

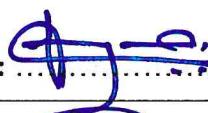
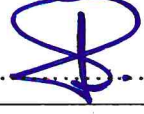
SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY

ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

DECEMBER, 2025

DOCUMENT APPROVAL FORM

SEKU – ISO 9001:2015 QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS		
ISSUE FOR USE ON:	SEKU ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY	REF: SEKU/CS/POL/xxx

Approved by: Prof. Francis Wachira Management Representative	Sign: 	Date: 28.4.2026
Authorized by: Prof. Eng. Douglas Shitanda Vice Chancellor	Sign: 	Date: 28/04/2025

THE MANDATE, VISION, MISSION, VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

(1) Mandate

The core mandate of the University is research, teaching and learning, community service, innovation and commercialization.

(2) Vision

A globally competitive Centre of Excellence in Research, Teaching and Learning, Community Service, Innovation and Commercialization.

(3) Mission

To provide quality education through research, teaching, extension, innovation and entrepreneurship with emphasis on food and nutrition security, health, engineering and technology, environment and natural resources management for sustainable development.

(4) Core Values

In order to achieve the vision and mission, the University will be guided by the following core values:

- a) Patriotism
- b) Professionalism
- c) Democracy and good governance
- d) Innovation
- e) Integrity, transparency and accountability
- f) Inclusivity, equity and equality
- g) Freedom of thought
- h) Teamwork
- i) Sustainability

(5) Philosophy

Arid to green Transforming lives.

PREFACE

The University Council is committed to safeguarding provision of quality education in SEKU in line with the requirements of CUE, Universities Act. No. 42 of 2012 (2020 Revised) and Universities regulations, 2014. The revision of this Academic Quality Assurance Policy of the University is therefore timely as it will enable the University Council to fulfil its oversight responsibilities to the university based on the up-to-date policies and guidelines. We note that the policy will allow the university to develop a tradition of maintaining high standards in the provision of quality education to our students. The policy would also assist the university to comply with the standards and guidelines of CUE including the Universities Standards and Guidelines of 2014.

I urge that every effort be made to ensure that the provisions of this policy are fully implemented by the entire university community. It is through concerted effort of all staff in the university that SEKU will be able to provide an enabling environment for provision of quality education at undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D. levels.

Prof. Crispus Kiamba

CHAIRPERSON, SEKU COUNCIL

FOREWORD

The South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) was granted a Charter on 1st March 2013. The University's main objectives and functions as outlined in its Charter are to play a leading role in the development and expansion of the opportunities for higher education and research in food and nutrition security, health, engineering and technology, environment and natural resources management for sustainable development with a special focus on ASALs. As a growing university, SEKU requires a comprehensive Academic Quality Assurance Policy to guide the implementation of its academic programmes. The University has thus formulated Academic Quality Assurance Policy not only to comply with the requirements of the CUE, but also as part of its quest for creating mechanisms that guarantee provision of quality University education. I am glad to note that this Policy has adopted best practices in the provision of university education. The Policy clarifies the roles of the University Senate, Management, Deans Committee, Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance, School and Departmental Boards in as far as Academic Quality Assurance is concerned. The Policy will provide the basis for internal processes of Academic Quality Assurance and review, external accreditation, and formal reporting to the University Management and the Senate, including other statutory institutions such as CUE.

The University Management is thus fully committed to the implementation of the Policy and will establish mechanisms of ensuring that it is updated from time to time to make sure it is consistent with the emerging trends in higher education sector, not only in Kenya, but also at regional and global levels. I urge all academic staff in the University, particularly Deans of Schools, Directors of Institutes and Chairmen of Departments to fully familiarize themselves with the provisions of this Policy and ensure it is implemented to the latter.



