office at the IUCEA Secretariat, and setting regional higher education benchmark quality standards based on internationally recognized frameworks. The process would also prepare a use-friendly quality assurance handbook based on existing national benchmarks and systems, and streamline national and institutional quality assurance systems according to the local perspectives with the aim of promoting international competitiveness of universities in East Africa.

The initiative also focused on capacity building through providing appropriate training on the implementation of the quality assurance system to staff in universities and national commissions and councils for higher education in the Partner States. It is linked to the establishment of a regional qualifications framework, whose development is already in progress. It was anticipated that the regional qualifications framework would facilitate harmonization of education and training systems, and qualifications thereby clearly indicating the programme learning outcomes, the different qualification levels, credit system and recognition of prior learning, among others. Therefore, the framework would easily facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications across the region as envisioned in the EAC Common Market Protocol. All these interventions were aimed at transforming East Africa into a common higher education area, as the ultimate goal of the Community.

In developing the regional quality assurance system in higher education in East Africa, IUCEA in collaboration with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Germany Rectors' Conference (HRK) within the framework of their joint Higher Education Management support programme referred to as "Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES)", started to work on this initiative through a consultative process involving various stakeholders of higher education in the region. The process involved a number of consultative meetings and workshops at country and regional level, aimed at building consensus and mapping out a strategy on how to establish a regional quality assurance framework. This included the development of an operational tool in the form of a Quality Assurance Handbook. The consultative forums were also aimed at ensuring that all performance indicators and quality benchmarks were agreed upon and owned by all end-user institutions. Additionally, IUCEA intended to develop specific subjects benchmarks as part of the tools for harmonization purposed academic programmes taught in higher education institutions in the region in addition to the development of The Handbook Roadmap to Quality.

On behalf of the IUCEA secretariat, I wish to encourage all stakeholders involved to adopt and operationalize the business studies benchmarks. It is therefore my sincere expectation that the higher education fraternity in the region will make use of these benchmarks in all educational processes and world of work to ensure that our programmes are of expected quality. Finally, I wish you all the best in the use of these benchmarks.

Prof. Mayunga H.H. Nkunya,
IUCEA, Executive Secretary

Kampala, June 2013

PREAMBLE

The benchmarks for business related studies contained herein, have been developed as one of the set milestones for the development of an East African Quality Assurance System. This will constitute the framework of the East African Common Higher Education Area that the EAC endeavours to realize by 2015. As highlighted in the foreword, the benchmarks are aimed at providing an important process of harmonisation of business and related studies and should be beneficial to all the players in higher education sub-sector. Thus, the main objective of this process is to harmonise all business and related studies in order to provide a baseline for comparability in business and related curriculum within the region.

However, the benchmarks are not a checklist for ticking off. They are to be used as a yardstick or a point of reference, and not as absolute standards. In the first stakeholders' roundtable forum (held in Arusha-Tanzania, in December 2011), it was agreed that the name *Bachelor of Business related studies (BBS)* be used to refer to all programmes in this field.

This document has been structured into two parts as follows: Part 1 presents the background, objectives and the justification. It also articulates the development process of the benchmarks and how they were formulated. On the other hand, Part 2 presents the developed benchmarks and the proposed operationalization modalities.

PART 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

One of the mandates of the IUCEA is to maintain high and comparable academic standards in higher education regionally and internationally, with special emphasis on the promotion of Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Management. In that regard, IUCEA aspires to operate within the expectations of stakeholders to deliver services that enhance and harness QA in the region.

In East Africa, the notion of QA in higher education is an issue of great concern among all stakeholders, including policy makers, parents, employers, and students. A number of factors have contributed to this phenomenon. East Africa has experienced rapid expansion of the number and enrollment levels in higher learning institutions in recent times. This has been triggered by the exponential increase in demand of access to higher education in each of the countries in the region.

As a result, the IUCEA felt the need to ensure that the rapid expansion of higher education in the region did not compromise quality of the very education being delivered. Furthermore, in recent years student mobility within East Africa has increased tremendously, necessitating the need to institute mechanisms for comparability of the quality of education in universities in East Africa. It is important to note that education has become a tradable commodity across borders and hence there have been efforts to institute international safeguards that would ensure maintenance of international quality standards. These efforts are being implemented within regional and international QA frameworks. The development of the benchmarks therefore became a necessity.

Consequently, the first regional benchmarks focused on the Bachelor of Business related studies. Based on the outcomes of the external assessment of Business related

studies in the region in the framework of the Regional Quality Assurance Initiative, it became clear that it was important to strive at equivalency of the Bachelor of Business related studies in the region. Therefore, the IUCEA, supported by DAAD (German Academic Exchange Services), took the initiative to develop benchmarks for the Bachelor of Business related studies, offered in the region.

1.2. Objectives of the Business and Related Studies Benchmarks

The objectives of the business related studies benchmarks are to:

- i) Act as a guide and tool for the HEIs designing the curriculum for business related studies;
- ii) Enable the National Regulatory Agencies to assess the quality of the Business related programmes;
- iii) Promote harmonization of the specific programme in the region;
- iv) Support staff and student mobility;
- v) Enhance the regionalization of the labor market, which is one of the aims of the East African Community (EAC); and
- vi) Guide the labour market in judging the quality of the graduates.

1.3. Justification

Following its revitalization and subsequent ratification of the Protocol in 2002, IUCEA initiated a reform process aimed at re-positioning itself in order to address its expanded mandate within the Community. Such reforms became necessary after the enactment of the IUCEA Act in 2009. The reforms prompted the need to establish an appropriate environment for harmonization of higher education systems, so as to promote the EAC regional integration agenda as envisioned in the Common Market Protocol. Among the important steps towards harmonization of higher education in the region was the setting up of a regional quality assurance system for universities that was initiated in 2006.

In light of the above regional dynamics, it was deemed necessary to develop the benchmarks that would then be used within the institutions in the region. The decision to start with business related studies programme was arrived at as a result of a prior analysis of peer review reports of all the academic programmes piloted by IUCEA.

1.4. The Development Process

The development of the Business related studies benchmarks underwent a number of iterative processes that include data collection and analysis, documentation and consultative fora such as stakeholders' round table sessions among others.

