

## **ANNEX 1**

### **UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION**

#### **GUIDANCE ON FORMULATING UNIVERSITY POLICY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE**

##### **1. RATIONALE**

Students are the primary stakeholders and beneficiaries in any university. Constructive feedback from students regarding their experiences and understanding can inform quality improvement, aid strategic decision making, better shape the services and facilities to meet student needs and result in increased student satisfaction. Being listened to and having a role in bringing about changes in an organization can be very motivating for students and may improve their active participation, achievements, progression and retention. Moreover, good opportunities for participation in enhancing the quality of their own education will produce more confident, more cognizant and more resilient students.

Each university has its own unique identity, and its own strategic plans and policies. Therefore, every university is expected to develop its own policy that encourages the views of students, individually and collectively, in informing quality systems in order to improve the student educational experience, both for current and future cohorts.

This guideline provides a template for setting out a university policy that will facilitate the constructive engagement of students in quality assurance. It provides guidance on how such a policy should be drawn up, together with some relevant definitions, and recommendations regarding the policy statement, and mechanisms for implementation of the policy, so that students become active partners in their learning and in defining the academic and strategic direction of their university. This guideline is also meant to facilitate consistent implementation of such activities across all universities.

It is expected that each university will draw up its own policy on student engagement in QA and after formal adoption of the policy by the University, CQA Directors will share their policies with the UGC and other universities through the UGC Standing Committee on Quality Assurance.

##### **2. SCOPE OF POLICY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QA**

Students should be encouraged to participate in the following aspects of university life, all of which impact on the student learning experience, and are subject to quality assurance:

- i. Induction and orientation of new students
- ii. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching-learning activities

- iii. Programme design, delivery and organization
- iv. Learning resources
- v. Student welfare and well-being
- vi. Career guidance and employability
- vii. University infrastructure development
- viii. Community outreach
- ix. Development of the university's strategic and action plans in areas relating to the student experience
- x. Development of common graduate attributes

The university policy on student engagement in QA should describe the strategy for implementation of the policy through:

- a. provision for student participation in the functions listed above;
- b. the manner in which the university ensures that such student participation is representative of the entire student body, including gender; and
- c. the level of contribution expected of student representatives.

The strategy should ensure that student views are gathered using a variety of means including the completion of questionnaires, student representation and direct access to academic staff and administrators. This feeds back into the University's quality cycle.

### **3. PURPOSE OF A UNIVERSITY POLICY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QA**

This university policy is meant to articulate its' position on student engagement in QA. It should provide the rationale for it, together with a short descriptive statement of the policy, and details of how the policy is to be implemented, including responsibilities and procedures.

Every university is encouraged to engage and empower students in the process of shaping their learning experiences on their journey towards becoming autonomous, self-motivated and independent learners.

Every university is expected to demonstrate a firm commitment to:

- a. provide mechanisms for the management of quality and standards through student engagement and partnership;
- b. provide students with the opportunity to make their views on their educational experience known to the university, and ensure that these opportunities are made known to students;
- c. ensure that it allows sufficient opportunity for students to provide feedback;
- d. consider and act on constructive feedback from students;
- e. inform students of what has been done in response to feedback;

- f. working with all students, either as individuals, and/or as small groups, to help them develop the essential skills and confidence to be actively involved in student feedback mechanisms, regardless of mode of study, age, sex, religion or disability

Activities through which students may be given opportunities for engagement include:

- a. Questionnaire-based surveys (online or paper-based) that seek student feedback on teaching-learning activities, and student satisfaction with common facilities and support mechanisms
- b. Student representation as appropriate, at different levels of Boards and Committees. Some examples include:
  - i. the Faculty Board and Faculty committees responsible for design of course curricula as well as student welfare
  - ii. the Faculty Quality Assurance Cell and the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance
  - iii. Department level committees that provide a forum for student-staff interaction in relation to the subject of study
  - iv. Other university or faculty committees that address aspects listed in Section 2 above.
- c. Establishment of a Student Society for Quality Enhancement, and / or naming of 'student ambassadors'. This could provide additional recognition and support for students who become very actively engaged in quality enhancement in a faculty.

