



INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

STANDARDS, GUIDELINES, PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE EAC REGIONAL PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

KAMPALA, JUNE 2021



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ACRONYMS

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ACE	African Centres of Excellence
ASG-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AU	African Union
CHEA	Common Higher Education Area
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
EAC	East African Community
EACMP	EAC Common Market Protocol
EALA	East African Legislative Assembly
EAQAN	East African Quality Assurance Network
EAQFHE	East African Qualification Framework for Higher Education
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation
HAQAA	Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
AUC	African Union Commission
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
KfW	German Development Bank
ODeL	Open, Distance and e-Learning
PAQAF	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework
QA	Quality Assurance
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning

FOREWORD

Higher education has greatly evolved in the 21st century with global changes encompassing rapid expansion of higher education both in terms of institutions and student enrolment; diversification of the provision of higher education; and increased privatization of higher education. It has also been affected by globalisation that led to the growth of internationalisation of higher education in general. Internationalisation of higher education brought about the increase of cross-border higher education with a resultant growth in the mobility of students, academic staff, programmes, institutions as well as professionals. These changes have impacted the processes and policies defining and documenting quality in higher education. Among other phenomena, they have led to the rise of accreditation activities that cross national boundaries. Despite the absence of regional accreditation system in East Africa, higher learning institutions have started looking for international accreditation. They seek accreditation from agencies in developed countries that have well-established and recognised quality assurance systems in order to increase their institution's international reputation, recognition and legitimacy of the qualifications.

However, considering new development in terms of quality assurance and accreditation at the continental level and the fact that higher learning institutions in East Africa that are being internationally accredited face challenges such as high costs, the cumbersome nature of the requirements and the immense size of data required by accreditors; IUCEA deemed it necessary to develop regional accreditation mechanisms that will facilitate mutual recognition of institutions and/or programmes that are recognised and accredited by the National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education in their respective Partner States.

More importantly, the regional accreditation will be one of the means to enforce implementation of regional standards and guidelines and will form part of important policies and instruments for operationalisation of the EAC Common Higher Education Area to facilitate free mobility of learners, labour and services. It would further serve as a mark of quality in addition to national accreditation and a competitive advantage, increasing institutions and programmes' ability to target the best students, academic staff and most outstanding researchers and serves as a marketing tool. It would also expand opportunities for public and private financial support.

It is my expectation that these Standards, Guidelines, Procedures and Processes for the EAC programme accreditation will be used to improve the quality of the programmes offered and hence increase the trust, visibility and marketability of regionally accredited programmes in the region and beyond.



Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona,
IUCEA, Executive Secretary

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The process of development of these Standards, Guidelines, Procedures and Processes for EAC regional programme accreditation involved a number of individuals and institutions to whom I would wish to express my sincere appreciations. Foremost I would like to gratefully acknowledge the invaluable contribution of representatives of National Commissions and Council for Higher Education in East Africa. Those representatives include Dr. Severin Dushimirimana of the National Commission for Higher Education, Burundi; Prof. Grace N. Njoroge of the Commission for University Education, Kenya; Dr. Thenoneste Ndikubwimana of the Higher Education Council, Rwanda, Mr. Job Akuei Alith of the National Council for Higher Education, South Sudan, Dr. Telemu Kassile of Tanzania Commission for Universities. Special thanks also go to Dr. Gervais Ndayizeye of International University of Equator, Burundi, Dr. Paul Nzioki of Laikipia University, Kenya, Dr. Bernard Bahati of University of Rwanda, Rwanda, Dr. Br. Bruno Dada of Catholic University of South Sudan, South Sudan, Prof. Michael Mawa of Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda, Prof. Masoud Muruke of University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, for their contribution.

I wish to also extend my sincere appreciations to Prof. Mike Kuria, Dr. Cosam Joseph and Ms. Juru Marie Eglantine of IUCEA for their invaluable contribution and support to this process.

It is my sincere hope that this document will be useful to the programmes and institutions looking for regional accreditation and will be used to improve the quality of the academic programmes.

Finally, I wish to thank all stakeholders for the continued support and cooperation rendered to IUCEA in the fulfilment of its mandate.



Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona
IUCEA, Executive Secretary
Kampala, June 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The genesis of establishing a harmonized regional system of accreditation dates back to 2011, when some members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) proposed the amendment of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) Act 2009, for IUCEA to undertake regional accreditation of both institutions and programmes. Higher education stakeholders were of the view that, cognizance of the good spirit of regional integration on higher education subjects, matters on accreditation should be bestowed upon the national competent authorities such as the national commissions and councils for higher education and that the mandate of IUCEA be strengthened in strategic development of higher education and research. According to the IUCEA Act. 2009, IUCEA should work in collaboration with the National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education. Subsequently, the decision of the EAC Council of Ministers on this matter, paved the way for transforming the EAC into a common higher education area. Henceforth, IUCEA was tasked by the Council to develop requisite regional frameworks and mechanisms that would facilitate this transformation. The anticipation was that such harmonised mechanisms would facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications, comparability, compatibility and synchronisation of higher education and training systems among other goals. Thus, the EAC was declared a Common Higher Education Area by the Summit of the EAC Heads of State on 20th May 2017 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The pronouncement by the Heads of States directed that national higher education and training systems be operated and guided by the common regional frameworks under which curricula, examinations and certification as well as academic and professional qualifications, and the quality of the educational and training output in higher education will be harmonised. IUCEA was tasked to provide all the necessary technical support in the operationalisation of the Common Higher Education Area under the oversight of the EAC Council of Ministers.

The initiative of IUCEA to develop the Standards and Guidelines for regional accreditation of academic programmes is consistent with the aspirations of the EAC Common Higher Education Area, the East African integration agenda and particularly the Common Market Protocol as one of the EAC integrations pillars. This initiative is also in-line with other African continental initiatives on harmonisation of higher education and mutual recognition of qualifications, such as the Addis Convention (Revised Arusha Convention) as well as other approaches to regulate transnational higher education globally.

Since 2018, IUCEA has organized meetings of experts drawn from the national accreditation agencies as well as higher education institutions in the region to develop the regional programme accreditation Standards and Guidelines, Processes and Procedures. The process of developing the accreditation framework involved benchmarking of existing international, regional and sub regional accreditation frameworks, such as the Bologna Process in Europe, and practices in South East Asia, Central and Southern America (Latin America). The existing EAC Partner States national accreditation practices were documented and analysed so as to develop a common understanding of the accreditation practices to be adopted. Several round table meetings were also held to agree on the final draft which was subjected to key regional higher education stakeholders for their inputs.

