



ST. FRANCIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES (SFUCHAS)



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ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES (SFUCHAS)

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QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY (DRAFT) 2021

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DQA	Directorate of Quality Assurance
HEI	Higher Education Institutions
MD	Doctor of Medicine
QA	Quality Assurance
QAD	Quality Assurance Directorate
SAUT	St. Augustine University Tanzania
SFH	St. Francis Hospital, Ifakara
SFUCHAS	St Francis College of Health and Allied Sciences
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The reason for establishing the St. Francis College of Health and Allied Sciences (SFUCHAS) as a constituent College of the St. Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) was to bring medical services closer to the people living in rural areas of Ifakara and neighboring districts. SFUCHAS establishment is in line with the Tanzania Episcopal Conference Policy that seeks to complement the endeavors of the Government of Tanzania in alleviating the scarcity of health personnel in the country.

The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) awarded SFUCHAS Certificate of Provisional Registration in 2010 and subsequently, the College was inaugurated in 2011 with a take off number of 46 Doctor of Medicine (MD) students. By the turn of 2021 SFUCHAS has graduated close to 1000 students with MD degrees ; and certificates and diplomas in Medical Laboratory Technology and Pharmaceutical Sciences. The expansion of the College in terms of students, academics and other staff, as well as infrastructure, has necessitated the development of solid governance tools to guarantee quality of its activities and products.

1.2. SFUCHAS Vision

To be an outstanding Catholic University College by setting standards of excellence in health training, research and health care for the rural community.

1.3 SFUCHAS Mission

- i) To transfer knowledge from one generation to another through teaching and to advance knowledge through research in rural community.
- ii) To create a competent human resource workforce with moral, spiritual and ethical values in rural Tanzania
- iii) To deliver quality health services to the rural community in Tanzania.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT, AIM AND SCOPE OF APPLICATION

In recent years, there has been an increase in demand for higher education globally, along with a diversity of institutions and programs. Consequently universities and colleges have exponentially increased in number. Not too long ago, tertiary education in Tanzania was provided solely through government owned universities and colleges with more or less similar standards. Of recent, however, higher learning has undergone massive transition with the development of private (non government) institutions. Along with these, there is rapid development of “modern” tools and communication/information systems for didactics, which have increased complexity in determining the quality of the education provided. These changes require an appropriate and corresponding quality assurance acceptable at institutional, national, regional and global levels by balancing excellence, efficiency and service provision.

Knowledge is now an economic commodity, which exerts pressure on national higher education institutions (HEI) to ensure that their products are competitive in the global market. Therefore, there is a need for SFUCHAS to have in place an internationally recognized quality assurance instrument.

This Quality Assurance (QA) Policy, therefore, aims at guiding SFUCHAS in managing its academic and administrative endeavors effectively, having in mind the increasing demand for qualified medical professionals of international standards and the challenges that go with it. This

policy also serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool for SFUCHAS activities in all fields. Thus the Policy covers both internal and external audit aspects. Its implementation will be through SFUCHAS Directorate of QA along with the Management of the College and the national accreditation organs i.e. TCU, NACTE and, or other pertinent professional bodies.

The Policy contains the following key areas:

- Relationship between teaching, research and community service
- Strategies for quality and standards
- Responsibilities of Departments/Faculties, students and other management units for implementation of QA
- Mode of implementation, monitoring and review of the QA Policy

2.1 Relationship between teaching, research and community service.

Teaching research and community service are the main functions of SFUCHAS. To strengthen teaching, Departments at SFUCHAS shall evaluate the program curriculum, and the quality of teaching/learning environments. Research should be appraised at institutional and at Unit/Departmental levels and community service shall cover a wide range of activities, including provision of professional advice /counseling to a party external to the College at a fees or in kind. The College will develop guidelines with this respect.

2.2 Strategy for quality and standards

Quality assessment is one of the pillars for quality assurance. SFUCHAS shall develop strategies for the development and implementation of internal quality assessment mechanism. This shall involve various operational units in carrying out its day to day activities to meet expected quality standards.

2.3 Responsibilities of Departments/Faculties, students and other management units

Given that QA is a product of diverse stakeholders, this activity shall involve departments, faculties, administrative and other organizational units and individuals. Students are the most important stakeholders in higher education and the impact of QA is of great significance in their future career, therefore, students must be involved in the QA process.

