



## UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

COMMISSION CIRCULAR NO. 09/2019

No. 20, Ward Place,  
Colombo 07.

October 7, 2019

Vice Chancellors of Universities  
Rectors of Campuses  
Directors of Institutes

### **FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

Internal quality assurance plays a vital role in ensuring high quality in the total educational experience offered by a university to its students. Since Commission Circular No 04/2015 was issued on 5 May 2015, significant progress has been made in all state universities, in setting up their own internal quality assurance systems. Regular reports on the performance score cards for the internal quality assurance units, drawn up in accordance with UGC Circular Letter UGC/QAAC/CQA/01 of 20 December 2016, indicate that the internal quality assurance units are now reasonably well established in all universities.

The recommendations made in this current circular are meant to further strengthen the universities' internal systems and take them to a higher level of functionality. To this end, the Commission proposes that the following measure should be implemented in all universities:

1. The Management Committee of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) should be converted to a Standing Committee of the Senate of each university, in accordance with provisions stipulated in Section 46(6)(vii) of the Universities Act No 16 of 1978 (as amended).
2. The composition of the Standing Committee should be similar to that of the MC of the IQAU, with, however, the addition of the Vice-Chancellor as the Chair of the Committee. See Annex 1 for recommended composition.
3. The IQAU should be re-named the University's Centre for Quality Assurance (CQA), in order to better reflect its university-wide remit. Administratively, it should function as part of the Academic division of the University.
4. The goal of the CQA should be to promote a culture of quality assurance within the university. The objectives and functions of the CQA should encompass those set out in Annex 2.

5. The recommended position of the Director CQA within the university, the terms of reference for this post, and privileges that may be considered for inclusion with appointment to the post of Director, CQA, should be as set out in Annex 3.

#### **Annex 1. Recommended composition of the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance**

- a. Vice-Chancellor (Chair of Committee)
- b. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (where relevant)
- c. Director, CQA
- d. Deans of all Faculties, Directors of undergraduate and postgraduate institutes affiliated to the University, and Rectors of campuses affiliated to the University
- e. The IQA Coordinators of Faculties, Institutes and Campuses, as recommended by the respective Faculty Board or Board of Management
- f. Registrar (or nominee)
- g. Bursar (or nominee)
- h. Librarian (or nominee)
- i. Director, Staff Development Centre
- j. Director, Centre for Continuing Education (or similar entity)
- k. Convener / Secretary to the Standing Committee should be the AR, SAR or DR of the Academic division of the University
- l. Any other member recommended by the Council

#### **Annex 2. Recommended objectives and functions of the University's Centre for Quality Assurance**

1. The CQA should seek to:
  - a. Institutionalize a culture of quality assurance in accordance with national guidelines and international practices
  - b. Ensure that the university procedures are aligned with UGC guidelines and national requirements
  - c. Develop and maintain favourable public perception of the university, through improved quality of education based on consistent practice of quality assurance procedures
2. In order to achieve these objectives, the major functions of the CQA should include:
  - a. Support the university and programme offering entities within the university (i.e. departments of study, faculties and institutes), in preparation for external quality assurance assessments and accreditation requirements.
  - b. Offer guidance and assistance to programme offering entities in defining programme objectives and outcomes, graduate profiles, and course curricula which are in accordance with national reference points such as the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework and Subject Benchmark Statements
  - c. Support establishment and effective functioning of Faculty QA cells

- d. Promote and coordinate all quality assurance related activities within the university, through conduct of workshops, seminars, development of manuals, and other appropriate capacity building activities
- e. Liaise with the Quality Assurance Council of the UGC and other external quality assurance agencies as well as relevant international agencies
- f. Develop, review and revise by-laws and standard operational procedures necessary for governance and management of the CQA

### **Annex 3. Post of Director, Centre for Quality Assurance**

#### **A. Position within the university**

The post of Director, CQA should ideally be a full time position. Since this may not be achievable in the near future, the Director should obtain a reduction in the academic workload by 50%. As the Director needs the support of all the Deans and other senior academics/administrative staff, it is important to position the Director at an appropriate level. Hence, the position of the Director can be specified in the HEI Organogram at the level of the DVC or at least at the level of a Rector or a Dean.

The Director CQA should be free of other major administrative responsibilities in order to implement QA processes effectively. Since academic auditing is a part of internal quality assurance, the person should not be a DVC, Dean or an administrative Head of Department, in order to maintain the transparency of the quality assurance process.

He/she should be a senior academic/Professor with significant experience in administration (at least 3 years), as well as in the QA processes and have a thorough knowledge of the external review process, since a Director bears important responsibilities in this process. Where the Director CQA is not a professor, he/she should be an invited member of the Senate.

He/she should be appointed for a period of three years, with the concurrence of the UGC. He/she will be eligible for reappointment for not more than one more term of three years.

#### **B. Terms of Reference**

The responsibilities of the Director, CQA should include the following:

1. Develop regulations for the CQA and obtain approval from the University Council for the same
2. Prepare operational guidelines for the CQA in accordance with the general guidelines developed by QAC of the UGC, and customized for the university's governance structure / organogram and specific implementation arrangement.
3. Develop a 3-year Strategic Plan for the CQA; obtain approval from the University Senate and Council and concurrence of the QAC of the UGC, before implementation.

4. Develop the annual work plan for the CQA and obtain approval from the University Senate and Council at the commencement of each calendar year.
5. Develop the annual budget for QA activities in the university along with the university's annual budget estimates submitted to the Treasury, and obtain Finance Committee and Council approval
6. Ensure that the CQA is established on the university website and details are updated regularly
7. Report regularly on QA activities and progress to the University Senate and Council
8. Circulate notices of QA activities in the university to the university community and other universities
9. Conduct University and Faculty level awareness programs on QA
10. Initiate and support preparation of SER for Institutional Reviews
11. Motivate and support study programs to prepare SERs for Program Reviews
12. Provide necessary training and workshop for Self-Assessment Report (SER) preparation
13. Motivate and support academic staff to showcase best practices in QA.
14. Develop relationships and liaise with international agencies and universities on QA activities.
15. Support academic staff in the process of preparing proposals for the conduct of new degree programmes, and ensure that applications submitted to the UGC for approval in this regard are compliant with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
16. Report on university QA activities at the UGC Standing Committee on QA
17. Submit an annual report of the CQA to the QAC of the UGC
18. Convene and facilitate all meetings of the CQA and FQACs
19. Assist manual preparation on QA aspects in Faculties
20. Make available to all staff and external stakeholders the results of external and internal reviews, including student surveys

### **C. Logistic support for the Director CQA**

1. The Director, CQA should receive an honorarium of 25% of the basic salary per month, and a telecommunication allowance approved by the Council of the University as per the Commission Circular No 06/2015.
2. He/she should be provided with transport whenever necessary for official purposes.
3. The University authorities should provide suitable permanent office space for the CQA, together with internet and telephone facilities with a dedicated line.
4. The University/HEI should provide support staff (an incumbent Assistant Registrar, a Management Assistant and a Works Aide) on a permanent basis for the CQA to carry out their duties smoothly, as recommended in the previous UGC QA Circular letter of 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (ref UGC/QAAC/IQAU)

Commission Circular No4/2015 of 05.05.2015 issued in connection with the above matter is hereby rescinded.

The Circular is effective from 05.09.2019. Please take necessary action accordingly.



**Prof. Mohan de Silva**  
Chairman

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  4. Members of the UGC
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  7. Deans of Faculties
  8. Registrars of Universities
  9. Accountant / UGC
  10. Bursars of Universities
  11. Librarian / SAL / AL of the Higher Educational Institutions / Institutes
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