Consequently, a survey of the Business related Studies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda was carried out and the results of its analysis shared with the participants in the roundtable session in Arusha¹. Rwanda and Burundi were not included in the study because they were brought on board much later in the quality assurance initiatives of the region. The analysis revealed the following:

- Differences in the naming of the Business related Studies that were, to a large extent, similar in content. However, the respondents were of the view that the name *Business Administration* was more appropriate than *Business Studies*;
- The majority were using the name Bachelor of Business Administration (40%). About 15% referred to it as Business Studies. Other institutions were using the term Administration and Management (30%), whereas 15 % were using the name Bachelor of Commerce with or without additional terminology.
- The naming was being driven by the perception of the market as demonstrated by the following response from the survey²:

“Bachelor of Commerce is the name that is perceived favourably by potential and current students and employers in Kenya since it is the name adopted by the universities, which pioneered Bachelor in business studies program in Kenya. Indeed my University has been using the name Bachelor of Business Management but we were forced to re-brand it to B.Com early this year due to public demand and market perception.”

- The HEIs offered diverse specialization areas within the Business related Studies , with the most popular ones being Accounting (offered by 90% of the universities), Finance(80%), Marketing (80%), while Business Administration and Human Resource Management were being offered by 50% of the universities;
- Programme objectives were seen as general since the formulation of expected learning outcomes were not reflected in most of the universities programmes – it was revealed that 8 out of 11 universities had no expected

1 Vroeijenstijn, Ton, *The state of the art of the BBA programs in the East African Universities, Arusha 2011*

2 Vroeijenstijn, Ton, *The state of the art of the BBA programs in the East African Universities, Arusha 2011*

learning outcomes formulated; duration of BBS differs from one country to another – in Kenya BBS is designed for 4 years while Tanzania and Uganda the duration is 3 years; and

- There are variations in content in terms of intensity, number of courses, internship, project work and final essay in the region.

Based on the above observations, there was a need to formulate clear programme objectives and expected learning outcomes for both the basic programme and specialisation areas and a benchmarked programme for Bachelor of Business Related Studies in the region. For successful formulation of benchmarks for this programme in the region, it was necessary to ensure equivalence (e.g.: curricula) and faculty support to the initiative.

In the analysis, it was observed that several endeavours had been made in the development of benchmarks for Business related studies programmes within and outside of the East African region. These include:

- The Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) minimum academic standards for Business related undergraduate programmes in Kenya;
- The minimum standards for courses of study in Management and Business studies undergraduate programmes in Uganda;
- The general Business and Management standards of Bachelor of Business Administration in the UK;
- The internationally recognized Benchmark definitions for Business Studies of the Foundation for international Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) in Germany; and
- The reference point from the Tuning Europe project of the business area group and from the survey of the relevance of generic competences in Africa.

To enhance this process, a first roundtable forum of stakeholders was convened in Arusha-Tanzania, in December 2011. The aim of the forum was spelt out as developing comparable standards for Bachelor of Business related studies (BBS) programmes, in line with national minimum standards and international standards that would be adopted by universities in East Africa. The roundtable discussions were expected to lead to the development of a set of benchmarks for the field of Business related studies, in line with the National Qualifications Framework, leading to harmonization of Business related studies in the region. This would culminate in the adoption of benchmarks for BBS programmes, which would be published, disseminated and implemented in the East African region. The benchmarks would address

the objectives, expected learning outcomes and content of the BBS programmes in addition to the organisation of the programme.

Participants were drawn from the Business departments of HEIs, Higher Education National Regulatory Agencies (NRAs), professional bodies, employers and industries from all the EAC Partner States. The EABC was also involved in this process. International experts were brought on board, as resource persons, to provide an overview of the global initiatives in the harmonization of standards in university education. The roundtable forum did not need to invent the wheel, but could build upon broad experiences, in the region and elsewhere. The discussions during the roundtable forum were, among others, based on experiences with the harmonization endeavours of the Tuning Europe and Tuning Africa projects, experiences with accreditation by Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) to establishing the professional bodies' and employers' expectations of Business related Studies in the region. Furthermore, the roundtable forum was used to learn more about the expectations of the professional bodies and the labour market.

Based on the discussions, the participants formulated benchmarks in small group discussions. The draft benchmarks for the programme and specialization areas were thereafter discussed in plenary sessions and culminated in the formulation of a draft document of *Benchmark for Business related studies in East Africa*.

This document was further fine-tuned by a regional team of experts in BBS and representatives of the industry. It was then circulated to various HEIs in the region for their inputs. Thereafter, the revised version was discussed at the 2nd roundtable forum in Dar es Salaam (27-30 August 2012). The main objective of this particular forum was to validate comments of various stakeholders on the improved draft. At this meeting it was decided that the focus would be on development of expected learning outcomes.

It should be noted that the document focused on benchmarking in terms of the output rather than the process. The output and qualification orientation were chosen because of the need to harmonize the programmes. The process of achieving the learning outcomes was left to the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and to individual National Regulatory Agencies.

Subsequent to the above processes, the revised document was reviewed at a joint meeting of the Heads of Councils/Commissions for Higher Education in the region in Nairobi on 13th February 2013. They resolved that amendments had to be made prior to submission of the document to IUCEA Quality Assurance Committee for

consideration. The IUCEA constituted a team of experts that met on 30-31 May 2013 in Mukono, Uganda, to further improve upon the document.

1.5. Stakeholders involvement

Efforts were made to involve key stakeholders drawn from professional bodies, employers and industry. The main outcome of the stakeholders' consultation highlighted the fact that common challenges of human resources in East Africa were as follows: Increase of unemployment rate in Partner States; change in consumer behavior of human capital from certificates to results delivery; decline in ethical values and professional dynamism.

In light of the above observations the stakeholders were of the view that the academic institutions should

- Produce demand-driven and result oriented graduates;
- Provide competence-based training including generic skills such as critical thinking, communication and problem solving;
- Inculcate entrepreneurial skills to students as an intervention to minimize unemployment rate;
- Change students' mind-sets from being job seekers to job creators;
- Produce graduates who are passionate and have positive attitude towards work; and
- Inculcate ethical values to enhance integrity as an intervention to declining moral behavior.

The subsequent sections present the benchmarks that have been developed.

