



MINISTRY OF HEALTH &  
SOCIAL WELFARE, LESOTHO

**NATIONAL HEALTH TRAINING COLLEGE**  
**REPORT OF STUDY TOUR ON THE BEST PRACTICES IN**  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE AT STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The National Health Training College (NHTC) is mandated by the Ministry of Health Lesotho, to train high calibre health professionals to meet the needs of Human Resource in the Health sector. NHTC is therefore a public institution of higher learning regulated by Council on Higher Education (CHE) Lesotho, and governed by Higher Education Act 2004.

CHE in Lesotho was founded by an Act of Parliament in 2004, to regulate higher education institutions in Lesotho, by:

- Promoting quality assurance in higher education
- Auditing the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions
- Accrediting programs and issue certificate of accreditation
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of academic programs offered in higher education institutions.

In order for the institutional programs to be accredited, there are minimum accreditation standards set by CHE which programs have to meet and adhere to.

## **1 Background**

In preparation for programs accreditation, a quality assurance task team representing all departments of NHTC which consists of ten members was formed. The task team has started developing documents required by CHE for accreditation, such as: program self-assessment checklist, policies, and plan of action to establish the quality assurance unit. This unit will be responsible for internal and external quality assurance mechanisms.

While developing NHTC policies, various policies from different institutions were compared and the Stellenbosch University policies were found to be well-spelled out, simple and of quality. This prompted the quality assurance task team to visit Stellenbosch University to learn more about their quality assurance unit, and how they carry out their quality assurance assessment, especially when the College is preparing for assessment and accreditation by CHE in October 2013.

## **Participants of the study tour**

Director General NHTC:	Dr. Shahida Tarr (Director General)
Director academic:	Mrs. Tjoetso Lehana (Academic Office)
3 Lecturers:	Mr. Sechaba Motloheloa (Applied Sciences and Research Department) Mrs. Mamoliehi Tekane (Nursing Department) Ms. Moliehi Mokalanyane (Allied Health Sciences)
The driver:	Mr. Telang Sengoai

## **2 Purpose of the tour**

The purpose of the tour was to learn the best practices regarding Quality Assurance systems to be able to develop NHTC's Quality Assurance Systems.

## **3 Description of Stellenbosch University (SU)**

It is a Higher Education Public Institution. It has the Council, Senate, Institutional Forum subcommittees of Council and Senate, Rector's Management Team, Student Representative Council and the Convocation.

It has ten (10) faculties, two of which are satellite campuses and the Lesotho delegation had an opportunity of visiting one which is a medical and health sciences.

## **4 Quality Assurance (QA) Systems at SU**

- SU has a well established and comprehensive Institutional QA framework with responsibility for implementation and management shared between the different levels of management in faculties, departments and support services.
- The QA processes are coordinated at an Institutional level by the Quality

Committee which reports to the Senate

- Quality Assurance at the institution forms an integral part of the normal and continuous activities of each member of the staff, especially in the managerial positions. All role players in the quality assurance are responsible to strive towards a balance between quality assurance, quality support, quality development and quality monitoring.
  - Student participation in QA activities is encouraged at all levels

## **5 QA management Systems at SU**

### **6.1 QA Unit**

The unit consists of 4 members who act as support for 10 faculties, two of which are satellite campuses.

Main functions of the unit include the following:

- Environmental scanning
- Formulation of Educational policies
- Liaise with faculties within the university, in regard to quality assurance activities and the Senate
- External Reporting
- Institutional Research
- Programme Accreditation and liaise with Council on Higher Education

#### **QA at Satellite campus**

There are quality assurance subcommittees at the satellite campuses that liaise with quality assurance at the main campus.

### **6.2 Quality Assurance Committee:**

6.2.1 Membership: The committee is composed of 5 to 6 people from:

- Academic section
- Student section
- Stakeholders
- Director of QA Unit
- Representatives from support services staff

6.2.2 The responsibilities of the Quality Assurance Committee are to:

- be responsible for the overall coordination of all quality assurance activities at the institutional level
- be responsible for the overall coordination of the external institutional audit of the institution (this includes the process of institutional self-evaluation)
- interpret all quality assurance reports (self-evaluation reports, reports on peer reviewers, etc) and to identify the issues arising from these for the attention of the Management Team

- advise the University Management on management and monitoring activities that should flow from the quality assurance system activities. This is done via the member of the Management Team who has the overall responsibility for the management of the quality assurance system
- advise the member of Management Team who has the overall responsibility for the management of the quality assurance system in order to ensure that the institution complies with its national statutory obligations with regard to quality assurance, and
- advise the member of the Management Team who has the overall responsibility for the management of the quality assurance system on suitable ways in which to effect overall liaison between and coordination of all the institution's planning and quality assurance processes.
- The chair of the Quality Assurance committee monitors the cost implications (in terms of time and recourses of the institution) of the quality assurance processes and ensures that the value added is justified.
- The Quality Assurance Committee is an advice to the Executive Committee of the Senate
- *The Quality Assurance Committee meets at least four times a year.*

### **6.3 Evaluation of QA systems**

At SU, evaluation is seen as one of the important dimensions of QA. It is done in three phases as follows:

- Self evaluation by departments and Programs– this forms the basis for QA systems. This is applicable in both academic and support service environments
- External Peer Review – is the second phase of QA system
- Third phase is the implementation of improvement plans with which issues identified in the self and external evaluation processes are acted upon.

