Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Policy Title – University policy on Student engagement in Quality Assurance
Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Policy Number – Policy / SUSL / QA / 04

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Approving Authority – The Council, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

Administrative Responsibility – Center for Quality Assurance, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Senate

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1. Introduction

Student engagement is a key element in higher education as students are one of the main partners in learning process. Students in the university system are inevitably the assets of the country and unequivocally they design the future of their society in many respects, thereby the country. Students provides crucial perspectives for the improvement of the quality of the academic experience. In making the students' whole learning context an autonomous and a complete enterprise, the university has decided to get the contribution of the students to the entire teaching-learning process and beyond. As responsible learners, the students should be made to understand the duties and responsibilities expected of them while the accountability to national level expenses is also a feature. The students could introduce the necessary and timely changes to the entire system to enhance their employability skills in contributing to the national economy in a sustainable manner.

So far the students in the university system have expressed their grievances in manners that have not been accepted by the society at large. Against the backdrop of this distorted image, the ultimate objective of this policy is to act as a driver of transformation of the concerned student cohort from a marginalized group whose future depends upon the decisions made by the others to a set of individuals whose own decision making powers formulate personal, national and global goals to face

and adapt to the challenges the life-course poses. With sound, rational and practical approach to life, this policy document assists the students to change their norms, attitudes, values and beliefs about the entire education system from macro to micro level with a systematic integration of the skills necessary to develop.

2. Policy principles

The Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka is committed to pursuit activities to assure quality of the students through setting a policy by defining the participation of students in quality assurance in accordance with the University Grant Commission.

The Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka aims at displaying a greater adherence to;

a) make each student a part of total quality management (TQM) process

b) allow each student to make suggestions to maintain and improve its quality standards

c) collect timely feedback from the student cohort to make necessary adjustments to its quality assurance procedures

d) give suggestions or their opinions in the decision making process related to the matters pertaining to the learning-teaching process

e) conduct the necessary training programs to inform all segments that are a part of its service provision

f) revise its quality assurance guidelines when and where necessary as the exact demands are met

3. Policy statements

The Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka ascertains that the salient feature of its image is based on quality in all aspects. The university's all-inclusive quality assurance process is designed to make all students to be a part of the quality maintenance activities integrated in to his or her tenure at the university. The process of teaching-learning, infrastructure, core- and extra-curricular activities that go to produce an able graduate should represent quality in each phase: input, throughput and output. The ultimate aim of the quality assurance mechanisms the university practice strive to make each individual student to be a productive contributor to its quality assurance process irrespective of any difference. The graduate of the Sabaragamuwa University is trained to extend all the quality

elements he/ she learnt during university life subsequently to practice for the greater goodness and happiness of the society.

With this policy statement, the students are invited to provide their feedback on teaching, learning and evaluation process to further improve the teaching learning process; students are represent at different levels of committees as invited by the governing bodies such as faculty board to raise their voice for improving their academic standards; students are invited to contact the academic staff when there is a need to discuss matters relating to their academic program; students are invited to share the student issues and ideas related to the quality assurance of academic program; voice of the student is heard by the staff to improve the quality of academic program; all the student should get the chance of learning and engage constructively with the staff to identify good practices with the scope of improving; student representative groups should stimulate the students to engage in academic activities to enhance the quality of the undergraduate program.

4. Applicability and scope

The main scope of the student engagement is promoting high quality learning outcomes. Additionally the applicability of this policy is also related to the following aspects in which the students as individuals, groups or as representatives could participate.

Those are in;

Developing graduate profile and attributes

Student engagement in curricular formation and program design

Assessing teaching-learning continuum

Evaluating the effectiveness of learning resources

Student welfare and well-being

Career guidance, counselling and university-industry linkages

Social responsibility and community outreach programs

The scope of this policy does not restrict or limited to the students who study at the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka but encourages the constructive feedback and fruitful suggestions from parents, alumni, stakeholders, industry experts, public and private sector institutions and any party that wishes the improvement of the quality system of the University.

5. Responsibilities and procedures for implementation of policy

5.1 Management responsibilities

All those who represent the different levels of the management pertaining to the university are expected to

- support the introductory phase of the policy among all segments
- see whether the implementation process of the policy work without hindrances
- evaluate whether the expected goals are achieved
- conduct a review of the said policy every two [02] years

5.2 Staff responsibilities

All the staff members [academic – permanent, visiting and on contract basis, non-academic and support] who represent the university are expected to

- study the policy proper and extend the fullest cooperation to make it a success
- apply and support the application of the contents in all the instances the student engagement could be enhanced
- help gain regular feedback from the parties concerned with the policy and evaluate

5.3 Student responsibilities

All the students of the university are expected to

- represent the genuine concerns of the students to maintain the high quality of teaching learning process
- take active engagement in enhancing the quality of academic program
- liaise amicably with the other segments of the University
- help the University to achieve its aims and objectives relating to quality

5.4 Procedures for implementation of policy

The procedures for implementing the policy are as follows.