PART 2:

THE BENCHMARKS BUSINESS RELATED STUDIES

It is important to note that Business related studies are “concerned with the effective and efficient mobilisation and deployment of society’s limited resources – natural, physical, human and financial. The effectiveness criterion relates to the provision of those goods and services that are most highly valued by society- either by consumer preferences exercised by purchases made through market mechanisms, or by publicity-funded choices made by governments and their agencies, or by philanthropic donations and voluntary contributions by citizens. The efficiency criterion focuses on the provision of these goods and services in a timely fashion, with high quality and with minimum waste”.³

Business related programmes aim at providing theoretical and practical knowledge and skills that lead to improved planning, organisation, implementation and control of business and economic activities.

The formulation of the benchmarks for the Business related programmes is as follows:

2.1. The Benchmarks and Curriculum design

One of the purposes of formulating the benchmarks is to support the HEIs to design or redesign the curriculum. It is clear that the National Regulatory Agencies of the five East African countries will apply their own criteria in the assessment of the curricula. The benchmarks are needed because learning outcomes guarantee:

- Comparable quality levels of the graduates;
- Comparable chances for the graduates in the labour market;

3 Tuning, Reference points for the design and delivery of Degree programs in Business, Bilbao (n.d)

- The knowledge of the labour market about BBS graduates;
- Increased national and international mobility of students; and
- Increased national and international mobility of lecturers.

The formulated benchmarks are a good starting point in the development or redesigning of the Bachelor programme in Business related studies.

2.1.1. Formulating the Expected Learning Outcomes

The first step in designing or redesigning a programme is the formulation of the learning outcomes. The purpose of the learning outcomes is to describe clearly what is expected from the student after completing the whole programme, a module or a course. HEIs are expected to compare their already formulated learning outcomes with the benchmarks and see what is missing or what should be rephrased. For each learning outcome, one should describe how the outcome would be measured and assessed.

2.1.2. Translating Learning Outcomes into the programme

The next step in the process is to identify what courses are needed to achieve the learning outcomes. Thereafter, examine the core subjects and the supporting subjects and see what is already present in the programme (maybe with another name) or there are subjects that should be added.

To check if the planned courses cover the learning outcomes, it is important to develop a curriculum alignment matrix as shown in Table 1. For each course one has to formulate the specific learning outcomes for that course and have to check how far this course contributes to the programme learning outcomes.

Table 1: Curriculum alignment matrix

Bachelor programme in Business related studies					
Learning outcomes	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3	Course 4	Course 5
Communication skills	x		x		
Critical thinking		X		x	x
Problem solving					x
Cooperate/working together	x				
etc					

2.1.3. Modularization and the use of Credit Points

The benchmarks are not prescribing to the HEIs what to do and how to do it. This also applies to the way the programme should be organised. The choice to follow either a modular or a course unit system is at the discretion of the university.

A module is a formal learning experience encapsulated into a unit of study, usually linked to other modules to create a programme of study. The advantage of modularization is that the credits transfer system can either be inter or intra. The survey of the BBS programmes showed that there was no overall agreed calculation of credit points in the region. The IUCEA is working on an East African Credit transfer system, which will be part of the Regional Qualifications Framework for Universities (RQFU).

Comparisons can be drawn from the ECTS module system, which is based upon the estimated amount of time/effort a student has to put into complete a module. It assumes students are studying full-time (9 - 5 p.m), 5 days a week), and are taking 60 ECTS each year. 1 ECTS = 25-30 working hours. These are not only contact hours, but include also reading, writing course work, preparing for exams and sitting exams etc. An academic year has 1500-1800 hours. So 1 year has 60 credits. A 3 year bachelor has 180 ECTS = about 5400 of work.

An average module is 5 ECTS. Each ECTS module should therefore typically involve at least 100 hours of work. This means that a Bachelor programme of 3 years should ideally have maximal 36 modules.

2.1.4. Course/module description

In this document, the learning outcomes both for the basic programme and the major areas of specialisation are provided. It is necessary to develop the modules or course units, starting with the formulation of the learning outcomes for that specific module/course. For each course unit or module, a clear description should be available as indicated in Tables 2 and Table 3 respectively.

Table 2: Example 1 of description of a module

No/Code of Module	21091
Name of Module	Strategic Marketing Management
Semester	6
Learning Outcome	Students shall be able to develop long term strategic concepts for different phases of life cycles and for entering new markets on the basis of a market and competitors' analysis and based on market forecasts
Duration of Module	One semester
Type of course (i.e. mandatory/ elective)	Mandatory
If necessary, course of the module	-
Frequency of the module offer	Annually
Prerequisites	Basic marketing courses 20433, 20156, 20998
Applicability of module of other study programmes	None
Person responsible for module	N.N
Language of teaching	English
ECTS (based on 30 hours workload)	7
Workload calculation	Contact hours 64, self study 146, total workload 210 hours
Contact hours per week	4
Methods and duration of examination	2 hours written exam, assignment
Percentage of the final grade	7/84 = 8.3%
Contents of module	Instruments for market and environment analysis PEST-analysis, porters five forces, portfolio and value chain analysis, scenario and delphi forecast methods
Teaching and learning methods	Seminar, case studies
Special feature (online work, guest speaker, practice)	-
Literature (compulsory reading, recommended literature)	Kotler, Philip...

Table 3: Example 2 of description of a module

No./Code of Module	BUS 314
Name of Module	Financial Management
Semester	5
Learning outcomes	The student should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the importance of financial management in all aspects of life; • Explain and apply theories of financial management; • Evaluate and choose optimal investment decisions; • Measure business performance and the impact of international financial organizations to the Kenyan financial market.
Duration of module	One semester (14 weeks teaching and 2 weeks of exams)
Type of module (i.e. mandatory/elective)	Mandatory
If necessary, courses of the modules	
Frequency of the course offer	Annually
Prerequisites	BUS-309: Business Finance
Applicability of course for other study programmemes	None
Person responsible for module	N.N
Language of teaching	English
ECTS (based on 30 hrs workload)	7
Workload calculation	Contact hours 42, self -study 84, total workload 126 hrs
Contact hours per week	3
Methods and duration of examination	2.5 hours written exam, assignment
Percentage of the final grade	60%
Contents of the module	Capital budgeting cost of capital, portfolio analysis, capital structure, foreign exchange, merger, and acquisitions.
Teaching and learning methods	Lectures, case studies, research presentation and class discussion

No./Code of Module	BUS 314
Special features (online work, guest speaker, practice)	
Literature (compulsory reading)	Pandey, I. (2006). <i>Financial management</i> , 11 th edition. Delhi: Vikas Publishing House. Khan M. & Jain, H. (2000). <i>Financial management</i> . India: Tata McGraw
Literature (recommended literature)	Van, H. & Wachowicz, J. (2000). <i>Fundamentals of financial management</i> . New York: Prentice Hall.