#### **4. THE POLICY STATEMENT**

This should be a clear and concise statement (2 – 6 sentences) of what the university does in relation to student engagement in quality assurance. It should reflect and define institutional values, and guide and determine present and future decisions and direction. It is suggested that the following are considered for inclusion in the university policy statement.

- ii. All students will be actively encouraged and supported to be involved in activities to improve quality processes in a manner and at a level that is appropriate to them.
- iii. The university will foster an appropriate range of activities to establish a culture where students are encouraged to take up the opportunities on offer.
- iv. Quality assurance processes adopted by the university will facilitate obtaining individual and collective feedback from students, as well as considering and implementing their constructive suggestions, and informing students of what has been done in response to their feedback.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- **Student engagement** is the involvement and empowerment of students in the process of shaping the student learning strategies, to inform a University's quality system with the purpose of improving the student educational experience for both current and future cohorts.
- **Dimensions of engagement:** student engagement is a complex construct influenced by multiple factors. Three dimensions of engagement have been proposed:
  - a. **Behavioural engagement:** Students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the University.
  - b. **Emotional engagement:** Students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the University
  - c. **Cognitive engagement:** Students' investment in their learning (motivation and self-regulation)
- **Factors that influence engagement:** some of the factors that influence student engagement at the University are:
  - a. **Lecturer factors:** Lecturer interaction style (enjoyment and shared focus, support, responsiveness, directiveness, verbal praise), behavioral and academic expectations
  - b. **Institutional factors:** This includes physical setting factors (physical layout and arrangement of classroom, sensory factors/noise levels, lighting etc), and consistent and structured approaches to the provision of student support and disciplinary measures
  - c. **Student factors:** A student's physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural state, including health issues and disability, peer relationships
  - d. **Family and community factors:** A student's residential circumstances, family support for/involvement in education, and relationships with their family
  - e. **Curriculum and resources factors:** Availability and type of learning resources including technology, dimensions of the learning tasks (level of difficulty, interest, meaningfulness to learner), task design, learning goals and objectives, and assessment approaches.
  - f. **Opportunities for community outreach:** availability of opportunities to learn from, and contribute to, the community
- **The 'whole' student:** The five dimensions of health and wellbeing of students may be taken into consideration when deciding on the strategy for implementation of the university policy on student engagement:
  - a. **Engagement in learning:** Includes active participation and engagement in learning, having functional skills to participate meaningfully in all aspects of one's life; being competent as a learner and problem-solver; and having a sense of meaning.
  - b. **Social and emotional wellbeing:** This includes positive mental health / absence of mental health problems; self-awareness; emotional intelligence; self-regulation; resilience; interpreting the world positively; pro-social values and behaviour.

- c. **Supportive relationships:** This includes having positive family bonds and friendship, ability to rely on a trusted adult, experiencing a sense of belonging, and engagement / involvement in age appropriate learning and activity.
- d. **Physical health:** This includes physical health / absence of health problems; oral health; nutrition and weight; physical fitness; and self-management, including sleeping.
- e. **Safety and material wellbeing:** This includes the sense of safety at home, while travelling and at University, being safe from injury and harm, having access to daily essentials, adequate and stable study environment and housing.

## 6. POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

It is recommended that each university adopts the following steps in development of its own policy on student engagement in quality assurance.

**Step 1. Initiation.** The Director of the university's Centre for Quality Assurance, and Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance takes up this UGC guideline for discussion and agrees on the need to develop a policy specific for the university

**Step 2. Development.** The Senate Standing Committee appoints a team to develop a draft policy according to the template provided in Section 9 of this document. The draft is circulated for discussion by Faculty Quality Assurance cells, the Faculty Boards, as well as student representatives of all degree programmes and office bearers of the student unions

**Step 3. Review and approval.** Feedback and suggestions from the above bodies are incorporated into the draft policy, which is submitted for approval by the Senate Standing Committee, the University Senate, and the Council.

**Step 4. Publication and management.** The approved policy is published on the university website, made available to all students and staff, and revisited when the need arises.

## 7. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

The following aspects should be considered in implementation of the university policy on student engagement in QA.

- i. Provision of support and information for students to ensure their understanding of student engagement and their individual and collective responsibilities in the process.
- ii. Provision of training and monitoring for staff involved in the promotion and completion of student engagement activities.