In the process of development of the Regional Accreditation Framework, it was deemed necessary to consider the critical role that a quality assured curriculum plays in achieving excellence in learning as well as aiding relevant national, regional and international development. It was recognized that assuring quality academic programmes in institutions of higher learning is a significant aspiration of all stakeholders in higher education. With the ever increasing demand for cross-border higher education, the importance of a regional accreditation framework that provides an internationally accepted quality mark for academic programmes offered from within the EAC region is critical.

The regional accreditation framework will serve as an external quality assurance tool as it encompasses internationally recognized criteria: relevance of the programme and graduates; quality of the curriculum, staff and facilities; appropriate modes of teaching and learning; provision for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and student mobility; collection and utilization of student, alumni and employers survey data in curriculum enhancement; student centered assessments; and student support systems. These Standards and Guidelines will act as the key recognition document in bestowing academic programmes with a regional seal of quality and therefore facilitate cross-border higher education. The operationalization of these Standards and Guidelines will be through the developed procedures and processes. The Standards and Guidelines will be reviewed every five years while the procedures and processes will be reviewed as and when need arises.

This document is structured into 2 parts: Part 1 encompasses the Standards and Guidelines for the Regional Academic Programmes Accreditation, and Part 2 provides for the requisite Procedures and Processes for the Regional Accreditation for Academic Programmes.

KEY TERMINOLOGIES AND DEFINITIONS

Accreditation	A process for verifying or approving a higher education institution or quality assurance agency or academic programmes by an authorised external organisation, normally valid for a limited period of time.
Assessment	Process of determining the extent to which academic programme provides learners with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.
Commission/ Council	National accrediting body of higher education institutions in a country.
Cyclic review	A periodic method of assessing, reviewing and revising academic programmes so as to identify gaps and weaknesses with a view to enhancing effectiveness and constantly improving student learning experiences
External peer reviewer	An individual contracted to the team that reviews the higher education institution, or academic programme under review. He/she should have some experience in the higher education sector/quality assurance or relevant experience in the subject area.
External quality assurance	Systematic monitoring and evaluation of the operations of a quality assurance agency of higher education, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards set out in the ASG-QA are met.
External review report	The main output of the review of a higher education institution or an agency in form of a document reporting in detail on the review, prepared by the Review Panel.
Guideline	Guidelines describe how standards linked to them may be achieved.
Harmonised systems of higher education	means synchronised and coordinated higher education based on agreed benchmarks, and as provided for in Article 11 (1)(b) of the EAC Common Market Protocol, 2010.
Higher education	means all types of studies, training or training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by Higher Education Institutions regulated by the respective National Councils/ Commissions.
Higher education institution (HEI)	University, college or other organisation that offer degree programmes and regulated by the National Councils/ Commissions
Internal quality assurance	A system and standardised procedures at a higher education institution or a quality assurance agency securing fit-for-purpose and quality outputs of processes.
Monitoring and Evaluation	set of on-going assessment tools of a project.
Qualifications Framework	means an instrument for the development and classification of qualifications according to a set of criteria for levels of learning and skills and competences achieved
Quality assurance	A general term for procedures in internal or external quality assurance procedures including but not limited to assessment, accreditation, evaluation, audit both onprogramme and institutional levels.
Regional Accreditation	Approval that an academic programme or institution has met the minimum standards of quality at national and regional level based on self and peer assessment.

Requesting institution	An applicant for regional accreditation
Review Panel	A team of peer reviewers
Revocation	The official cancellation of the regional accreditation, or act of recall or annulment of decision due to non-fulfilment of obligations
Seal of Quality	This is a seal of authenticity, beyond the national accreditation of an academic programme
Self-Assessment Report	An analytical report prepared by a higher education institution under review, assessing the internal quality status of its own academic programme(s) based on the IUCEA criteria
Site-visit	A site visit is when an external evaluation team goes to an institution to evaluate verbal, written and visual evidence.
Standard	Refers to the specification of aspects, elements or principles to which an institution, programme, higher education institution or quality assurance agency should conform or by which quality is judged.
Supervision	Mentorship of a student in an academic process, especially on research.
Suspension of accreditation seal	Refers to a temporary withdrawal of seal of quality due to suspension of the programme accreditation at national level or non-compliance to the regional quality standards and guidelines or any other nonconformity (ies).
Tracer studies	Periodic data collection and analysis on graduates from a given academic programme with the view to evaluate the impact of training, improvement of the curriculum and relevance to the labour market needs.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and context

External Quality Assurance (EQA) is a phenomenon that has received widespread attention by higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide. In order to ensure that the education offered by HEIs meet labour market requirements, many countries have established national higher education commissions and councils or other bodies to regulate the provision of higher education in their respective countries.

Accreditation of programme is universally accepted as a means of quality assurance. Thus, as it is the case elsewhere across the globe, in the East African Community (EAC) region, it is a best practice that before a programme is offered, it must be accredited by the respective National Commission /Council or any other accrediting body using prescribed quality assurance standards and guidelines. The benefits of accreditation are widely known and may include, but not be limited to advancing standards, enhancing excellence, good reputation building, creating public accountability, safeguarding the interests of higher education stakeholders, acceptability of credits transfers, acceptability of qualifications by employers and other higher education stakeholders and increasing the possibility for securing support from funding agencies.

In recognition of the importance of enhancing mobility of students and labour by enhancing recognition of qualifications, there are several initiatives that have been undertaken at the East African level. For example, under Article 102 of the EAC Treaty, Partner States agreed to co-ordinate their human resources development policies and programmes and also to harmonise curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions through the joint action of their relevant National bodies. Equally, they agreed to exchange information and experience on issues common to their educational systems, from which they would collaborate in establishing appropriate education and training programmes. To facilitate these processes, IUCEA was re-established as an EAC Institution in accordance with Article 102 (2) (f) and mandated to play a coordinative and oversight role in the Community in the enhancement of quality and sustainable development of higher education systems and research for purposes of supporting the region's socio-economic development and regional integration.

The establishment of the EAC Common Market Protocol (EACMP) in 2010 and the declaration of the EAC as a Common Higher Education Area in 2017 expanded the mandate of IUCEA to provide for among other things, harmonised quality assurance and accreditations systems that would allow comparability, compatibility and synchronization of higher education and training systems, and the qualifications attained to facilitate mobility of learners and labour.

Over the past several decades, there has been an increasing trend for HEIs to seek international reputation by subjecting their programmes and institutions for accreditation by non-national accrediting agencies. Examples on this, include non-USA business schools that have obtained accreditation from the US Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), and business schools from a range of countries that have sought accreditation under the EQUIS scheme in Europe or from the Association of MBAs in the UK.