Figure 1 shows an example of a module description whereas figure 2 shows that of a BBA programme with the calculation of credit points.

Figure 1: example of module description

1. Semester	Organization	Production Accounting	Mathematics Financial Mathematics	Basics in Law	Basics in Informatics	Scientific Research Methods
2. Semester	Human Ressources	Financial Accounting	Business and Labour Law	Statistics I	Informatics (application systems)	Business Language I (basics)
3. Semester	Marketing Purchasing	Cost Accounting	Controlling Investment	Statistics II	Micro economics	Business Language II
4. Semester	Corporate Finance	Specialization I	Specialization II	Specialization III	Macro economics	Soft skills
5. Semester	Business plans	Specialization I (Continuation)	Specialization II (Continuation)	Specialization IV	Taxation	International Competences
6. Semester	Internship			Project Work		

■ Core courses (basic and specialization)
■ Supporting courses
■ Skills

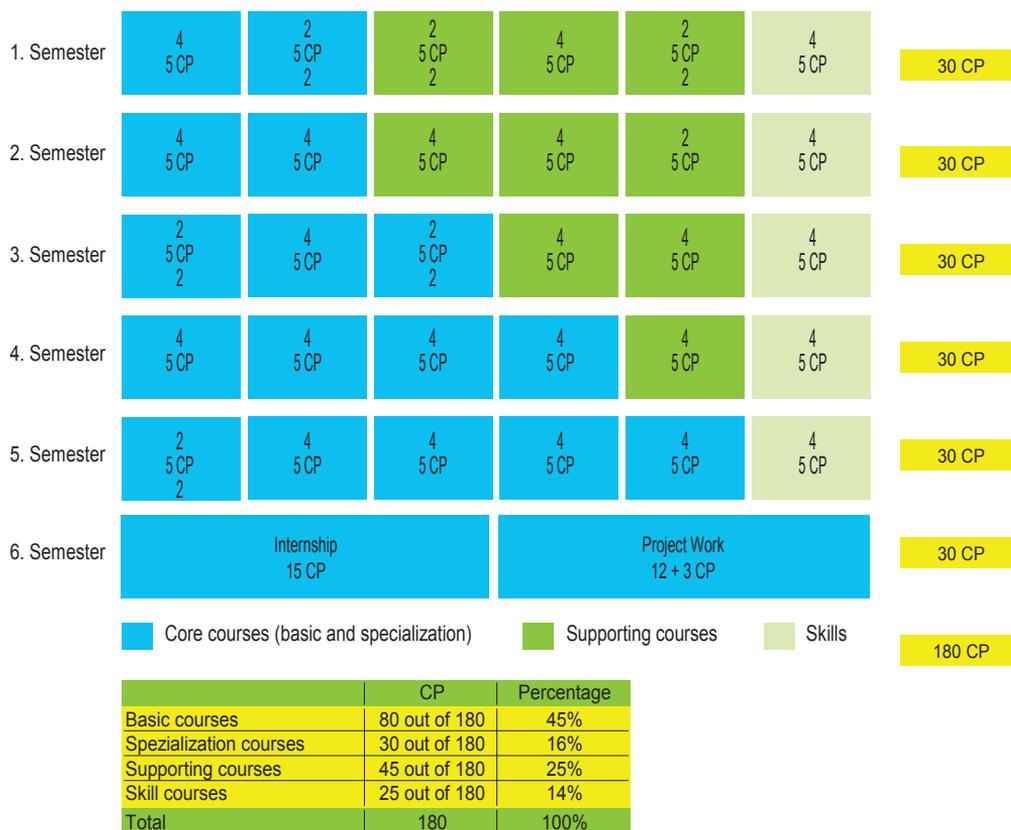


Figure 2: example of BBA programme with calculation of credits⁴.

An essential part of the programme is to assess how far the student has achieved the learning outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary for the HEIs to decide how each learning outcome will be assessed.

2.2. The Benchmarks and Quality Assurance

It is envisaged that these benchmarks will play a significant role in quality assurance of the programme. Although each National Regulatory Agency applies its own criteria in assessing the quality of programmes, the benchmarks can play a role in harmonization of quality assessment and quality assurance in the region. It is therefore expected that the NRA's will ideally align their standards with these benchmarks. The benchmarks also offer the expert teams for the external assessment a frame of reference in assessing the quality of a BBS. For the HEI, the benchmarks offer a good instrument for evaluating the quality of the programme.

⁴ Bruns, Benchmark Standards for BBA studies, 2nd roundtable forum, Dar as Salaam August 2012

2.3. Competencies

It is worth noting that benchmarks are based on the formulated learning outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary to make clear what is meant by learning outcomes.

Competencies and learning outcomes

According to literature on benchmarking and learning outcomes, there are many different definitions of learning outcomes or competences.

In the European Qualification framework (EQF)⁵ *Learning outcomes* are defined as: statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. *Competence*, according to EQF, is the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development.

According to IUCEA⁶ learning outcomes, are viewed as what a learner is expected to know and understand, and be able to do or demonstrate, on completion of a learning process within a recognized qualifications framework.

In the glossary of the Tuning⁷ the following definition is given: *Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of learning.* Tuning makes a distinction between Learning Outcomes and competencies: *Competences represent a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities (can do statements).* Tuning distinguishes between generic (relevant to all academic study courses) and subject learning outcomes (relevant for the specific subject area).

In the discussion about learning outcomes, the problem is the concept *competencies*. In the Dutch qualification framework⁸: *The term “competence” is used to mean the combined total of knowledge, insight and skills acquired.* In the minimum standards document of the NCHE of Uganda⁹ the term competency is defined as: *the specification of knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standard of performance expected in the workplace and to industry standards. Competence is the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in the workplace/industry.*

5 The European Qualification Framework for Life Long Learning, European Commission 2008

6 IUCEA EAQF draft

7 Tuning, Reference points for the design and delivery of Degree programs in Business, Bilbao 2009

8 Nederlands Kwalificatieraamwerk Hoger Onderwijs, compatibel met het overkoepelende Europese Kwalificatieraamwerk voor de Europese Hogeronderwijsruimte, 2008

9 NCHE, Minimum standards for courses of study in Management and Business studies undergraduate programs, Kampala 2011

Although the notion Competency is used regularly, it is unclear what competences are. In all definitions there is a hint to knowledge, applying knowledge and skills. Furthermore, there is talk about abilities and attitudes. It seems that competency as such is at this moment one of those confusing words promoting more misunderstanding instead of understanding. It is not to assert that learning outcomes equals competencies.