Strategy	Responsible officer[s]
Identify the need of the specific quality assurance mechanism	Director, CQA, SUSL
Assess the available resources at the University	Coordinator, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
Discuss with the relevant parties how to address the need in the most effective manner	Director, CQA, SUSL and Coordinator, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
Inform / educate the concerned parties about the new implementation	Coordinator, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
Collect the feedback from the parties who have experienced the implementation	Coordinator, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell
Analyze the impact the implementation had on the students' lives	Director, CQA, SUSL and the Senate Standing Committee
Take necessary steps whenever necessary to upgrade the quality education	Director, CQA, SUSL and the Senate Standing Committee

In implementing the policy the following levels are considered. The students who represent different dimensions such as ethnicity, religion, geographical area, subject, degree, sex, medium of study, disability and study year should be equally selected to avoid any form of discrimination or marginalization.

- Individual students [excessive and unnecessary representation is discouraged]
- Student groups or representatives of a specific subject
- Student groups or representatives of the Department or Unit
- Student groups or representatives of student unions
- Student groups or representatives of a Faculty
- Student groups or representatives of alumni
- The Deans, the Directors, Heads of Departments, Course/Subject Coordinators
- Student welfare director, carrier guidance director
- Registrar, Bursar, Librarian or any other officer of similar capacity
- Medical officers, Hostel Wardens… etc

6. Glossary

Career guidance – advice and information about careers that helps individuals, especially, young people, decide on a career and also teaches them how to pursue their chosen career

Community outreach program - a program designed to help and encourage disadvantaged members of the community

Counselling – the job or process of listening to someone and giving that person a help/assist to sort out his/her problems

Curriculum – the subjects comprising a course of study in a Department or Faculty

Graduate attributes - the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution

Graduate profile – are descriptions of attributes, or knowledge, skills and attitudes, which a university community intends its graduates will develop through their study to equip them for their future education or employment

Infrastructure - the basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads and power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise

Learning resource - a material that is used for teaching a course

Policy – a principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individual

Quality assurance – the maintenance of a desired level of quality in a service or product, especially by means of attention to every stage of the process of delivery or production

Social responsibility - an ethical framework and suggests that an individual has an obligation to work and cooperate with other individuals and organizations for the benefit of society at large

Student engagement - engaging all students individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their education experience

Student welfare - encompasses the mental, physical and emotional well-being of students

Student well-being – a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experiences at the University

Teaching-learning continuum - continuous series of elements or items that vary by such tiny differences that they do not seem to differ from each other in both teaching and learning

Total quality management - a system of management based on the principle that every member of staff must be committed to maintaining high standards of work in every aspect of a company's operations

University-industry linkage – the relationship developed between the agents of the industry with the University to provide more research and employment opportunities for Undergraduates

7. Frequently asked questions

a. What is student engagement?

   The proportion or the share the student makes individually or collectively in his or her learning experience can be considered as student engagement.

b. From where can I get more information about student engagement?

   You can collect the required information from the University Grant Commission's (UGC) Website, the Website of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL), the Center for Quality Assurance (CQA) of SUSL or from your Coordinator of the Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (QAC).

c. Why student engagement is important to learning-teaching context?

   Student engagement is instrumental in shaping the entire learning-teaching process of the student taking initiatives of their own to improve the decision making power, problem solving skills and making learning a rational activity.

d. How can I contribute to enhance student engagement in my Department, Faculty and or University?

   Each member of the university system is made to understand how he or she can contribute to achieve the common goals of the department, faculty or university and contribute positively with the capacities, skills and knowledge one has.

e. How does the student engagement link with quality assurance?

   Quality assurance is the mechanism through which the university tries to upgrade its overall service standard to produce able graduates who can contribute to the humanity at large. The students can be a part of the standardizing process at each and every activity that takes place be they are curricular, core-curricular and extra-curricular.

f. Can the student engagement directly link with employability?

The students can work together with all the other relevant stakeholders to make their learning directly link with their future employment prospects. The students can voice their concerns and help establish an employability-driven curriculum in their respective Departments or Faculties.

g. Does the student engagement cater to national sustainability goals?

Since the ultimate goal of all these activities aim at different aspects of sustainability of the nation, the student engagement increases the young generation's contribution towards country's different drivers of sustainability.

8. Related information

The following documents could be used to facilitate the student engagement.
- Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework [SLQF]
- By - laws of Quality Assurance
- By - Laws of Examination
- https://www.eugc.ac.lk/qac/

Section C

9. Revision history

The committee appointed for the preparation of this policy by the Senate Standing Committee on Quality Assurance, SUSL (28th SSC-QA, held on April 2021) is as follows,

Dr. U.P Lekamge – Chairman   *Dr. D.D. Wickramanayake*
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Centre for Quality Assurance

Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

October 2021.

****This policy has been submitted to the 246th Senate held in 08.12.2020