

EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK

THE 8TH ANNUAL FORUM OF THE EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK, 7TH – 10TH MAY 2018, KIGALI, RWANDA

1. PREAMBLE

The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) is a network of quality assurance practitioners in the region. The Network was formally established in 2012 and organized its first forum in May 2012 held in Entebbe Uganda. Since then, and following the agreement during the EAQAN General Assembly, EAQAN in collaboration with Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) has been organizing an annual QA Forum around May every year. The subsequent forums have been held in Kigali 2013, Arusha in 2014, Nairobi in 2015, Entebbe 2016 and Dar es Salaam 2017. These gatherings provide opportunity for EAQAN members to present papers and share experiences on key issues of quality assurance, receive further training and network with other QA practitioners in the region and beyond.

Both EAQAN and the IUCEA, as close partners share, the same remit to improve quality of the higher education sector in the region. For this the IUCEA has been committing resources to EAQAN to build capacity for enhanced quality improvements in higher education in the region. To accomplish the objectives of the Forum, EAQAN has been receiving support from DAAD, HRK, DIES and National Higher Education Commissions and Councils in the region. The 2018 EAQAN Forum shall build on lessons from themes of previous conferences as well as from suggestions given by participants during evaluation of the 2017 Forum held in Dar es Salaam. This forum will emphasize on issues of promoting ICT in enhancing active and innovative learning, use of ICT-mediated teaching as a pedagogical tool to enhance access and teaching large classes, evaluation of functionality of institutional quality assurance systems and creating public-private-partnership for institutional sustainability and quality product. In addition the forum will address issues related to strengthening postgraduate studies in higher education institutions.

2. FORUM THEME:

ICT FOR QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION AND EXPANDED ACCESS - Leveraging technology for effective QA systems in East Africa.

Sub-Theme 1: The Role of ICT in Enhancing Quality in Higher Education

Sub-Theme 2: Effectiveness of Internal QA Systems in Higher Education Institutions – Experience from Universities in East Africa

Sub-Theme 3: University-Partnership with Industry for improved Quality of Graduates and Institutional Sustainability.

3. FORUM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The main *Goal* of the Forum is to foster dialogue through sharing of ideas on higher education policies, QA practices, challenges and prospects for promoting quality higher education in the region.

The main objectives of the forums are to offer academics and practitioners in quality assurance the opportunity to:

- a) Strengthen collaboration, networking and capacity building among stakeholders involved in Quality Assurance work in the region. Specific emphasis of capacity building through keynotes and training workshops offered will include *Promoting active and innovative learning and, use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.*
- b) Discuss policies concerning quality assurance in the East African HE system and their impact on the practice of quality assurance.
- c) Learn lessons from other regions on the involvement of private sector on quality enhancement and institutional sustainability
- d) Share lessons learnt during the ten years of quality enhancement in higher education sector in East Africa.

4. FORUM ACTIVITIES

- a) Paper Presentations on various topics
- b) Key Note addresses by experts and discussions
- c) Networking events
- d) Training Workshops to build capacity on enhancing quality practices in teaching and learning
- e) Roundtable dialogue involving VCs and DVCs to discuss pertinent issues on quality in higher education in East Africa

5. PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Those wishing to present papers on any of the topics identified below should submit their complete papers for evaluation. Papers chosen for presentation will be classified in appropriate paper sessions as defined by the organizing committee. Conference papers must be prepared according to the guidelines issued to authors. Quality papers will be published in reputable peer reviewed Journal.