In the EAC region, there is currently no regional accreditation system. Accreditation is done by National Commissions/ Councils for higher education at the national level. However, some potential international funding agencies of higher education (e.g.: World Bank, KFW, GIZ, DAAD) request for evidence of regional/international accreditation as one of the requirements in their funding protocols. A practical and most recent example is of programmes from 24 Centers of Excellence that are hosted at 16 universities in eight countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi,

Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. These centers were required by the funding agencies to have international accreditation as one of the disbursements linked indicators. Absence of regional accreditation in the EAC region has necessitated some HEIs to consider seeking international accreditation from agencies in developed countries, which have well-established and recognised quality assurance systems. In many of the cases, the programmes are subjected to tools available in the region and evaluated by experts such as the ones that are already in the region and for astronomically high prices.

It is against the above background, that the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) considered it necessary and beneficial to establish a regional accreditation system that would provide appropriate mechanisms to guide the accreditation process of programmes at the EAC regional level.

It is worthwhile mentioning that the regional accreditation will be one of the means to enforce implementation of regional standards and guidelines in line with the provision in the IUCEA Act 2009, that assigns IUCEA the function of obliging universities to offer quality education. In addition, the accreditation system will form part of important practices, policies, and instruments for operationalization of the EAC Common Higher Education Area to facilitate free mobility of learners, labour and services.

It is also important to underline that the proposed regional accreditation is meant to be voluntary, quality based and complimentary and incremental to, as opposed to being a substitute of the respective national accreditation of the programmes in question.

Therefore, this document provides a set of standards and associated guidelines, procedures, and processes for programme accreditation at the EAC regional level. The document was developed through a consultative process that involved representatives from National Commissions/Councils, Quality Assurance Experts, HEIs and other stakeholders in the EAC Partner States.

2. Guiding principles for implementation of the regional standards and guidelines

These regional accreditation standards and guidelines are guided by the principles outlined in the IUCEA publications: Principles and Guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in East Africa, Road Map to Quality: Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, and Standards and Guidelines for postgraduate studies as well as the following principles:

- i) The regional accreditation process is entirely voluntary and complimentary to national accreditation. Hence, a HEI interested to have her programme(s) accredited at the EAC regional level must be nationally accredited and must submit a formal request using the procedures and processes prescribed in this document;
- ii) By applying for programme accreditation, the concerned institution declares that it consents to adhering to these standards and guidelines;
- iii) The regional accreditation is intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice at regional level;
- iv) Through these standards and guidelines, the IUCEA encourages improvement of academic programmes, sound academic practices, and constructive innovations in-line with the agreed regional quality assurance standards;
- v) The regional accreditation process results in recognising academic programmes with a Seal of Quality for

purposes of enhancement of cross border higher education and regional and international recognition and visibility.

3. The regional accreditation framework vis-à-vis other IUCEA quality assurance tools, regulations and guidelines

Internationalisation of higher education has impacted the processes and policies defining and documenting quality in higher education. As higher education institutions increasingly seek international reputation, there is a stronger pressure to benchmark academic programmes, develop and harmonise curricula, examination systems, certification and accreditation practices of education and training institutions with the view of putting in place mechanisms for facilitating learners and professional/labour mobility and enhance recognition and marketability in the global labour market.

The East African Community has made significant strides in the development of regional policies and guidelines that are contributing in the harmonisation of higher education and training systems. Under the EAC Treaty, Article 102, Partner States agreed to harmonise curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education. Furthermore, Partner States agreed to revive and enhance the activities of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). Thus, the mandate of IUCEA as an institution of the EAC was expanded to play a coordinative and advisory role in the Community in the enhancement and harmonisation of quality assurance and sustainable development of higher education systems and research.

Subsequently, IUCEA in collaboration with national commissions and councils for higher education of the EAC Partner States spearheaded the development of harmonised approaches for quality assurance in higher education in East Africa, with key publications such as “A Roadmap to Quality in Higher Education: Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, comprising 5 volumes. The handbook was developed based on existing national quality assurance systems and accreditation practices by benchmarking from international good practices. While volumes 1 and 2 focus on quality assurance at programme level on self- and external assessment, respectively, Volume 3 focuses on total quality assurance at institutional level, and Volume 4 is on management of Quality Assurance at Institutional level. Finally, Volume 5, provides Principles, Practices and Management of External Quality Assurance in East Africa”. Thus, Volume 5 which is founded on the core external quality assurance, specifically on accreditation principles and practices of all the Commissions and Councils for Higher Education of all the 6 EAC Partner States is the core building block of the envisaged Regional Accreditation Framework. Volumes 1, 2 and 3 are also key to the Regional Accreditation Framework as they provide the basic inputs, requisite processes to either programme or institutional accreditation. Henceforth, the focus of this Regional Accreditation Framework at programme level is largely in line with the already agreed and harmonised quality assurance procedures entailed in Volume 1 and 2, for programme self-assessment and external review, respectively.

In order to ensure sustainability of the regional quality assurance system that has been developed, IUCEA put in place various strategies that include continuous capacity building on various domains of quality assurance and advocacy initiatives at various levels of implementation of the regional QA systems from heads of departments, deans of faculties/schools, directors of quality assurance of higher education institutions including technical staff of commissions and councils for higher education from the EAC Partner States. Furthermore, IUCEA facilitated the establishment of the East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN), as a networking and experience sharing platform that brings together policy and decision makers in higher education such as Vice Chancellors, Deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals/Rectors and Quality assurance practitioners such as Directors/coordinators of Quality Assurance. The networking and sharing of experiences focus, among others, on current global trends and good practices, challenges and strategic implementation of quality assurance.

In the context of the ‘Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative’ (HAQAA), the African Union Commission (AUC) initiated the development of a Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) to provide a continental platform for enhancing the provision of higher education quality and promoting compatible methodologies. In 2018, the AU constituted a Technical Working Group of experts from five African sub-regions, including the EAC that developed the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA) which provides instruments for the implementation and appropriate functioning of PAQAF. The ASG-QA are expected to provide mechanisms that will eventually contribute significantly in the harmonization of higher education systems and training in Africa, one of the continental agenda of African Union Vision 2063. In essence therefore, the proposed EAC regional accreditation is in tandem with current trends on the continent and will contribute strongly to the EAC’s strength and role in the Continental Strategy for Africa (CSA).

PART I: STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION IN EAST AFRICA

Introduction

This part presents the Standards and Guidelines for Programme Accreditation in East Africa. The Standards and Guidelines will cover key quality marks of an academic programme or curriculum viz: inclusivity, relevance and systematic approach to curriculum development, implementation and cyclic reviews; monitoring and evaluation for enhancement and relevance to labour market needs in Partner States as well as internationally. The other key quality aspects include engagement of appropriately qualified and experienced staff while ensuring an optimum learning environment; institutionalisation of internal and external quality assurance for academic programmes; student centered learning and support approach; fair and transparent student-centered assessment among other quality matters.