2.4. Policy Implementation and review

There shall be a periodic monitoring of the QA policy implementation and review.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

Effective institutional QA processes assess quality against their Mission and related objectives. SFUCHAS has, in this QA framework, adopted Quality as “Fitness for purpose”, a concept that stresses the need to conform to generally accepted Standards and Guidelines as defined by TCU. The objectives are set in an explicit way that enables their effective implementation and set the framework for planning monitoring and measuring of outcomes. Also, they facilitate communication with stakeholders i.e. employer, industry, government, students and parents.

3.1 Main objective

The main objective (aim) of the QA Policy is to support continuous delivery of quality teaching, research/consultancy and community services through its specific objectives outlined below.

3.2 Specific objectives

- i) To initiate and inculcate the culture of seeking quality assurance among students, staff and other members of the College community
- ii) To create and maintain efficient, transparent and accountable core service delivery process in accordance with SFUCHAS Mission

- iii) To ensure provision of high quality academic programs that respond to the needs of the community
- iv) To provide the environment for capacity building among the academic staff to enhance quality community service delivery through research and outreach services
- v) To ensure continuous improvement of the provision of staff and student support services
- vi) To establish functional institutional QA strategies and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that systematically work across the institution
- vii) To establish QA network with other institutions that have similar QA programs for purposes of sharing experiences and external review

CHAPTER FOUR

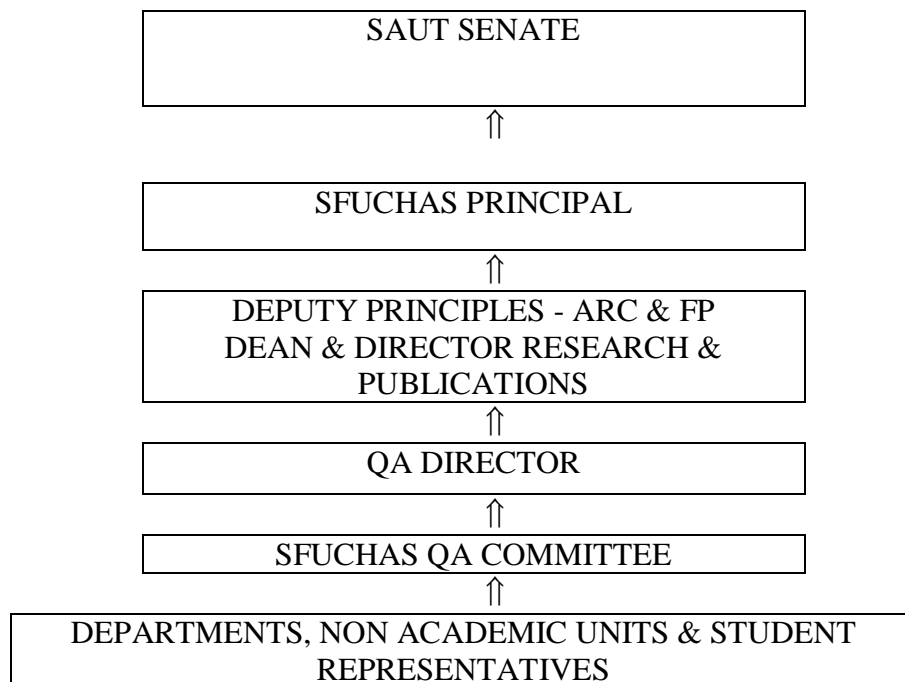
4.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK

4.1 Quality Assurance structure

There shall be a Quality Assurance Director (QAD) whose primary mandate include the setting up of the Directorate/Committee of QA with representatives from academic and administrative Departments, students and other relevant implementing units of the College. The QA meetings shall be held as per SFUCHAS Almanac, or otherwise as may be determined by the QA Director in case of need. In general the QAD shall report matters through internal QA mechanisms to SAUT Senate via the College Principal, on a continuous basis and, periodically also, through external QA strategies as shown in Figure 1.

