



2-Day Staff Training for ACDE Member Institutions on Conducting Institutional Quality Assurance Reviews and Certification

Concept Note

1. Background and Rationale

As open and distance learning (ODL) continues to expand, concerns about the quality of its delivery have risen, leading to negative public perceptions and questions about the credibility and effectiveness of distance education programmes. In response to these quality challenges and to ensure that ODL institutions maintain high standards of excellence, the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE), a continental educational organization committed to promoting quality practices in open and distance learning across Africa has developed a comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) Toolkit. This toolkit is designed to guide institutions in enhancing the quality of their programmes and services.

ACDE is now implementing its Quality Assurance Certification Programme to certify institutions that comply with ACDE's quality standards. The goal of this process is not only to ensure that ACDE member institutions meet established quality standards but also to encourage continuous improvement in their educational offerings, thereby sustaining excellence in the delivery of distance education. Achieving certification will enhance an institution's reputation and bolster its credibility both across the continent and internationally.

To assess compliance with ACDE's standards for certification, institutions must undergo external quality assurance evaluations and reviews. However, there is a pressing need for trained professionals who can effectively conduct these evaluations. These professionals are essential for assessing the quality of ODL practices, ensuring that institutions meet the required standards, and identifying areas for improvement. Their role will be instrumental in supporting institutions to enhance their educational practices and outcomes.

In light of this, ACDE aims to strengthen institutional capacity for quality assurance by conducting a 2-day training for staff of ACDE member institutions, who will be trained as quality assurance champions to lead evaluations and certification processes at their institutions.

2. Objectives

The primary goal of the 2-day training is to equip participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct effective QA reviews and certification for ACDE member institutions. By the end of the training, participants will be prepared to assess the quality of ODL practices and processes, both within their own institutions and across other ODL institutions in their region. Specifically, the training aims to:

- Equip participants with the tools and knowledge needed to drive improvements in quality assurance processes at their institutions and prepare them for external evaluations leading to certification.
- Provide participants with the skills and expertise to effectively support the certification process and ensure that institutional reviews are conducted in a thorough, efficient, and objective manner.
- Build capacity among participants to become external quality assurance assessors or internal evaluators.
- Enhance participants' ability to report findings and provide actionable recommendations for improving institutional quality and performance.
- Foster collaboration and networking among participants to share best practices and strengthen regional quality assurance efforts.

3. Target Audience

The training will target relevant staff involved in quality assurance in ODeL institutions, including

- QA Directors of member institutions across Africa
- ACDE's train-the-trainer officers (TOTs) (staff who participated in the Kenya2023 training)
- Other relevant staff involved in QA processes

In essence, each institution will be represented by three staff members, and the training will be conducted as a combined group session for all participants in a virtual format.

4. Mode of Training

The training will be conducted virtually, allowing for greater participation and inclusivity from all institutions, particularly given the high cost of air travel that may limit institutional participation.

5. Methodology

The training will feature a combination of interactive group sessions, direct instruction, simulations, and demonstrations to show how the QA toolkit can be used to enhance institutional quality assurance processes in ODL environments, as well as how an institutional review process is conducted, leading to certification.

6. Training Outline:

The 2-day training will cover the following topics, structured into 8 sections:

Day 1 – How to use the ACDE QA toolkit to enhance internal quality assurance processes

- Opening session/welcome remarks **(30mins)**
- Unpacking the toolkit- purpose, structure, usage **(30mins)**
- Using the digitized toolkit - A demo of how to access and use the digitized toolkit **(15mins)**
- Group activity **(20mins)**
- Using the self-assessment reporting template **(15mins)**
- Question and Answer **(25mins)**

Total 2hours 30mins

Day 2 – Conducting an Institutional QA Reviews and Certification

- Recap of Day one’s activities **(10mins)**
- ACDE certification process: the procedure of applying for certification **(20mins)**
- How to conduct an institutional QA evaluation leading to certification - the role of external reviewers **(40mins)**
- Practical exercise: institutional reviews simulation **(30mins)**
- Reporting and feedback mechanisms: How to report findings and provide feedback for institutional improvement **(15mins)**
- Question and Answer