STD 1. The programme must be accredited by the National Commission/Council/accrediting agency **Guidelines:**

- i. The requesting institution shall provide evidence of accreditation of the programme at national level
- ii. The confirmation letter by the national accreditation agency shall be provided
- iii. Involvement of the relevant National professional bodies, where applicable shall be provided.

STD 2. Curriculum development shall be intentional, inclusive, systematic and cyclic: The development of the curriculum should follow regional quality assurance standards and guidelines, should be informed by best practices, and involve relevant stakeholders. It should also be periodically reviewed.

Guidelines:

- i. The programme should be aligned to programme benchmarks, and has followed the IUCEA quality Assurance guidelines;
- ii. Development of curriculum is informed by good research and best practices nationally, regionally and internationally. It should also be informed by the demand for graduates in the field and should include inputs from recognized experts in the field, employers, alumni, and other relevant stakeholders;
- iii. The curriculum has a focus on the current and future trends in the field of study including employability skills and match to relevant industry;
- iv. Adequate flexibility to allow for adaptation to changing environment (meeting changes in societal needs, rapidly expanding new knowledge, fast changing communication technologies, skills needed in the field constantly changing or conceived);
- v. Integration of the requirements of stakeholders into the programme's expected learning outcomes; and
- vi. Provision for periodic reviews and re-development

STD 3. Curriculum shall be adequate in content, structure and organization **The curriculum shall demonstrate its consistent with the EAQFHE, provide for clear progression pathways, adequate content and take into consideration students' diversity.**

Guidelines:

- i. Content is consistent with corresponding level in the East African Qualifications framework for higher education;
- ii. Provision for clear progression to the next educational level;
- iii. Skills and competencies to be attained by students are well-articulated;

- iv. Adequate in content and scope, promoting core content, ideas, values and the acquisition of soft and employability skills;
- v. The program's structure and credit hours/units are in accordance with East African norms for the amount of study required for each qualification it offers;
- vi. High degree of consistency between the various units in the curriculum;
- vii. Core texts, references and reading materials to reflect regional and international scholarship of teaching and learning;
- viii. Clearly articulated role of research and innovation;
- ix. Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible methodology and learning paths; and
- x. The delivery of the programme comply with the general requirements for the discipline and/or the professional field

STD 4. Postgraduate students in the programme shall be supervised by adequate and relevant staff within the prescribed duration of the programme

Guidelines

- i. The programme is aligned to the IUCEA Standard and Guidelines for Postgraduate Studies in East Africa;
- ii. Each postgraduate student shall be supervised by adequate and appropriately qualified supervisors;
- iii. Each supervisor shall not supervise more than the recommended number of students at any given time

STD 5. Each academic programme shall be accredited for the specified mode(s) of learning

Guidelines

- i. Accreditation at the East African region shall include programmes offered through all modes of delivery that is, conventional (face-to-face), Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL), dual or blended.
- ii. An institution seeking regional accreditation of a programme offered through ODeL delivery mode shall demonstrate existence of appropriate instruments, which shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a. requisite knowledge and skills of the academic and technical/support staff for effective teaching and learning of students in the programme;
 - b. requisite facilities to students and staff to ensure effective and efficient teaching and learning;
 - c. necessary support services to the learners during the course of training of the programme; and
 - d. principles and procedures for effective and independent assessment of students in the programme including proctoring of examinations in the learning management system.
- iii. Institutions seeking regional accreditation of a programme offered through ODeL mode shall demonstrate existence of appropriate systems to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning in the programme; and
- iv. Policies and procedures for continuous training and skills upgrading for staff and students.
- v. With due review and approval by a competent authority an institution may be allowed to switch the mode of delivery.

STD 6. Clear quality management policy and practice for effective curriculum development and implementation. The institution should provide for quality assurance mechanisms of its programmes.

Guidelines:

- i. Institutionalization of academic programmes quality assurance mechanisms with internationalization perspective (international office, help desk, physical and on-line, number of international students in the programme);
- ii. Existence and implementation of quality assurance policies;
- iii. Carrying out, analysis and mainstreaming of outcomes of quality surveys; and

- iv. The programme should have completed at least one delivery cycle and reviewed at least once after completion of the first delivery cycle.
- v. Notwithstanding the provisions of guideline (iv) in case of new programmes the East African procedures and processes for regional accreditation shall apply

STD 7. The East African qualifications framework for higher education will be employed to allow for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and provide for student mobility within the region

Guidelines:

- i. Every higher education institution shall have a credit transfer policy aligned to the East African qualifications framework for higher education and the East African Credit Accumulation and Transfer policy;
- ii. Clear, accurate and current information on credit transfers shall be readily available to prospective students;
- iii. All elements of the curriculum should be assigned specific credits directly related to the expected workload

STD 8. Relevantly, appropriately qualified and experienced academic and technical/support staff

Guidelines:

- i. Academic staff involved in the programme delivery shall have adequate training in pedagogy;
- ii. Except for PhD, the academic staff shall be involved in programme delivery at least one level below their own qualifications;
- iii. Academic staff teaching PhD level programme shall have a PhD degree with, at least, three years of HEI teaching and/or research experience in the relevant field after acquiring PhD;
- iv. Staff teaching at Masters' level programme shall have a PhD degree with, at least, two years of HEI teaching and/or research experience;
- v. The technical, administrative and support staff attached to a Programme shall be suitably competent for the duties allocated to them;
- vi. The institution shall make annual reports on publications produced by the staff teaching the programme;
- vii. The institution shall have academic and technical/support staff continuous development policy;
- viii. Academic staff adopt innovations in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;
- ix. Teaching duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience and skills;

STD 9. The higher education institution shall provide adequate and appropriate infrastructure, facilities and equipment necessary to deliver the programme.

Guidelines:

- i. The quality of teaching and learning infrastructure shall comply with the guidelines for educational physical facilities based on international practice in the field or profession;
- ii. The available facilities, equipment and apparatuses shall be sufficient, relevant, up-to-date and in good conditions as provided for in each field of specialization
- iii. The higher education institution shall show evidence of incorporating modern technology in teaching and learning, and provides for training in use of new technologies for both staff and students.
- iv. The HEI shall be barrier free (cater for special needs users)

STD 10. The higher education institution shall regularly publish and integrate findings of student programme evaluation data

Guidelines:

- i. The higher education institution shall collect, analyse, review and report annually data on:
 - a) Student progression

- b) Completion transition rates
 - c) Students' satisfaction with their Programme
 - d) Failure rates
 - e) Students withdrawal from the Programme
 - f) Students transfer from and into the Programme
 - g) Gender distribution of the students
- ii. The HEI shall use the findings for academic quality enhancement as well as manpower development;

STD 11. The higher education institution shall regularly publish and integrate findings of the tracer studies and alumni survey results

Guidelines:

- i. Within three years after each programme cycle, the higher education institution shall collect, analyse, review and report data on:
 - a) Students completion rates;
 - b) Graduates entering employment or higher studies
 - c) Most frequent industries absorbing the graduates
- ii. Use of the tracer studies and alumni surveys to review and improve the programme and promote linkages between the higher education institution and the labour market as well as aligning the outcomes to the changing societal needs.

