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A framework for cyclical nursing curriculum review across multi-site and multi-country campuses

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Abstract



Cyclical curriculum review and continuous course improvement is an unarguable measure of quality nursing education. Higher education and professional regulators across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and African (Afro) regions are increasingly mandating cyclical review within accreditation and programme approval standards. Many nursing education providers in the region operate multi-site and multi-country campuses. A key challenge is to ensure that programmes keep pace with international standards in nursing education, and, that inter-campus drift does not occur in programme content and quality. Cyclical review offers a process whereby programmes can be updated to current best practice and consistent cross-campus standards can be maintained. The review process described in this presentation arises from a Aga Khan University project designed to review the status of courses within its post registration RN to BScN programme. The University operates four direct delivery sites in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Pakistan and provides mentoring support to programmes in Upper Egypt and Mozambique. The project sought to assess currency of course content and develop a nursing course review framework for use by any educational provider involved in multi-campus programme delivery.

The approach engaged an expert review team including internal and globally sourced external experts. The team involved subject experts and curriculum development and pedagogical experts. Key foci of the review framework are described including; expected student outcomes, learning objectives, content inclusions, assessment items, and, teaching/learning resources. The review framework is of practical use to other educators involved in the review of course modules across multi-campus, multi-state, multi-emirate and/or multi-country settings.

Keywords: Nursing Education; Quality Improvement; Academic Review; On-line learning



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Mandate

- Providing quality programs in advanced and continuing education to meet the needs of nurses, institutions, and communities in East Africa and further afield.
- Utilizing innovative curriculum and program delivery strategies.
- Educating nurses capable of providing exemplary nursing care appropriate to the health needs of urban and rural populations in hospitals and communities.
- Providing leadership in nursing education, practice, administration and research.

For this we need high quality curricula

Talking of Curricula

“Curriculum...is a design of events that brings about conversion. Curriculum...is not worth the journey if it does not convert those who participate in it into something better.”

(Schubert, 1991)

Cited in McNay, M. (2009). Western Guide to Curriculum Review The University of Western Ontario, Teaching Support Centre, The University of Western Ontario: 1-47.

Why review?

Curriculum Assessment, Evaluation, and Review can help to:

- Demonstrate the strengths of a program
- Evaluate recent changes in a discipline and subject
- Identify aspects of the program that should be reconsidered or changed
- Provide a basis for renewing or reforming components of a program
- Enhance student learning, engagement, and satisfaction
- Ensure professional accreditation standards are met
- Align a program with national higher education regulations
- Move towards renewal and reform

McNay, M. (2009). Western Guide to Curriculum Review The University of Western Ontario, Teaching Support Centre, The University of Western Ontario: 1-47.

Aga Khan University Expectations

- All programmes require a curriculum self-review every five years before embarking on the cyclical external QA review.
- Board of Trustees recommended that these reviews should also inform the strategic planning process of each entity.

President Firoz Rasul, Memo to All Academic Entity Heads and Academic Council Members. 22rd December 2016

Higher Education Regulator: Kenya

PROG/STD/12 The content of a given academic programme shall be systematically presented, relevant and aligned to the institutional, national and global goals and trends.

- *The content of a given programme shall be reviewed regularly in order to address current trends in the discipline in focus*

CUE/Commission for University Education, Kenya: UNIVERSITIES STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES, 2014

Higher Education Regulator: Uganda

Minimum Standards - Statutory Instruments Supplement No. 85

Paragraph 23.

(1) A curriculum should be able to facilitate a balanced learning process and ensure that students are able to acquire such cognitive, effective and psychomotor skills as are consistent with the educational goals and aspirations of Uganda as may, from time to time, be defined by the National Council.

(2) Account shall be taken in the design of every curriculum to ensure that the programme proposed—

(a) is broad-based or integrated;

(b) is practical oriented;

(c) is diversified;

(d) does not compromise the standards of excellence set by the National Council; and

(e) contributes to the overall national human resource development and requirements.

Uganda National Council for Higher Education: STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS SUPPLEMENT No. 85

<http://www.unche.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Statutory-Instruments-No.85-2005-Institutional-Standards.pdf>

Higher Education Regulator: Tanzania

“Continuous monitoring is crucial during curriculum implementation at training institutions to ensure that curriculum remains relevant in terms of market needs and NACTE norms. If the latter is not the case, it gives clear sign of the need to review the curriculum.”

“Once the need for curriculum review is clear, which shall be demonstrated by the gap between what the performance indicators are showing and the targeted values, one will need to clearly identify the required intervention.”