A graduate exhibiting competencies at a working place will have partly acquired the skills as outcomes of his/her study. But parts of the competencies have to do with inborn characteristics.

2.4. Some definitions of terms

In this document, the following definitions are used and their relationships are illustrated in Figure 3:

“**Learning outcomes**” are statements of the knowledge, skills and attitude that a learner is able to demonstrate on completion of a learning process.

Based on the Bloom’s taxonomy learning outcomes can be divided into:

- **Knowledge**

Knowledge means the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning. Knowledge is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. Knowledge is described as theoretical and/or factual;

- **Skills**

Skills mean the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems. Skills are categorized as:

- » Cognitive skills (involving the use of logical, intuitive and creative thinking);
- » practical skills (involving manual dexterity and the use of methods, materials, tools and instruments);
- » interpersonal skills (the way of communication, cooperation, etc).

- **Attitude**

Attitude means a settled way of thinking or feeling about something. Four major components of attitude are: affective (emotions or feelings), Cognitive (belief or opinions held consciously), Conative (inclination for action), Evaluative (positive or negative response to stimuli).

Figure 3 will also be used to categorize the learning outcomes for the Business related Studies.

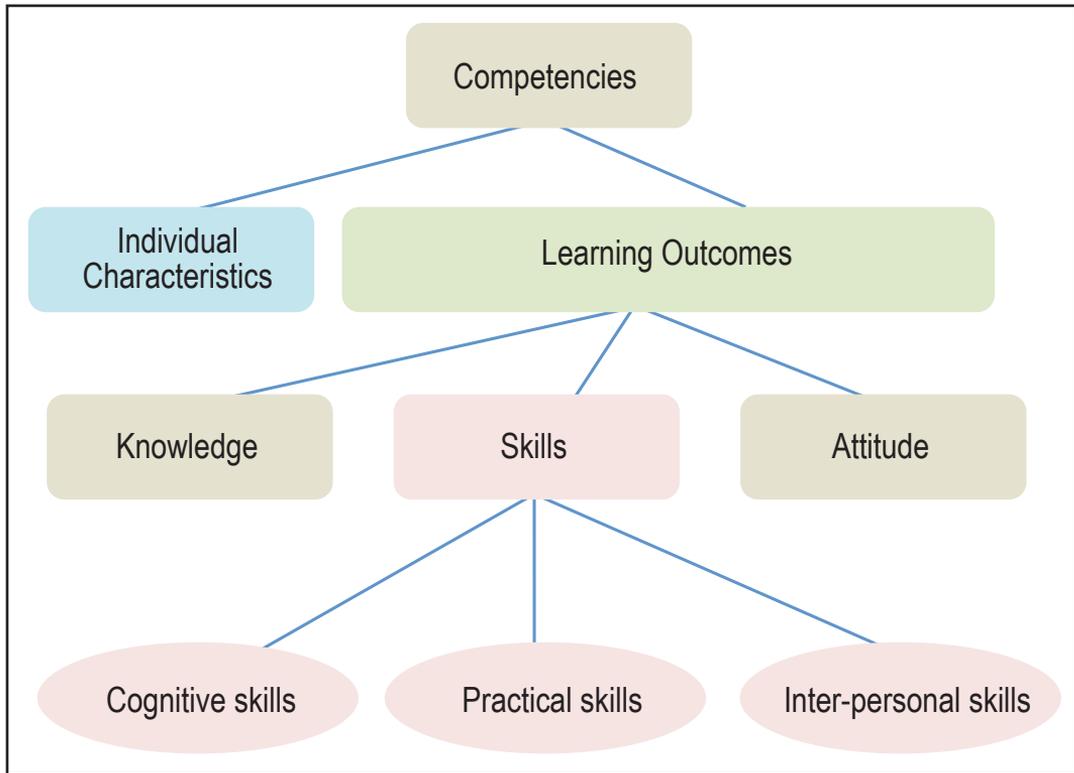


Figure 3: Categorisation of Learning Outcomes

In formulating learning outcomes, a distinction has to be made between *generic* learning outcomes and *subject specific* learning outcomes. Generic learning outcomes are those outcomes, expected from all academic trained graduates. Examples of Generic learning outcomes are: problem solving, communication skills, and ability to cooperate. A key characteristic of the generic learning outcomes is that you can only exercise them in a particular field. Subject specific learning outcomes are those that are typical to that discipline.

2.5. Programme Objectives and Learning Outcomes in BBS

The survey of the Business related Studies showed that the universities in general had formulated programme objectives, but not learning outcomes. In fact, what was in place was what was expected from the programme. What had not been put in place was the translation of the programme-oriented objectives into student-oriented learning outcomes: what the student is expected to learn through this programme.

2.5.1. Programme objectives

The Bachelor of Business related studies should be designed in such a way that it addresses the concerns of different stakeholders. This should be reflected in the programme objectives. These objectives can be grouped into three categories:

A. Academic ability

The programme objectives are intended to:

- Impart knowledge about business organisations and value chains;
- Enable the learner to acquire skills, appropriate techniques and practices in business; and
- Develop and offer learning process that enables progression to higher-level studies.

B. Employability

The programme objectives are intended to:

- Enable the learner to meet the requirements of the labour market and enhance the chances of employability;
- Equip students with managerial skills for business;
- Equip students with entrepreneurial skills; and
- Produce graduates who can integrate theory and practice to work effectively and efficiently in organisations.

C. Personal development

The programme objectives are intended to:

- Produce a graduate who can enhance his/her career development and progression;
- Assist the learner to develop generic skills that enable acceptance as a team member in the business environment;
- Train the learner for lifelong learning;
- Develop awareness and understanding of the skills necessary to live and work in a diverse multicultural environment; and
- Promote ethical behaviour, especially in the business environment.

