

Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education (FSTE)

Intensive Teacher Training Programme Module 1: The education environment locally and globally

Notes on Quality Assurance

I. Quality in education

Quality in education tends to mean one of four things. Different stakeholders will identify with different definitions:

- a. Quality as perfection is the traditional, classic notion, that of quality which equates it with excellence and the provision of a service that is flawless.
- b. Quality as fitness for purpose requires that the product or service fulfils the customers' needs, requirements, or desires. These requirements need to be clearly articulated by the customer.
- c. Quality as fitness for purpose may also be linked to the institution (e.g. the university), as an internal stakeholder. Here the institution ascribes and entrepreneurial role to individual departments to generate resources for the institution.
- d. Quality may be conceived in broader terms by taking a transformative and qualitative view of change. A service can transform the consumer by enhancing and empowering an individual. Transformation in an educational context involves not only measurable outcomes, such as examination performance, but also cognitive transcendence with the provider "doing something to the customer rather than just doing something for the customer".

II. Quality Assurance vs. Quality Control

- a. Quality assurance (QA) activities include a planned system of review procedures conduct by personnel not directly involved in the inventory compilation/ development process. Reviews, preferably by independent third parties, should be performed upon a finalized inventory following the implementation of QC procedures.
- b. Quality control (QC) is a system of routine technical activities, to measure and control the quality of the inventory as it is being developed. The QC system is designed to:
 - ✧ Provide routine and consistent checks to ensure data integrity, correctness, and completeness;
 - ✧ Identify and address errors and omissions;
 - ✧ Document and archive inventory material and record all QC activities

III. Debates about quality assurance

- a. The lead parachute: following all the right processes to do the wrong thing?
- b. The audit conundrum: who is the right person to make a judgment about someone else's work?
- c. Who guards the guardians?
- d. Whether it is fitness for purpose or fitness of purpose?
- e. How do we know that quality assurance improves quality?