Key Topics:

a) The Role of ICT in Enhancing Quality in Higher Education:

Science and Technology are expected in the near future to drive the world economies where ICT is expected to play a leading role. In response to this expectation, universities in EA are increasingly embracing ICT in teaching in order to cope with the growing needs for higher education which has resulted into increased enrolment to absorb all needy students. This has resulted into teaching of large classes, dominated by lecture teaching methods with less

student-teacher interaction, impacting on the quality of graduates. Thus this forum is facilitating dialogues on the improving quality of teaching by embracing ICT in order to meet the overall goal of ensuring that East African graduates meet stated learning outcomes of critical thinking, problem solving, innovative and creative thinking.

b) Effectiveness of Internal QA Systems in Higher Education Institutions – Experience from Universities in East Africa

It is about ten years since quality assurance in higher education initiative was launched by IUCEA in collaboration with DAAD, HRK and national Commissions and Councils in the EAC countries. Many institutions developed QA policies, established QA units and appointed QA officers with the objective to operationalise internal quality assurance systems. Having operated for 10 years now, we need to reflect on the following questions: Is there evidence that the internal QA systems in universities are working for the better? What is the relationship between universities and national higher education regulatory bodies? What experience can we share and learn from each other? QA Officers from universities are therefore encouraged to write researched based presentations drawing from a decade experience in operationalising internal QA systems.

c) University-Partnership with Industry for improved Quality of Graduates and Institutional Sustainability.

Academic-industry partnership was highly rated by Quality Assurance Officers as one of the important issues for discussion during the 8th QA Forum in Kigali. Universities are keen in establishing strong collaboration with industries/private sector in the form of research link, provision of public services, collaborative training and internships. Impact of such collaborations will be discussed in relation to institutional funding and sustainability, and quality and relevance of graduates.

6. HIGH LEVEL QUALITY ASSURANCE DIALOGUE:

A one-day level dialogue meeting session involving Vice Chancellors (VCs) and Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVCs) is scheduled on the last day of the Forum (Thursday 10th May 2018). It will also draw senior executives from the Government, Commissions and Councils for Higher Education and Professors from academic institutions. Discussion will be centered on harmonizing curricula through development of field specific benchmarks.

7. NETWORKING EVENTS

The Conference participants shall be treated to a variety of networking events including *cultural events* that will not only exhibit the rich diversity of the East African cultural heritages, but will also provide opportunities for the participants to be entertained and to build partnerships for the enhancement of quality assurance in their respective institutions. In addition, attempts will be made for *parallel site visits* to learn from IQA initiatives in various Higher Education settings around Kigali.

8. CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Training Workshops will be facilitated by the regional and international experts in the broad thematic areas shown below:

- ICT for active and innovative learning
- Postgraduate training and quality issues in East Africa

9. CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE

The 8th Annual Forum of the East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network is scheduled to take place in Kigali, Rwanda from 7th to 10th May 2018. The specific venue/hotel will be communicated later.

10. TARGET PARTICIPANTS

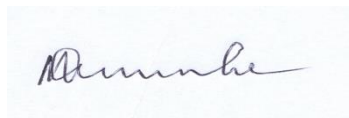
The target participants for this Conference are the Quality Assurance Coordinators/Directors/Officers from Universities; Academics; University Researchers; University Administrators; Executives, Directors/Secretaries of National Accreditations Agencies, Regional Higher Education Agencies and Experts, Policy makers, trade unionists, professional bodies, students and student unions and other higher education stakeholders.

11. CONCLUSION

This Concept Note is intended to invite you all to start preparations for the Forum by (1) Preparing a paper or a poster on one of the Forum's themes and submitting it on time (see call for papers); 2) Clearing your Institutional/individual EAQAN annual subscription fees; 3) Mobilizing resources since participation to the Forum is on the cost sharing arrangement and 3) Setting aside time for the event.

12. COMMUNICATION

All communications should be directed to the EAQAN General Secretary, Sr Lucy Dora Akello, Email: lucydr86@gmail.com and copied to the EAQAN President, Email: hsmuruke@gmail.com/muruke@udsm.ac.tz. Please visit EAQAN web page hosted in IUCEA Website: www.iucea.org/EAQAN for this and other information.



Prof. Masoud H. Muruke
President, EAQAN

Emails: hsmuruke@gmail.com / muruke@udsm.ac.tz

Tel: +255 754 307794

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