2.5.2. Learning Outcomes

As mentioned in Section 2.3, A learning outcome is a statement of the knowledge, skills and attitudes students should have acquired at the end of each course (module, unit) and programme. It has been observed that, although universities are engaged

in a practice of defining objectives and measuring outcomes in one form or another, many do not approach the process of formulating Learning Outcomes in a uniform and collaborative way. It is important to note that being more consistent in defining learning outcomes, would create an opportunity to:

- Enhance students’ learning and mobility;
- Provide guidance to instructors;
- Identify and overcome barriers to effective teaching;
- Facilitate collaboration among HEIs in the region and beyond;
- Improve students’ learning, retention and completion;
- Produce quality graduates; and
- Increase students’ chances for employability.

To harmonise the programme and make them more consistent, the following learning outcomes have been formulated, to be used as benchmarks. The HEIs may consider adding Learning Outcomes as and when necessary.

Table 4 provides the Learning outcomes for the basic programme of BBS.

Table 4: Expected Learning outcomes for a Bachelor of Business related studies

1.	Knowledge	The graduate should be able to: Demonstrate a broad and integrated knowledge and understanding of the academic/scientific foundation of Business Studies. Demonstrate critical understanding of the relevant theories, principles and methods of business studies.
2	Skills	
2.1	<i>Cognitive skills</i>	The graduate should be able to: Differentiate business concepts and managerial tools in different organizational settings in decision-making. Analyse business challenges and opportunities in a contextualized environment. Apply research concepts and techniques to solve business problems. Transfer business knowledge to the work environment and provide practical solutions. Demonstrate creativity and innovativeness in a business environment. Solve emerging challenges in modern business organizations. Appraise complex business situations and react in an appropriate manner.

2.2	<i>Practical skills</i>	The graduate should be able to: Apply management skills at individual and group levels. Apply contemporary technology, including IT, in business practice. Apply entrepreneurial skills in business.
2.3.	<i>Inter-personal skills</i>	The graduate is able to: Communicate efficiently and effectively. Negotiate professionally with stakeholders. Demonstrate leadership skills within a legal and ethical framework. Be an effective and resourceful team player.
3	<i>Attitude</i>	The graduate should demonstrate an attitude that enables him/her to: Venture into his/her own business. Show awareness and understanding of the ethical standards of the profession. Adapt to and work in a multicultural and global business environment appreciating contemporary issues. Act professionally in the work environment. Show confidence, commitment, self-drive and creativity in the work environment. Show self-awareness and ability to adapt to new situations. Exhibit passion for continuous improvement and life-long learning.

2.5.3. Translating the Learning Outcomes into the basic phase of the BBS

The learning outcomes need to be translated into the programme. In this document, the programme is defined at Bachelors level. A programme is seen as a coherent set of courses leading to a degree, in this case a Bachelor degree. A Bachelor programme can be divided into:

- the basic phase. The programme is the same for all entering students.
- the specialisation phase. The student makes his/her choice for a certain specialisation.

The programme may be organised in courses, modules or units but at least the following subject areas must be covered:

In the basic phase, 3 types of subject areas can be distinguished as follows:

- **Core subjects**

These are the essential subjects offering a thorough foundation of the discipline. The core subjects are the backbone of the discipline. They are typical Business subjects a student must never miss. This means that the subjects are compulsory.

- **Supporting subjects**

These are subjects for backing up the core subjects. Without these subjects it will be difficult to understand the core subjects. For example “Business Mathematics”, “Basics of Computer Studies”. Those subjects are also compulsory for all students.

- **Elective subjects**

These are subjects that can be taken by a student, to deepen or to broaden the knowledge, but they are not compulsory. However, a student has to make a choice to meet the minimum requirements for graduation.

Table 5 shows the minimum core and support subjects in the basic phase of a Business related studies programme.

Table 5: Core and supporting subjects in the basic phase of a Bachelor of Business related studies.

Core subjects	Supporting subjects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Accounting • Financial/Principles of Accounting • Financial Management • Human Resource Management • Introduction to Business/ Business Studies • Micro and Macro Economics • Principles of Management/ overview of Management practice • Principles of Marketing • Principles of Taxation • Purchasing and Supply Management • Strategic management • Leadership and governance • Risk management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication skills • Basics of Computer Studies • Business Ethics • Business Law • Business Mathematics • Business Research Methods • Business Statistics

Based on the core and supporting subjects in Table 5, the following remarks apply:

- The titles of the subjects may differ from HEI to HEI. The emphasis should be on content rather than title.
- The autonomy and the uniqueness of HEIs will be taken into consideration in formulating the core and supporting subjects for the basic phase. The HEIs will have the choice to add their own subjects beyond the core and supporting subjects.
- The core and supporting subjects may be designed in form of modules, courses, or units as per HEIs' systems.

2.6. Benchmark Standards for the specialization phase

Specialisation in Bachelor of business related studies has been grouped into four main areas. These are based on the main business area/function (accounting, business administration, human resources, finance, marketing and others); types of enterprises (SME, MNC, etc); geographical areas (East Africa, Europe, Eastern Europe, Asia, etc.); and business sectors (tourism, banking, insurance, taxation, service-, pharmaceutical, automotive industry, etc.). In this document the specialisation benchmarks have been formulated on the basis of the organizational functions of:

- Accounting
- Business management
- Human Resource Management
- Finance
- Marketing

This document restricts itself to the above-mentioned specialisations although HEIs can have additional areas.

For each specialisation, the expected learning outcomes and core subjects are given. The guidelines that apply to the basic subjects above are also applicable to all the specialisations.

The expected learning outcomes and the core content of the subject specialisations are presented in the Tables 6 to 10.

Table 6 Accounting specialisation

Expected Learning Outcomes	Core subjects
<p>A graduate of the programme in the Accounting specializa- tion should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Apply the concepts, fundamental principles and appropriate techniques and practices of Accounting using systems and software in the context of current developments. 2. Perform analysis of real situations and provide operational solutions to challenging accounting situations. 3. Conduct audits and prepare management reports for decision-making. 4. Apply taxation principles and Taxation Acts to compute tax liability and provide tax advice. 5. Produce financial statements 6. Manage risk in new ventures in developing their career 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advanced and corporate Accounting 2. Accounting Information Systems 3. Not for profit and Public Sector Accounting 4. Advanced Taxation and planning 5. Auditing and Assurance 6. Financial Reporting and International Accounting Standards 7. Management Accounting