The QA Director shall update Department and Unit Heads with new information on QA issues as well as providing them with evaluation schedules and instruments. The Director will give corresponding feedback on internal and external evaluation outcomes, including recommendations for improvement. The QA Director shall be responsible for preparation of SFUCHAS matters to TCU and other accreditation bodies and shall link SFUCHAS with professional bodies whose interests have bearing on the College curricula implementation.

Figure 1 SFUCHAS QA organogram



4.2 Role of Departments and other implementation units.

Implementation Units refer to any other sector with a mandate of carrying out functions for the purpose of achieving specific College objectives.

Their role within the QA system shall be:

- To develop and revise their unit specific standards
- To prepare unit specific procedures, operational manuals and submitting copies of such manuals to DQA
- To conduct unit self evaluations of performance standards, and provide the same to DQA
- Implementing recommendations emanating from audits and providing DQA with reports on status of implementation
- To keep staff, students and other stakeholders informed of evaluation outcomes, and strategies for improvements where applicable

4.3 Role of QA participatory organs

Participatory organs are primarily meetings at departmental and unit levels but also, directorates (eg Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Staff Development Research and Publications) and other technical committees.

Their roles shall include:

- To have in place appropriate quality standards, and their review mechanisms
- To appraise the performance of implementers in their respective units based on set criteria, and suggesting improvement measures
- Directing corrective measures to address poor performance

The DAQ shall provide technical guidance to the implementing organs as may be appropriate.

4.4 Functions of the QA Director

- i) To chair meetings of the QA Committee

- ii) To Report matters from the QA Committee to the Principal via Deans, and Directors and Deputy Principals
- iii) To provide technical support on QA matters
- iv) To represent the College at national/regional and international forums on quality assurance matters
- v) To update the College on new developments in QA matters for Higher Education Institutions

4.5 Responsibilities of the QA Committee

These shall include:

- i) Developing and periodically raising their specific performance standards at departmental/unit level
- ii) Preparing departmental/unit specific quality assurance procedures and where applicable, operational manuals
- iii) Conducting self assessment to determine adherence to set QA standards and present reports to QA meetings
- iv) Implementing at the departmental/unit level recommendations from internal/external audit reports/QA Committee meetings

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CODE OF PRACTICE AREAS

The QA Policy shall have codes of practice areas that shall serve as standards, benchmarks and guidelines for its implementation. These are, among others, the following:

- Reliable sources of information
- Experiential, practical and flexible learning
- Student admission, assessment and quality standards
- A practicable student academic appeals and complaints system
- Programs approval, monitoring and review system
- High standard Research and Postgraduate programs
- Staff recruitment, development and appraisal mechanism
- Career guidance based on tracer studies
- Equality of opportunities

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE QA POLICY

Through QA Policy, principles that guide SFUCHAS operations will shape accountability and improvement of the College. Some of these principles are based on:

- i) Holistic approach: All SFUCHAS activities (academic, administrative and managerial) will be subject to audit and reporting
- ii) Self assessment: The College will be judged according to its own mission and objectives
- iii) Focus on improvement: The QA shall focus on assisting and facilitating improvement within SFUCHAS, based on audit as a valuable tool to enhance quality education
- iv) Planning framework and data resources: Objectives will be planned and actions taken be measurable in a verifiable way. Data from surveys, especially of employers and students on what is happening or has happened in the field will be crucial instruments for continuous improvement.
- v) Quality teaching, learning, research and community services as core values for continuous improvement. The QA processes will be intrinsic to the work of all staff who are undertaking or supporting teaching and the promotion of learning, research, and community services
- vi) Benchmarking and evidence based approach: SFUCHAS shall evaluate its achievements against appropriate national and international benchmarks. Its QA methods shall be evidence based

and outcomes and feedbacks from stakeholders (students, staff, employers and the community) will provide the basis for conclusions on which improvements are made

vii) Collegiality and Team spirit: The QA advocates SFUCHAS principles of rigorous peer review, identification of areas for improvement, collaboration, team spirit and critical self evaluation

viii) Audit processes: To assist auditors, guidelines will be developed collaboratively by the QA Team and SFUCHAS Management.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0 POLICY STATEMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

To enable realizing its Vision and Mission, SFUCHAS shall continuously monitor and systematically evaluate the implementation of its mandated activities. Initially, SFUCHAS shall review all its existing policies, regulations/guidelines/procedures and develop new ones where there is need, to ensure that there are always in place criteria for judging its performance. The policy statements and strategies are outlined below:

7.1 Teaching and learning environment for students are improved to meet national, regional and global expectations

7.1.1 Strategies

- i) Develop appropriate infrastructure to cater for the numbers of students and programs offered
- ii) Provide adequate and updated materials teaching/learning and infrastructure for effective delivery of all programs
- iii) Enhance capacity of staff continuously to provide programs/courses effectively
- iv) Promote use of digital /online technologies to ease teaching and learning
- v) Engage competent and adequate academic and technical staff and periodically appraise their capacity using well structured criteria
- vi) Seek students feed-back on the quality of teaching / learning delivery
- vii) Provide essential social services/facilities to the College community including: communication recreational, catering, healthcare, vocational, social counseling

7.2 Competence based academic programs are developed

7.2.1 Strategies

- i) Develop guidelines for curricular development and periodic review
- ii) Ensure all course have clearly defined learning outcomes
- iii) Students are enrolled based on clearly defined and impartial and transparent selection criteria
- iv) Ensure that best practices are in place in the setting, moderating, invigilation and marking of the of student assessments
- v) Develop and use clear performance indicators to appraise the quality of students
- vi) Periodically review programs through internal self assessment and external audit to maintain relevance
- vi) Use past students (alumni) and employers of SFUCHAS graduates to identify key competencies that address community/stakeholder needs
- viii) Uphold the academic integrity of SFUCHAS awards issued to students and staff

7.3 SFUCHAS Research outputs are consistently monitored and evaluated in terms of the quality and quantity

7.3.1 Strategies

- i) Policy/regulations to support research at SFUCHAS are operational and effective in light of the Colleges objectives and performance
- ii) Efforts are made by academic staff to secure funds for research and infrastructural development
- iii) Implementation of research activities is guided by appropriate ethical consideration

- iv) A mechanism of research findings dissemination is in place to enable create desired impact on the teaching and learning , research community beyond SFUCHAS and the public
- v) Efforts are made to involve business community to support research for the purpose of commercializing research outputs in collaboration with the College, where appropriate

7.4. Quality health care services are delivered to the community in collaboration with the St. Francis Hospital (SFH) efficiently and effectively

7.4.1 Strategies

- i) Appropriate agreement is put in place to guide the involvement of SFUCHAS in the provision of quality health care in collaboration with
- ii) Ensure that SFUCHAS contribution within the collaboration with SFH contributes significantly towards improvement of the quality of life among target communities
- iii) Develop a firm operational system for joint planning, executing and evaluating public service jointly with SFH.

7.5. Good governance practices are maintained at all levels of the College

7.5.1 Strategies

- i) SFUCHAS abides by the Charter establishing the College and pertaining principles
- ii) Establish and operate efficient governance structure consisting of institutional administrative organs and committees
- iii) Sustain well defined hierarchy of authority/accountability, which is transparent and interactive in decision making processes
- iv) Maintain clear guidelines in recruitment and appraisal of academic and supporting staff.
- v) Observe no conflict of interest in staff recruitment and appraisal

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.0 ADMINISTRATION STRUCTURE

There shall be a Directorate for quality Assurance (DQA) consisting of a Director (Chairperson) and a committee representing all academic and administrative implementation Departments/Units (Departments). The Dean of the Faculty shall be a member of the QA Committee by virtue of his/her position The core task of the Committee will be to monitor and sustain quality at the College at all levels and at all times.

8.1 Linkages with other units

The QA Director shall maintain close working contacts with the Deputy Principles and the Principle by communicating new developments, that require action at the top administrative level. Close working relationship of the QA Director with the implementation units is paramount in assuring and maintaining quality at SFUCHAS. The Director shall update unit Heads with new developments on QA matters as well as providing the units with QA evaluation tools, as well as providing feed back from QA audit teams from time to time. The Directorate shall serve as the link between the College and external QA agencies, professional bodies and TCU via SAUT in matters of institutional accreditation, or other matters that may have bearing on the colleges programs and curricula. The Directorate shall also be involved in coordinating external evaluation activities and submit reports to the implementation units and to College administration on the findings of external evaluation teams

8.2 Role of implementing units and participatory organs in quality assurance

Implementing units at SFUCHAS are defined as departments or other segments of the college establishment which carry out activities with the aim of meeting the college's established objectives. Participatory organs include meetings, boards, senate and technical committees e.g.

research and publications committee, undergraduate committee) In addition to enabling the College maintain high quality standards, the units and organs should also carry out regular self assessments.