STD 12. The programme provides for and assures fair and transparent student-centered assessment

Guidelines:

- i. Performance indicators shall be used to evaluate student workload, progression & completion rates.
- ii. Student assessment uses a variety of methods;
- iii. Criteria for assessment are clear and known;
- iv. The standards applied in assessment are explicit and consistent;
- v. The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance scrutiny.
- vi. Assessment methods for each course/module which are appropriate for checking the realization of the learning outcomes are defined in the course/module description.

STD 13. The programme defines the conditions and support system necessary for students to make adequate academic progress

Guidelines:

- i. Formal requirements for admission are clearly stated and readily available.
- ii. Evidence of diversity in admission, including gender mainstreaming and consideration of disadvantaged groups and persons with disabilities, where applicable;
- iii. Admitted students meet the programme-specific entry requirements;
- iv. The programme promotes student retention and progression, and address issues concerning drop-outs;
- v. Evidence on the storage of the programme records and transcripts regarding the list of courses, units and grades;
- vi. Appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints are provided; and
- vii. Align student support services to the requirements of the IUCEA principles and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education in East Africa

STD 14. The programme shall undergo cyclical reviews

Guidelines:

- i. The accredited programme shall have a validity period of two cycles and a grace period of two years
- ii. The review of the programme shall be informed by the self-assessment report
- iii. The programme review cycle is consistent with the duration of the programme and reflects the defined validity of the accreditation period;
- iv. Review recommendations are used for the programme improvement
- v. The programme review should reflect the changing societal needs, evolving learning environment and support services.

STD 15. The accreditation decisions shall be limited to two cycles after which the programme may be re-accredited

Guidelines:

- i. The higher education institution shall undertake continuous monitoring of the regionally accredited programme to inform necessary review
- ii. The revised programme shall be submitted for reaccreditation
- iii. A grace period of two years shall be provided to allow for completion of the re-accreditation process

STD 16. The accreditation of academic programme may be revoked upon confirmation that gross violations to these standards have been committed

Guidelines:

- i. After every cycle the programme shall be evaluated for maintenance of quality;
- ii. Before revocation of accreditation status, there shall be provision for suspension of the academic programme as provided for in the procedures and processes for Regional programme accreditation;
- iii. As stipulated in the procedures and processes for Regional programme accreditation, a programme found to have gross violations shall have its accreditation revoked;
- iv. A programme whose accreditation has been revoked may be considered for re-accreditation after a period of two years

STD 17. Institutions shall monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that the set objectives and expected learning outcomes are met.

Guidelines:

- i. The monitoring shall be periodic and involve benchmarking and a diversity of stakeholders
- ii. The findings shall inform adaptation and review of the curriculum, taking into consideration among others; outputs of latest research, changes in societal needs, rapidly expanding new knowledge, fast changing communication technologies, skills needed in the field constantly changing or conceived;
- iii. Annual reports shall be filled with IUCEA

PART II: PROCEDURES AND PROCESSES FOR PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION IN EAST AFRICA

Introduction

This Section presents core procedures and processes for the implementation of the Standards and Guidelines for Programme Accreditation in East Africa. The purpose of these procedures and processes is to provide a clear and transparent frame of reference that can guide higher education institutions, national commissions and councils for higher education as well as IUCEA Secretariat in handling regional programme accreditation. With these procedures, there will be enhanced confidence and trust of stakeholders in the outcome of the programme accreditation processes. The procedures will be operationalized through various processes.

There are ten key procedures defined in this Section namely:

- i. Procedure for Application by a Higher Education Institution for Programme Accreditation
- ii. Preliminary evaluation of the application
- iii. Procedure for the review panel to review the Programme
- iv. Procedure for Site Visit and Programme Assessment
- v. Procedure for Approval and Declaration of Accreditation
- vi. Procedure for Appeal/ Arbitration
- vii. Procedure for Publication of Accreditation Status
- viii. Procedure for Suspension of Accreditation Seal
- ix. Procedure for Revocation of Accreditation Seal
- x. Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluation

Considering that the programme accreditation process needs to be concluded within a specified period of time, the procedures here below have defined time frame. A workflow chart has also been included below to guide all stakeholders in the programme accreditation process.

PRCD 1. Application by a higher education institution for Programme Accreditation

Processes:

- i. A higher education institution shall fill in a standardized application form for programme accreditation – filled application form showing proposed dates (Annex A.)
- ii. Submit the application form to the IUCEA accompanied by:
 - a. Certificate/ Letter of Institutional Accreditation by the relevant competent National Authority
 - b. Evidence of National accreditation status of programme
 - c. Evidence of involvement of Professional Bodies in the national accreditation of the programme, where applicable.
 - d. Letter of endorsement from the relevant National Regulatory Authority, as applicable, for the regional accreditation process.
 - e. Respective academic/ study programme (Curriculum).
 - f. Situational Analysis Report/ Needs Assessment Report for new programmes
 - g. Programme Self-Assessment Report for existing programmes as per the prescribed format
 - h. Evidence of payment of the applicable non-refundable fees for programme accreditation

PRCD 2. Preliminary evaluation of the application

Process:

- i. Preliminary/ Administrative Review of the application by IUCEA Secretariat within two weeks of receipt of the application – completed check List (Annex B)

PRCD3. Review Panel for Programme assessment

Processes:

- i. Upon receipt of a request for programme accreditation, a Panel of reviewers for the programme will be constituted within four weeks of receipt of the application. The establishment, rules of engagement and outcome of the review Panel will be in accordance with the Guidelines for External Programme Assessment contained in the IUCEA Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. At the minimum, the Members of the Panel should either have experience in higher education, be trained in programme accreditation processes, be familiar with programme review or be qualified in the relevant subject area. The Panel should include one peer from the discipline, one student leader, one expert from the industry, one representative of the respective national regulatory authority, one representative from IUCEA Secretariat, one representative from EAQAN (preferably from the country where the programme emanates) or other international quality assurance networks and one representative of professional bodies (where applicable). IUCEA will provide secretarial services for the programme accreditation exercise. The experts shall disclose their independence and no conflict of interest.
- ii. IUCEA informs the Applicant Institution of the proposed names of the review Panel for no objection. (one week)
- iii. IUCEA appoints the proposed review panel (within one week of receipt of no objection response).
- iv. Submission of application documents by IUCEA to the review Panel for preliminary review of the respective programme (immediately after 3. iii above).
- v. Submission of standardized individual reports by each member of the review Panel on preliminary review of the respective programme. This report and any other documents should be submitted to IUCEA within four weeks after receipt of documentation.
- vi. IUCEA organizes a meeting of the review Panel where they nominate the Panel Chairperson, harmonize individual reports and prepare for the site visit (within a month after receipt of individualized report). The Expected outcome shall either be; accept for next step of site visit, review or reject.
Note: The applicable recommendation shall be based on the ratings as per the evaluation tool for academic programme accreditation based on the defined Standards and Guidelines
- vii. IUCEA submits preliminary report of the review Panel to the Applicant Institution for necessary action (one week after the meeting).
- viii. Applicant Institution submits to IUCEA report on the actions taken for programmes that are recommended for review before a site visit (within a month of after receipt of the observations). – ‘Review with recommendations’

PRCD 4. Site inspection

Processes:

- i. IUCEA informs the respective applicant institution of the proposed dates and schedule of activities for the site visit (at least one week prior to the intended site visit). This shall be applicable to programmes that have been accepted for the next step of site visit. The schedule of activities shall be informed by the IUCEA Roadmap to quality: Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- ii. Applicant institution nominates a contact/ focal person
- iii. Institution designates a working space/ room for the Panel and ensures that the relevant documents are available. The list of relevant documents shall be as per IUCEA Checklist annex B.
- iv. The Applicant Institution organizes and actualizes meetings, interviews and facility inspections as scheduled.
- v. The review panel compiles a comprehensive final report (including the preliminary review and the site visit findings) and submits to IUCEA. (Within two weeks of the site visit). The recommendations by the panel

shall either be: accept and recommend for issuance of accreditation or recommend for further review or recommend for rejection.

Note: The applicable recommendation shall be based on the ratings as per the evaluation tool for academic programme accreditation based on the defined Standards and Guidelines

PRCD 5. Procedure for Approval and Declaration of Accreditation (within four months of receipt of the comprehensive report)

Processes:

- i. A Sub-Committee of the Common Higher Education Area (CHEA) Committee (a technical organ to consider all applications for programme accreditation) will receive the report of the review panel for consideration and presents a report to the CHEA Committee of IUCEA for consideration.
- ii. The CHEA Committee of IUCEA presents a report to the Executive Committee for discussion, approval, and issuance of IUCEA accreditation by the Executive Secretary on behalf of the Executive Committee, where applicable.
- iii. IUCEA Secretariat communicates the respectively approved outcomes to the applicant institution.
- iv. For programmes that are recommended for further review, the applicant institution submits a report of the actions taken to IUCEA and prepares for a site visit by a team of the Panel. After this, Processes 4 (i) and (ii) above shall apply as the case maybe. If there are major limitations to award accreditation, another site visit will be at the cost of the institution.

PRCD 6. Procedure for Appeal/ Arbitration

Processes :

- i. Applicant Institution that are not satisfied with the decisions of the Executive Committee may submit an appeal to the Chair of the Executive Committee for consideration. Only one appeal shall be acceptable (within one month of receipt of communication from IUCEA Secretariat).
- ii. The appeal shall be accompanied by:
 - i. Relevant documentation supporting the appeal
 - ii. Evidence of payment of the specified non-refundable appeal fees, determined by the Executive Committee from time to time.
- iii. The Chair of the Executive Committee shall direct the IUCEA Secretariat to constitute an Ad hoc Committee of Experts (with new membership from the initial Panel) to consider the appeal.
- iv. The Ad hoc Committee of Experts compiles a comprehensive report (including the preliminary review and/or the site visit findings) and submits it to IUCEA Secretariat within one month from the date of appointment. The Committee may recommend either to uphold or rescind the earlier decision of the Executive Committee.
- v. The Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee of Experts presents the decisions of the Committee to the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the Executive Committee's approval.
- vi. IUCEA Secretariat communicates the final decision to the Applicant Institution (within three months after the appeal).

PRCD 7. Procedure for Publication of Quality Seal

Processes:

- i. IUCEA publishes the awards, suspension, and revocation of programme quality seals through the approved avenues including but not limited to Websites, Universities Directory and Annual Reports.
- ii. IUCEA updates and maintains all regional programmes accreditation status in the East African Qualifica-

tion Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) Register.

PRCD 8. Procedure for Suspension of Quality Seal

Processes:

- i. Suspension of quality seal may be initiated based on the following circumstances :
- i. Upon suspension of the programme accreditation at national level. This shall call for immediate suspension of the regional programme accreditation.
- ii. Non-compliance to the regional quality standards and guidelines
- ii. On receipt of information as stated in 8 (i) above, IUCEA appoints an Ad hoc Committee of Experts and Peers to carry out a quality audit on the programme in question.
- iii. IUCEA requests from the institution a comprehensive self-assessment report for the said programme accompanied by other relevant documents.
- iv. IUCEA submits the self-assessment report and all relevant documents to the Ad hoc Committee of Experts to carry out a quality audit on the programme in question. (Immediately after 8. (iii) above).
- v. The Ad hoc Committee of Experts compiles a comprehensive report and submits to IUCEA. The report may provide recommendation on suspension of accreditation of the said programme or retention of the accreditation status with condition for improvement.
- vi. The Chairperson of the Ad hoc Committee presents the comprehensive report to the Sub-Committee of the CHEA Committee
- vii. Sub-Committee of the CHEA Committee presents the Ad hoc Committee of Experts and Peers recommendation to the CHEA Committee of IUCEA for consideration.
- viii. The CHEA Committee of IUCEA presents its recommendation to the Executive Committee for approval.
- ix. The IUCEA Secretariat communicates the decision of the Executive Committee to the institution. If the decision of Executive Committee is to suspend the quality seal, the institution will be required to address the gaps within a specified period but not exceeding one (1) year.
- x. The institution submits an improvement report to IUCEA for verification before the end of the suspension period.

PRCD 9. Procedure for Revocation of Quality Seal

Processes:

- i. Revocation of quality seal may be initiated based on the following gross violations :
- i. Failure to address the grounds of suspension under Procedure 8 within the specified period.
- ii. Withdrawal of the programme accreditation at the national level.
- iii. Deregistration of the institution by the National Accreditation Agency.
- ii. IUCEA Secretariat informs the institution of pending revocation of the programme quality seal and presents the matter to the Sub-Committee of the CHEA Committee.
- iii. The Sub-Committee of the CHEA Committee provides to the CHEA Committee a recommendation for revocation of the said programme quality seal for consideration.
- iv. The CHEA Committee provides to the Executive Committee a recommendation for revocation of the said programme quality seal for approval.
- v. IUCEA Secretariat publishes the revocation of quality seal through the approved avenues including but not limited to Websites, Universities Directory and Annual Reports.