Table 7: Business Management specialisation

Expected Learning Outcomes	Core subjects
<p>A graduate of the programme in the Business Manage- ment specialization should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop strategic and operational plans. 2. Manage business projects. 3. Design and implement Business performance management practices. 4. Analyse the international dimensions of business management. 5. Discuss and explore contemporary issues and theories in management. 6. Create jobs and markets. 7. Negotiate and lobby effectively 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership and Corporate Gov- ernance 2. Project Management 3. Organisational Conflict Manage- ment 4. Business Performance Manage- ment 5. Contemporary Issues In Manage- ment 6. Strategic Management 7. Culture and Management 8. Innovation and venture Manage- ment

Table 8: Human Resource Management Specialisation

Expected Learning Outcomes	Core subjects
<p>A graduate of the programme in the Human Resource Management specialization should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulate the content and context of Human Resource Management in working organizations or institutions and apply them in a given environment. 2. Analyse Human Resource Management needs and devise and implement the relevant skills development plan. 3. Design appropriate HR strategies to optimize human resource performance towards achieving organizational goals. 4. Utilise appropriate software to collect, analyse, store data for effective human resource management 5. implement and monitor HR organization policies and practices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rewards Management 2. Performance Management 3. Change Management 4. Human Resourcing 5. Labour Law and Industrial Relations 6. Human Resource Information Systems 7. Employee Relations and Counseling. 8. 8.Cross-Cultural Management 9. Contemporary issues in HRM 10. Human Resource development 11. HR Planning

Table 9: Finance specialisation

Expected Learning Outcomes	Core subjects
<p>A graduate of the programme in the Finance specialization should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpret financial statements. 2. Provide financial advice to the management of an organization. 3. Manage financial risks in organizations. 4. Manage financial institutions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of Financial Institutions. 2. Corporate Finance. 3. Public Finance. 4. Investment Portfolio Management 5. International Finance. 6. Investment Analysis 7. Emerging issues in Finance

Table 10: Marketing specialisation

Expected Learning Outcomes	Core subjects
<p>A graduate of the programme in the Marketing specialization should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct market research for present and future markets. 2. Interpret market information. 3. Analyse market segments and targets. 4. Manage customer relationship. 5. Implement market strategies. 	<p>Marketing Research</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consumer and organisational Behaviour 2. Strategic Marketing 3. Customer Relationship Management 4. Marketing instruments 5. Distribution Channel Management 6. Marketing Communications 7. E-Marketing (E-Commerce) 8. International Marketing 9. Marketing Planning 10. Marketing Controlling

2.7. The role of internship and project work

In the BBS programme *Internship* and *project work*, which are compulsory play an important role. Internship offers the students the opportunity to become acquainted with their future jobs. It further provides the student with experiences at working floor level. The project work, on the other hand, is a form of study, which is problem oriented. The project is normally based on an actual existing problem, which may be linked to internship and leads to possible solutions.

2.8. The Benchmarks and the Qualifications Framework

As earlier mentioned, this document is not meant to replace the initiatives of the EAC Partner States and institutions, but rather to provide a regional benchmark with regard to the learning outcomes. Therefore, the benchmarks should be in line with the various national qualification frameworks.

2.9. The East African/National Qualifications Framework

Globally within the last 10 years, there have been developments in which various countries have either formulated or are formulating a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Such National Qualifications Framework may be regarded as: The policy framework that defines all qualifications recognized nationally in post-

compulsory education and training within a country. The NQF comprises titles and guidelines, which define each qualification, together with principles and protocols covering articulation and issuance of qualifications, and Statements of Attainment.

In the same spirit the East African countries are working on a National Qualifications Framework. The NQF of Tanzania¹⁰ defines National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as “*a national instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning and skills achieved.*”

*The East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE)*¹¹ defines Qualifications Framework as “*an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning and skills and competences achieved.*”

Looking at the NQFs in Europe and the European Qualifications framework, and other NQFs in other parts of the world, one sees the development trying to describe the different levels of education. Concerning Higher Education, 3 levels are described: Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate. For the purpose of this document, only Bachelors and Masters Degrees will be discussed. In all NQF's the levels of Bachelors and Masters Degrees are described. The level-number may differ. In the European Qualification framework, it is level 6 and 7, as well as in the EAQF. However, the level descriptors are more or less the same.

Bachelor's Degree (level 6)

The holder of the qualification will be able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide and unpredictable variety of contexts with substantial personal responsibility for the work of others and responsibility for the allocation of resources, policy, planning, execution and evaluation.

Master's Degree (level 7)

The holder of the qualification will be able to display mastery of a complex and specialized area of knowledge and skills, employing knowledge and understanding to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity, able to work autonomously and in complex and unpredictable situations.

The generic learning outcomes for a Bachelor's degree

The description of both the Bachelors and the Masters Degree level is general. The level has to be filled in and elaborated with statements of learning outcomes. In most

10 *The Tanzanian Commission for universities, National Qualification framework, final draft March, 2010*

11 *The East African Qualifications Framework, draft May, 2014*

of the NQF's, the level descriptors are elaborated in more detailed generic learning outcomes. Each programme/discipline has to embed the generic learning outcomes in the subject. For example, one of the generic learning outcomes is ability to identify, pose and solve problems. This might become applied research concepts and techniques to solve business problems or solve emerging challenges in modern business organizations.

Tuning has formulated a list of generic competencies¹². In broad terms, those generic learning outcomes are covered in the National Qualifications Frameworks. Table 11 demonstrates whether the benchmarks of BBS are in line with the NQF's as formulated in this document.

Table 11: comparison of Tuning generic learning outcomes with BBS

TUNING List of Generic Competences	BBS number ¹
Ability to communicate in a second (foreign) language	---
Capacity to learn and stay up-to-date with learning	23
Ability to communicate both orally and through the written word in first language	13
Ability to be critical and self-critical	2;22
Ability to plan and manage time	----
Ability to act on the basis of ethical reasoning	18
Capacity to generate new ideas (creativity)	7;21
Ability to search for, process and analyse information from a variety of sources	3;4
Ability to work autonomously	22
Ability to identify, pose and resolve problems	5;6;8
Ability to apply knowledge in practical situations	6
Ability to make reasoned decisions	3
Ability to undertake research at an appropriate level	5
Ability to work in a team	16
Knowledge and understanding of the subject area and understanding of the profession	1
Ability to motivate people and move toward common goals	10
Commitment to conservation of the environment	----
Ability to communicate key information from one's discipline or field to non-experts	6;13
Ability for abstract and analytical thinking, and synthesis of ideas	3;4