“Normally, such interventions include improvement of competencies, in order to either be in line with revised occupational standards or other NACTE norms, or attain competitive edge over other institutions, or ensure flexibility of curriculum in response to modern socio-economic trends, or rationalize efficiency in curriculum implementation; or combination thereof.”

The National Council for Technical Education, Tanzania: PROCEDURES FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW, 2004.
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/dz2x413vp9qpkcw/doc00465720180606114901.pdf?dl=0>

Getting started ... A Review Team

Internal Reviewers

- Active leadership from Dean & Head of School
Regional Course Coordinator
- Site subject Specialists

External Reviewers

- Subject Specialist/s
- Curriculum Specialist

Moodle

LMS: Learning Management System

Moodle complements face-to-face delivery and allows learning to be shared across regions/nations and aids curriculum review

- **Quality Assurance**
Consistency in course delivery and communication of learner and teacher expectations.
- **Transparency and Accountably**
Course information readily for audit and review
- **Flexible Access to Course Content**
Anytime access to course information, learning materials and assessment
- **Secure and Paperless Recording Keeping**
Visibility for the purpose of program review and accreditation.
- **Moodle Monitor role has been established for continuous audit & identification of areas for quality improvement**

Complete documents submitted to the review team

Approved template used for course outline

Engagement with Moodle

Documents identified with date/author/course code & file name/s

Full assessment details included in course outline

Schedule of weekly topics included in course outline

Links to organizational policies included in course outline

References and resources listings updated and current

East Africa or Pakistan specific references included

Clinical objectives included with matching clinical assessment tool

Evidence of regional alignment/consistency

Reference to compliance: local high education and nursing council standards

Assessment – grading rubric for all assignments

Item Reviewed	Country A	Country B	Country C	Country D
Complete documents received	Course outline missing but later supplied	✓	✓	Course outline missing but later supplied
Approved template used for course outline	Initially X Late version in approved template ✓	✓	X	Not yet agreed for Pakistan
Engagement with Moodle	Significant gaps in Moodle postings No course outline posted	✓	Significant gaps in Moodle postings No students enrolled in MH course	Not yet engaged with Moodle
Documents identified with date/author/course code & file name/s	X	✓	X	X
Full assessment details included in course outline	X	✓	✓	✓
Schedule of weekly topics included in course outline	X	✓	X	✓
Links to organizational policies included in course outline	X	✓	X	X
References and resources listings updated and current	X	✓	X Includes references from 1988 to 2009	✓ Partial update complete but some reference very dated
East Africa or Pakistan specific references included	X	X	X	X Minimal (1 only) with remainder North American in focus
Clinical objectives included with matching clinical assessment tool	✓	X	Only clinical objectives No assessment criteria	X
Evidence of regional alignment/consistency	Not evident Marked difference noticed in sample exams	Not evident Marked difference noticed in sample exams	Not evident Marked difference noticed in sample exams	Not evident Marked difference noticed in sample exams
Reference to compliance: local high education and nursing council standards	X	X	X	X
Assessment – grading rubric for all assignments	X	X	X	X Only the scholarly paper includes grading rubric – missing from other assessments

Regional Coordinators

- Confirm a regional coordinator for all courses
- Coordinator leads faculty team in a given course specialty
- Faculty work in teams across the four countries/two continents focused on:
 - Regional alignment/consistency course content and assessment
 - Continuous quality improvement of course content, resources and delivery

Team Responsibilities

- Utilization of correct course template
- Developing course manuals and clinical guidelines
- Updating
 - All course content
 - Lesson plans
 - Course assessments
 - Marking rubrics
 - Cited references, texts, course readings

Library as a Partner in Development

- Advice and guidance to faculty in updating texts, readings and course resources
 - Global literature
 - Local East African literature
 - Country specific literature
- Support to ensure texts align with those in course guides and student handbooks
- Integrate existing LibGuides with Moodle Platform
- Turn-it-in & Endnote training for new faculty & students
- Work with course coordinators for regional alignments of texts

IT as a Partner in Development

- Reloading revised course templates and content
- Uploading lecture capture
- Linking Turn-it-in functions to Moodle
- Licenses for Academic software, Endnote & SPSS
- Sufficient Wi-Fi strength for simultaneous class log-ons
- Quality multi-function lap tops & connectable screens
- Options for affordable provision of student tablets

And of course Finance

- Ensure annual identification of budget provisions for curriculum development and review
- Inclusion in budget provisions for instructional designers for on-line developments
- Funding lines for:
 - Travel and accommodation for annual face-to-face regional meetings
 - Academic support including mini-grant & publication support
 - Soft-ware licenses (Endnote, SPSS)
 - Accreditation costs
 - Student tablets
 - Improved Wi-Fi
 - Adequate storage for course content and lecture content



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