#### **6.3.1 Periodic internal and external evaluation**

There is also a periodic evaluation of Academic core functions (teaching, research, community interaction) and Organisational units and functions conducted by the departments, faculties, professional bodies for accreditiaon and Higher Education quality committee (HEQC). All evaluations use criteria set by HEQC

### **6.3.2 Evaluation of Professional programmes**

Professional programmes are evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set by the external professional bodies recognised by the HEQC for the purposes of programme accreditation

### **6.3.3 Internal and External moderation:**

All continuing programs exams are internally moderated but quality is ensured throughout and only exit level exams are externally moderated. The office of the registrar liaise with the departments for identification of moderators.

### **6.3.4 Evaluation of support units ( including security and catering services)**

Evaluation of support units is done using the Baldrige approach which provides a framework for the evaluation of support services and may be adapted to address a particular environment's needs. (it is simple and easy to understand and implement)

### **6.3.5 Evaluation of governance**

Governance and management structures including SRC are also evaluated using the three phases of evaluation.

## **6.4 Students participation in QA**

### **6.4.1 Students feedback**

The feedback system makes provision for students to give feedback on their experience of individual module/ course, lecturers's lecturing and the program as a whole. This feedback is utilised in the development of modules and programs and for the professional development of lecturers.

Student feedback is not used in isolation as a quality assurance or quality evaluation instrument.

### **6.4.2 Student participation in evaluation Committees**

Every self evaluation committee whether for academic or support services has at least one student who serves as a full time member.

## **7. Other areas visited by the Lesotho team were:**

### **7.1 Research Unit of the Satellite faculty of medicine and health sciences (Tygerburg)**

#### **The unit has three divisions namely:**

- Ethics –Institutional Review board which reviews the research proposals for ethical clearance
- Capacity building, development and support which deals with grant proposal writing
- Grant management which is responsible for Project application; Agreement negotiations; Finalization of agreements and grants management on behalf of the researcher during the project life

### **7.2 International Students office**

SU has international students and also engages in students exchange programs. The importance of exchange programs is that it attracts international students and therefore recognition of the institution internationally. Accommodation for the international students is fully paid and self-catering, therefore generates funds for the institution.

#### **7.2.1 students facilities:**

- SU has a well established and functional library and student centre facilities
- accommodation is available and the SU takes availability of accommodation serious as it forms part of the students' academic life

## **8 Recommendations for NHTC**

### **8.1 Outputs**

The study tour has empowered the task team to undertake the following tasks more effectively and efficiently:

- Strengthen Management, Academic and support services, quality assurance systems of the College in preparation for and after accreditation.
- Establish quality assurance culture within the College.
- Refine draft policies.
- Develop outstanding policies, strategic plan and other documents
- Establish quality assurance committee.
- Appoint one person to coordinate QA activities on a full time basis.

## 8.2 Other lessons learnt:

- NHTC must have a firm commitment to excellence and utilize the quality assurance system as an instrument to further enhance the quality of its core and support functions.
- Internationalisation -The institution must recognize the importance of encouraging and enhancing a diversity of people and ideas in all its activities and in its staff and student composition. The institution should see diversity and quality as complementary in the sense that a multiplicity of disciplinary approach, frameworks and perspectives add value to the quality of the academic study. The quality of research, teaching, learning and community interaction is enhanced through the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of the student body and the responsiveness of the curriculum to the diversity challenges of our local and global society.
- The appointment of qualified and committed teaching and support staff for the College is a key requirement for excellence.
- Student participation in quality assurance activities is important on all levels.

In addition sensitise both academic programs and support services to use Self-evaluation as the basis for quality assurance system. This will be followed by external peer review and the implementation of improvement plans where issues identified in the self-and external evaluation processes are acted upon.

NHTC should visit colleges that offer same programmes as NHTC for future partnership which will lead to exchange programmes for both lecturers and learners. As well as to market itself in order to attract foreign students.

The team learnt that the SU also receives USG funding and it is possible to open one bank account with different codes for different projects and this could be explored for NHTC in relation to partner support like NEPI instead of opening a separate bank account for each partner support

## 9. Challenges

The major challenge encountered was with the sponsor support in that:

- The money for per diem was given to participants very late on the last day before the journey
- The funds were given in the form of cheques and the banks had already closed which made it impossible for the participants to deposit the cheques or cash them even though the funders knew well in advance about the trip and the day of the departure.
- This means that the trip was undertaken without money for fuel and tollgates



- The sponsor ended up depositing the money for fuel and tollgate afterwards and this caused a lot of inconvenience as participants had to contribute to re-fill fuel and pay for tollgates
- Unfortunately even the fuel funds were insufficient which also compelled participants to contribute to top up the fuel funds.
- The per diem given was insufficient because the cost of living is high at the place visited.

#### **10. Conclusion:**

- The study tour was a huge success because we were expected and welcomed warmly by our hosts and everything was in place.
- All the areas of the study tour were adequately covered
- All relevant material provided to participants

Finally the team would like to thank HRAA for supporting this important activity which NHTC has undertaken in preparation for programs' accreditation. With support NHTC will be better prepared for the activity.

Also the team thanks the Ministry of Health for allowing us to undertake the tour to be able to improve quality assurance systems at the College and ultimately produce a quality and competent graduates.



**DAY 1: STUDY TOUR TEAM WITH THE QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT MEMBERS IN THE**

**BOTANICAL GARDEN, STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY,**



**DAY 2: STUDY TOUR TEAM WITH Q.A TEAM FACULTY OF MEDICINE  
AND HEALTH SCIENCES, TYGERBURG**