(25mins) Total 2hrs 30mins

The detailed programme of activities is provided in Appendix A

7. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the training, participants will be able to:

1. Assess their institution’s quality assurance processes and effectively prepare for external evaluations, ensuring alignment with certification standards.
2. Conduct comprehensive, objective institutional reviews and support the certification process with efficiency and clarity.
3. Serve as both external quality assurance reviewers and internal evaluators, with an understanding of the responsibilities and ethical standards involved
4. Report findings from external evaluations and craft actionable, impactful recommendations to drive improvements in institutional quality and performance.
5. The opportunity to collaborate with peers, share best practices, and build a network to strengthen regional quality assurance efforts and enhance institutional practices.

8. Resource Persons

- Dr. Ephraim Mhlana – SAIDE, South Africa / or Dr. Eleanor Johannes
- Prof Teresa Mwoma - Executive Director, ACDE, Kenya
- Prof Dorothy Ofoha – Director, ACDE-QAAA, NOUN
- Prof Christine Ofulue – Director, RETRIDOL, NOUN

9. Proposed date and time

October 8th and 9th 2025. The training will run for approximately 2hrs 30mins per day

10. Cost

The cost per participant is 50 USD, which means each institution will be charged 150 USD to cover three participants.

Appendix A Training Programme

Time	Activity	Details	Resources/Facilitator
Day 1			
9.30 -10:00	Opening session/Remarks		ACDE President or representative
10.00 -10:10	Welcome and introductions	Introduction to the training and objectives.	ACDE Executive Director Prof Mwoma
10:10 -10:30	Why quality assurance matter in ODL?	Opening presentation	PowerPoint slides Dr. Mhlanga
10:30 - 11:00	Session 1: Unpacking the Toolkit - Purpose of the Toolkit - Structure of the Toolkit - How to use the toolkit	Presentation on the toolkit's purpose, structure, and usage.	PowerPoint slides Prof Ofoha
11.20- 11.40	Session 2: Using the digitized toolkit	Demonstration and practice of how to use the digitized toolkit	The digitalized toolkit Prof Ofulue
11.40 – 12.00	Break out session	Group activity	All facilitators
12:00 - 12.15	Session 3: Using the self-assessment reporting template	Demonstration and practice of how to use the self-assessment report.	Soft copy of the self-assessment reporting template - Prof Ofulue
12.15 – 12.40	Question and Answer		Prof Ofoha
12.40- 12:50	Wrap-up and closing remarks	Final thoughts, feedback collection, and session closure.	Prof Mwoma
Day 2			
9:30 - 9:40	Recap of Day one's activities	Key takeaways from Day one's activities	Participant
9:40-10:20	Session 5: ACDE QA certification process	ACDE QA certification process: the procedure of applying for certification	Certification process manual - Prof Ofoha

10:20 -11.00	Session 6: How to conduct an institutional QA evaluation. The review process and the evaluation criteria /Role of external reviewers	Step-by-step process of conducting an institutional QA evaluation leading to certification. The review process and the evaluation criteria / Role of external reviewers	Review process manual & Assessment rubrics Dr. Mhlanga & Prof Ofoha
11.00 – 11.30	Session 7: Practical exercise: institutional reviews simulation	Group activity: Simulate a QA review process from start to finish	Group activity All facilitators
11.30 – 11.45	Session 8: Reporting and feedback mechanisms	How to report findings and provide feedback for institutional improvement	Review report template Dr. Mhlanga
11.45 – 12.10	Q&A and Discussion		Prof Ofoha
12.10 – 12.20	Wrap-up, closing remarks & way forward on the certification plan		Profs Mwoma & Ofoha

*Organized by: African Council for Distance Education,
Quality Assurance & Accreditation Agency (QAAA) in
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