Among the their roles in QA shall include:

- i) Participating effectively at all QA meetings
- ii) Developing periodic specific performance standards and maintain the standards in practice
- iii) Preparing specific QA procedures, manuals, guidelines... and providing copies to DQA
- iv) Carrying of self evaluation at unit/organ level and communicate the findings to DQA
- v) Implementing recommendations resulting from internal and external evaluations and

CHAPTER NINE

9.0 INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS

The QA Committee shall work hand in hand with the Dean of Students and student Class Advisors/Representatives to provide conducive physical and material learning environment as well as social and psychological support. The QA Committee shall involve students particularly for the following aspects:

9.1 Student Assessment

The QA Committee shall be responsible to oversee the operation of students assessment at SFUCHAS which shall include:

- i) Developing the continuous assessment and examination system to provide the measure of whether the students have achieved expected learning outcomes of programs
- ii)Assisting in aligning course tests and examinations within the programs
- iii) Ensuring adequate consistency of assessments

9.2 Student evaluation

The QA Committee shall be involved in carrying out student evaluation with the Departments in the following aspects:

- i) Supporting Departments on how to conduct students continuous evaluation on regular and well spaced sessions
- ii) Determining how best students evaluation can be used for quality improvement
- iii) Assisting Departments to provide post assessment feedback to the students and vice versa

CHAPTER TEN

10.0 AUDITS AND PROGRAM APPRAISALS

10.1 External audits and program reviews

The DQA shall arrange/coordinate periodic external institutional audits and program reviews. Institutional audit shall focus on matters of governance and program reviews shall evaluate the relevance of teaching programs being offered. The DQA shall disseminate the audit findings to the implementation units, for consideration in improving quality where there are shortfalls

10.2 Internal audits and program reviews

The Dean, Directors, Head of Institutes and Departments shall be charged with the mandate for carrying out the implementation of the QA policy through regular self evaluation of their units structurally and functionally for improvement of teaching/learning. To achieve harmony, the Director QA shall develop the terms of reference for the audit/reviews. If necessary the Principal may appoint a team of individuals to carry out verification visits following the submission of the report by the audit/review team

10.3 Program accreditation

SFUCHAS teaching programs shall be accredited by TCU, after all preliminary internal procedures coordinated by QAD have been approved by the Academic Board and subsequently by SAUT Council

CHAPTER ELEVEN

11.0 KEY SAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders for this QA policy shall include:

- i) All individuals who are actively involved at full time or part time basis in teaching, research, delivering community service or other core functions of the College
- ii) Students registered at SFUCHAS
- iii) SFUCHAS alumni
- iv) Government ministries, agencies and departments
- v) Professional bodies
- vi) Partners and collaborators of SFUCHAS, internal and external to Tanzania
- vii) Tanzania Episcopal Council

CHAPTER TWELVE

12.0 RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

All SFUCHAS policies, regulations and guidelines constitute the basis for setting the College operating standards. Therefore, the QA Policy will relate to other policies for its operation and evaluation. These policies include:

- i) The Charter establishing SAUT
- ii) Rolling strategic Plan
- iii) SFUCHAS Prospectus
- iv) SFUCHAS Curriculum
- v) Specific Students Admission Regulations
- vi) Students Examination Regulations
- vii) Guidelines for Recruitment and Promotion
- viii) Research and Publication Policy
- ix) Inventory and Procurement Policy
- x) Other policies that may be developed from time to time

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

13.0 STATUS, EFFECTIVE DATE AND AMENDMENTS/REVIEW & CUSTODIAN

The Policy shall come to effect from the date it is approved by SAUT Council and any statement thereof may be removed or altered if it will appear redundant or outdated due to major changes of the College environment. In any event the entire QA Policy document shall be reviewed after every program cycle but not longer than five years

13.1 policy custodian

The SFUCHAS Quality Assurance Directorate shall be the custodian of this policy