PRCD 10. Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluation

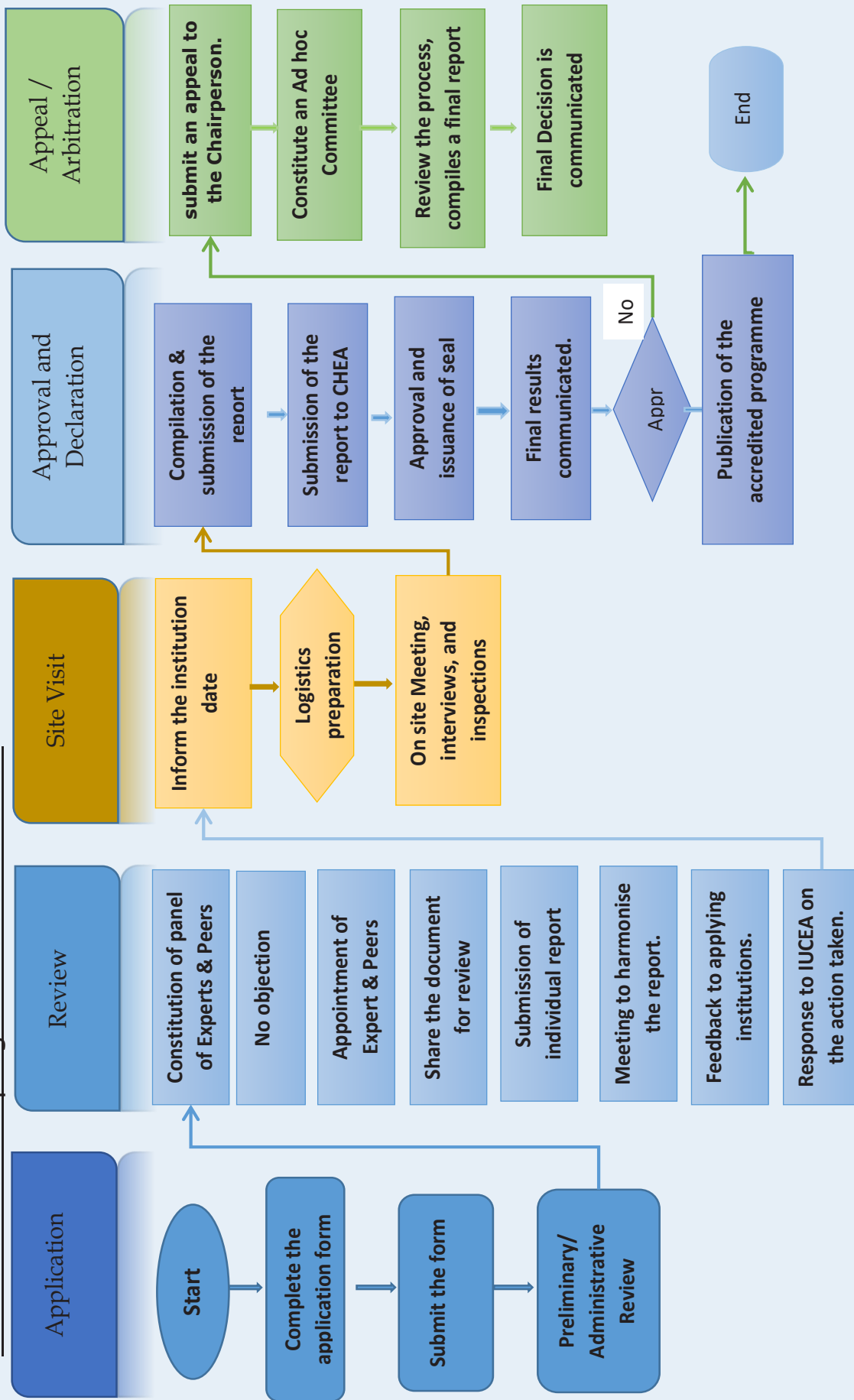
Processes:

- i. Universities whose programmes have received regional quality seal shall conduct periodic programme

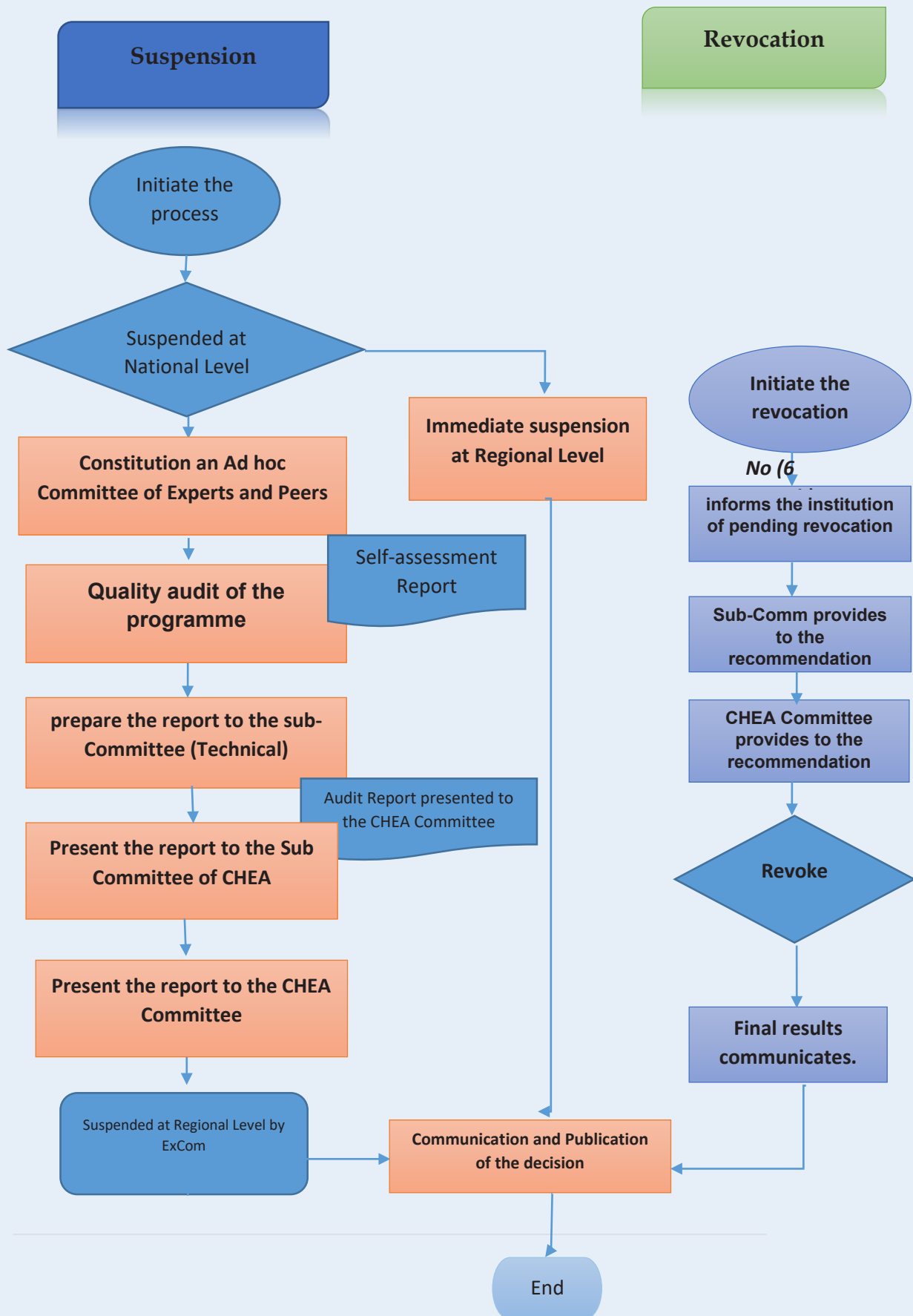
- assessment (at the end of each programme cycle) and submit a self-assessment report to IUCEA.
- ii. IUCEA in collaboration with the national commissions and councils for higher education, shall regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of regionally accredited programmes in their respective countries.
 - iii. Where a programme quality seal is being considered for suspension, IUCEA shall request from the institution a comprehensive self-assessment report for the said programme accompanied by other relevant documents. Other processes provided under Procedure 8 above shall apply.