- iii. Students may be invited to offer insight into all or only some of the aspects of university life enumerated in Section 2 above.
- iv. It is the responsibility of all staff and administrators involved in the delivery of teaching, learning, assessment and support to students to foster and promote student engagement opportunities across the university. The Vice-Chancellor will lead the process, supported by Deans, Heads of Department and administrative officers who are responsible for ensuring that all students are aware of and able to access opportunities for student engagement.
- v. Members of the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the Faculty Quality Assurance Cells have a major role in working with the student body.
- vi. The means of communicating opportunities for student engagement in QA may include the student handbook, the university's virtual learning environment or learning management system, a students' newsletter, Faculty level committees, and specific discussion groups with student representatives.
- vii. The selection and appointment of student representatives in different bodies should be transparent and clear to all students, and their roles in such bodies should be also made clear.
- viii. Appropriate training and briefing activities will be provided relevant to the level of student engagement for all students. These will range from induction briefing for all students, to specific training activities for course representatives, and the development of video programs that encourage student engagement.
- ix. Members of the Faculty Quality Assurance Committees should be responsible for engaging with training and briefing activities to ensure effective dissemination and promotion of student engagement activities to students.
- x. Academic staff, Heads of Department, Deans and other university officers should ensure that follow up action on student feedback is made known to students. Similarly, if it is decided that follow up action is not required, or not possible with regard to some suggestions, students should be informed of the reasons for such decisions.
- xi. Ensure that processes for engaging with students do not make disproportionate demands on the time of students and staff.

## **8. MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

The Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and the Faculty Quality Assurance cells are expected to monitor implementation of the student engagement policy, and to ensure that it is effective in informing and supporting students in the provision of feedback for quality enhancement.

These entities will periodically evaluate the processes under implementation and suggest appropriate measures to improve student engagement towards their satisfaction.

## 9. TEMPLATE FOR UNIVERSITY POLICY ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE

### SECTION A

<b>Policy Name</b>	(Student Engagement in Quality Assurance)
<b>Effective Date</b>	(date of approval by University Council)
<b>Responsible Party</b>	(Centre for Quality Assurance)

### SECTION B

#### 1. Introduction

(This should include background information on the need for the Policy. It should allow the reader to see the Policy in a wider context and understand the rationale behind it. The reasons and intent in creation of the Policy may be mentioned as motivating factors. The purpose of the Policy should be stated clearly. Refer to Section 3 above for guidance.)

#### 2. Policy Principles

(This section should outline the underpinning principles that form the basis of belief in the importance of this Policy)

#### 3. Policy Statements

(This should state what the university does in relation to student engagement in quality assurance. It should be clear and concise - not more than 2-6 sentences in length. The statement should be general enough to allow for flexibility and accommodate unanticipated circumstances. It should have longevity, i.e. not be subject to continual amendment. It should state what is to be done, but not how it will be done. Refer to Section 4 above for guidance).

#### 4. Applicability and Scope

(Describe who the policy affects and which actions are impacted by the policy. It may expressly exclude certain people or actions from the policy requirements. This section enables focus on only the desired targets, and avoidance of unintended consequences where possible. Refer to Section 2 above for guidance)

#### 5. Responsibilities and Procedures for Implementation of Policy

(This should set out the **strategies** to be adopted in implementation of the Policy. It should indicate which university offices are **responsible** for carrying out actions that are required for implementation of the Policy. It should also provide details of plans for

**monitoring and evaluation** of policy implementation. Include a hyperlink to any **forms** related to the policy. Refer to Sections 7 and 8 above for guidance)

## **6. Glossary**

(Provide definitions for terms that have particular meaning in the Policy document. It should be used sparingly. It is not necessary to define common terms or list terms where the meaning is self-evident. Refer to Section 5 above for guidance)

## **7. Frequently Asked Questions**

(If there are common questions, the CQA-MC may wish to develop a FAQ list hosted on a website page. The URL link may be referenced here)

## **8. Related Information**

(Links to other related policies, information, guidelines, or procedures that should be cross-referenced. E.g. QA By-Laws / Regulations, Student Union regulations, etc)

## **SECTION C.**

### **Revision History**

(Revision Dates: month, year)