¹² *Tuning is using the word competence while in fact they are learning outcomes. Tuning, A Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles, Bilbao/The Hague, 2010 (annex 2, page 63)*

TUNING List of Generic Competences	BBS number ¹
Ability to interact constructively with others regardless of background and culture and respecting diversity	19
Ability to design and manage projects	----
Ability to interact with others in a constructive manner, even when dealing with difficult issues	14;19
Ability to show awareness of equal opportunities and gender issues	-----
Commitment to health, well-being and safety	-----
Ability to take the initiative and to foster the spirit of entrepreneurship and intellectual curiosity	12;17;20
Ability to evaluate and maintain the quality of work produced	---
Ability to use information and communications technologies	11
Commitment to tasks and responsibilities	20
Ability to adapt to and act in new situations and cope under pressure	22
Ability to act with social responsibility and civic awareness	15;18
Ability to work in an international context	19

Although the majority of the generic learning outcomes are covered by the BBS learning outcomes the following have not been articulated:

- Ability to communicate in a second (foreign) language
- Ability to plan and manage time
- Commitment to conservation of the environment
- Ability to design and manage projects
- Ability to show awareness of equal opportunities and gender issues
- Commitment to health, well-being and safety
- Ability to evaluate and maintain the quality of work produced.

It is important that HEIs incorporate the above generic learning outcomes when designing/reviewing their curriculum.

2.10. Implementation of the Benchmarks

The implementation of these benchmarks is an oversight responsibility of the National Regulatory Agencies. IUCEA will provide the overall coordination and evaluation of the process.

2.11. Review of the Benchmarks

These benchmarks will be subject to review after every five-year period to take care of emerging trends in the environment.

CONCLUSION

The benchmarking process for Bachelor of Business related studies was built on different initiatives currently pursued by National Regulatory Agencies and HEIs in East Africa. The purpose of the benchmarks includes among others, the enhancement of the quality of Business related studies in the region; to assist HEIs to identify areas where improvement is needed; to compare existing processes with best practices within and elsewhere outside the region. Furthermore, the benchmarks are expected to contribute to harmonization of BBS in the region.

As IUCEA, it gives us great pleasure to commend these benchmarks to you.

GLOSSARY¹³

Attitude	Attitude means a settled way of thinking or feeling about something.
Bachelor degree	It is a degree in which the holder of the qualification will be able to apply knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide and unpredictable variety of contexts with substantial personal responsibility, responsibility for the work of others and responsibility for the allocation of resources, policy, planning, execution and evaluation.
Basic phase	The first phase of the Bachelor programme, compulsory for all students (2 in a 3 years bachelor and 3 years in a 4 years Bachelor.
Benchmark	point of reference against which something may be measured.(Take IUCEA definition)
Benchmark standards	Subject benchmark statements set out expectations about standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what gives a discipline its coherence and identity, and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject. (T)
Competencies	Is a product of individual characteristics and achieved learning outcomes
Core subject	These are the essential subjects offering a thorough foundation of the discipline. The core subjects are the backbone of the discipline.
Course(unit)	A self-contained, formally structured learning experience. It should have a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes... and appropriate assessment criteria. Course /units can have different numbers of credits.
Curriculum alignment matrix	An instrument for checking the contribution of a course, unit or module to the achievement of the programme learning outcomes.
Curriculum	See programme
Elective subjects	These are subjects out of which a student has to make a selection, to deepen or to broaden their learning experience in the programme.
Equivalency	Having the same value, without being uniform.
Generic learning outcomes	Generic Learning outcomes are those learning outcomes, expected from all academic trained graduates, irrespective of the study programme. Examples of generic learning outcomes are problem solving, communication skills, and ability to cooperate.

13 Use is made from the Tuning glossary in Tuning, A Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles, Bilbao/The Hague, 2010 (chapter 3, page 51-57). The descriptions of Tuning are marked with (T).

Harmonization	Harmonization of programmes means that the programmes in the region are comparable based on agreed benchmarks.
Internship	Is a period of supervised training at the workplace and is an important part of the programme. It offers the student the opportunity to become acquainted with his /her future job. It provides the student with experiences at working floor level.
Knowledge	Is the body of facts, principles, theories and practices that is related to a field of work or study. It is the outcome of the assimilation of information through learning and is described as theoretical and/or factual
Learning outcomes	Statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.
Master degree	It is a degree in which the holder of the qualification will be able to display mastery of a complex and specialized area of knowledge and skills, employing knowledge and understanding to conduct research or advanced technical or professional activity, able to work autonomously and in complex and unpredictable situations.
Module	A formal learning experience encapsulated into a block of study, usually linked to other modules to create a programme of study.
Module description	Module description is statement of the aims, objectives/learning outcomes, content, learning and teaching processes, mode of assessment of students and learning resources applicable to a block of study.
National Qualification Framework (NQF)	The policy framework that defines all qualifications recognized nationally in post-compulsory education and training within a country. The NQF comprises titles and guidelines, which define each qualification, together with principles and protocols covering articulation and issuance of qualifications, and Statements of Attainment. See also Qualifications framework.
Programme	A set of coherent educational components, based on learning outcomes, that are recognized for the award of a specific qualification through the accumulation of a specified number of credits and the development of specified competences.(T)(IUCEA definition)
Programme objectives	Overall specification of the intention or purpose of a programme of study (T)
Project work	Is a form of study, which is problem oriented. The project is normally based on an actual existing problem which may be linked to internship and leads to possible solutions. The project may be practical or research oriented.

Qualifications framework	Is an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning and skills and competences achieved
Skills	The ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems.
Standards	Explicit levels of academic attainment, which are used to describe and measure academic requirements and achievements of individual students and groups of students.
Subject specific learning outcomes	Are those learning outcomes that are typical for that discipline. See also generic learning outcomes
Supporting subjects	These are subjects for backing the core subjects. Without these subjects it will be difficult to understand the core subjects.
Tuning	Tuning is a collaborative, consultative process involving academics working in subject groups with employers and other stakeholders in curriculum development to enhance student competences. Tuning projects which are funded by the European Commission in higher education have been successfully completed in over sixty countries around the world



INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

IUCEA Secretariat
EADB Building
Plot 4, Nile Avenue

P. O. Box 7110, Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256-414-256251/2 **Fax:** +256-414-342007

E-mail: info@iucea.org **Website:** www.iucea.org