ANNEXES

Flow chart for the programme accreditation



Suspension and Revocation of the Quality seal



Annex A: Application Form (Provided online)



INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA

P. O. Box 7110 Kampala, Uganda

APPLICATION FOR REGIONAL ACCREDITATION OF A PROGRAMME

Please fill out all items and append attachments wherever necessary. Applicants are advised to study and comply with the Standards, Guidelines, Norms and Procedures for Regional Programme Accreditation available at the IUCEA website (www.iucea.org)

PART A: FOR THE APPLICANT

1. Profile of the Higher Education Institution/HLI:

1.1 Name of the Institution:

1.2 National Accreditation Status of the Institution:

1.3 Ownership Status (Private, Public or Public-Private Partnership)

1.4 Physical Address of Institution:

• Country:

Location (District, County)

Postal Address:.....

• E-mail Address:.....

• Web Address:.....

• Telephone Number(s):.....

2. Programme Details

2.1 Programme Title/Name:

.....

2.2 Programme level:.....

2.2 Programme Cluster (e.g. Applied Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Medical and Allied Sciences, Pure and Natural Sciences and Social Sciences):

2.3 Programme sub-field (the discipline of the programme to be accredited e.g. Nursing, Psychology, Physics etc.)

2.4 East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) level.....

2.5 Duration of the Programme (academic years and the total credits of the programme):

2.6 Mode of Study (if is full time, part time or both):

2.7 Mode of delivery (face to face, blended, distance, online, ODeL, etc.):

2.8 Location of the delivery (where the actual training will be based to include Campus, City and Country):

2.9 Total Students' Enrolment in the Programme by years of study:

2.10 Programme Host Department:

2.11 Programme host Faculty/School, Campus, Institute/College:

2.12 National Accreditation Status of the Programme:

2.13 List of other approved programmes in the host Faculty/School, Campus, Institute/College in the following format:

S/N	Programme Name	Year of National Accreditation	Programme sub-field (Discipline)	Number of students	Number of Qualified & Available Academic Staff			
					Doctorate	Masters	Bachelor	Total

3.0 Declaration

I hereby declare that the information provided in this application and all supporting documentation submitted is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and I stand to be held responsible under the applicable laws for any false information that appears in this Form and associated supporting documentation.

Designation of Head of Institution:.....

Name:

Signature: Date:

Official Stamp/Seal:

Please provide the following documentations (As annexes)

- a) Certificate/Letter of Institutional Accreditation by the relevant competent National Authority
- b) Evidence of National accreditation status of programme
- c) Evidence of Professional Bodies accreditation/ approval status of programme, where applicable.
- d) Letter of endorsement/ recommendation by the relevant National Regulatory Authority, as applicable, for the regional accreditation process.
- e) Respective academic/ study programme (Curriculum).
- f) Situational Analysis Report/ Needs Assessment Report for the programmes
- g) Self-Assessment Report for the programme as per the prescribed format
- h) Evidence of payment of the applicable non-refundable fees for programme accreditation

PART B: FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

1. Receipt of Application

Application Receipt Date:

Application received by:

Name of Officer: Title:

Signature: Date:

2. Administrative Review by IUCEA Secretariat

2.1 Application Fees Paid - Control/Receipt No:

2.2 Completeness of Application Form (Yes/No):

If No.: Highlight the areas of incompleteness of the Application Form and action required:
.....

2.3 Submission of all required documents as per the Checklist (Yes/No):

If No.: Highlight the missing documents and action required:

.....
Remarks:

Name of Officer:

Designation/ Title:

Signature: Date.....

Official Stamp/Seal of IUCE

Annex B: Checklists of Documents

Documents	Available (Yes /No)	Remarks
1.		Higher Education Institution prospectus/ handbook/Manual/ Catalogue
2.		Institutional space and facility inventory
3.		A copy of the class schedule and the academic calendar
4.		List of Faculty, administrative and technical staff profiles and their C.Vs.
5.		List of faculty/staff publications
6.		Course contents and mapping
7.		Quality Assurance Policy
8.		Human resources policy including job description for administrators, faculty and staff
9.		Students Manual
10.		Programmes documents/curriculum documents
11.		Self –Assessment report
12.		Relevant minutes of the Senate
13.		Samples of students projects/Internship report
14.		Samples of external examination report
15.		Practical training reports
16.		Field attachment / Teaching practice reports
17.		Audited Financial Report for past 3 years
18.		Current Institutional Budget
19.		Strategic Plan documents (Institutional master plan(s))
20.		Relevant Memorandum of Understanding with different institutions and organizations
21.		Research project policy
22.		Internship policy
23.		Graduate Tracer Study report(s)
24.		Students evaluation reports
25.		Examination policy
26.		List of library Catalogue
27.		Faculty/staff Training policy
28.		Graduation lists
29.		Annual Reports



Inter University Council For East Africa

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