Prof. Eng. Douglas Shitanda, PhD

Vice Chancellor

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASALs: Arid and Semi-Arid lands

ARI: Academic Research and Innovation

CATs: Continuous Assessment Tests

CUE: Commission for University Education

DAQA: Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance

KNEC: Kenya National Examination Council

KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KUCCPS: Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service

ODeL: Open, Distance and e-Learning

SARs: Self-Assessment Reports

SEKU: South Eastern Kenya University

SEUCO: South Eastern University College

SLAs: Service Level Agreements

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

TQA: Teaching Quality Assessment

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

South Eastern Kenya University is a fully-fledged Public University which was awarded its Charter on 1st March, 2013 by the then President and Commander in Chief of the Defense Forces of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki. The University Main Campus is located in Kitui County in a serene and conducive learning environment, 12 Kilometers off Kwa-Vonza Township, along the Kitui-Machakos road.

The University is governed by the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012, Universities Regulations (2014), Universities (Amendment) Act 2020, Universities Standards and Guidelines (2014), University Charter (2013) and University's Statutes (2023).

The University's main objectives and functions as outlined in its Charter are to play a leading role in the development and expansion of the opportunities for higher education and research in agriculture, forestry, mining, energy, water and environmental sciences with a special focus on arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs). This is in line with Vision 2030—Kenya's long-term development plan—which recognizes the importance of ASALs. SEKU being a growing institution requires a comprehensive Academic Quality Assurance Policy to ensure quality in the implementation of its academic programmes.

1.2 Purpose of the Policy

This policy shall provide a framework for SEKU members of staff and all stakeholders with clear guidelines, principles and procedures for adhering to and assurance for the highest academic quality in the University.

1.3 Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to:

- (1) Provide guidance in the development and implementation of internal and external academic quality assurance procedures and practices.
- (2) Ensure that the quality of academic programmes at the University meet standards expected by stakeholders.
- (3) Ensure that graduates who have undertaken academic programmes in the university have attained skills and knowledge that are valued by stakeholders. iv. Enable the University

to assure itself, its stakeholders and CUE that the University's policies, systems and processes for the development, maintenance and enhancement of quality in all its educational provisions are functioning effectively;

- (4) Facilitate development of a culture of continuous quality improvement in the university in order to achieve academic excellence.

1.4 Rationale

This policy has been developed to help the University coordinate and manage academic quality assurance processes for purposes of enhancing quality teaching, learning and research in the University.

1.5 Scope of the Policy

The Academic Quality Assurance Policy applies to all University's staff, students and other stakeholders as well as to all undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes. The Policy shall apply to all units of the University through internal quality assurance mechanisms on a continuous basis and external quality assurance strategies which will be periodic.

The Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms shall focus on the quality of: programmes and courses, staff, teaching and learning experiences, staff/student performance assessment, support services, resources, facilities and research.

1.6 Guiding Principles

The university acknowledges that:

- (1) The members of the University community are collectively responsible for maintaining and enhancing the quality of its academic programmes and for improving the quality of the student learning experience.
- (2) There is student involvement, participation and regular formal feedback in academic programme development, monitoring and review.
- (3) Academic programmes and quality assurance mechanisms are subject to internal and external peer evaluation and review, involving consultation with students, alumni and other stakeholders.

- (4) Academic programme quality will be judged based on a collection of evidence, and not on any single piece of evidence.

The principles that will underpin University's approach and *modus operandi* in as far as this policy is concerned are outlined below:

- Principle 1: *Holistic approach.*** All aspects of the university's activities, academic, administrative and managerial, will be subject to audit and reporting.
- Principle 2: *Based on self-assessment . . . Trust but verify...*** The university will be judged according to its own objectives, that is, on whether or not it is achieving its own mission in a purposeful and clear fashion.
- Principle 3: *Improvement focus.*** The University Academic Quality Assurance will have a focus on assisting and facilitating improvement within the university. Audit is a valued tool to assist the university to enhance quality education.
- Principle 4: *Planning framework.*** The quality assurance model adopted presupposes a planning and evaluation framework to quality systems. Objectives must be planned, actions taken must be measurable in verifiable ways; plans are reviewed and measures implemented.
- Principle 5: *Data and resources.*** Whatever data and resources are needed for quality assurance, they should already be required by the University's internal quality systems and processes. The Academic Quality Assurance self-assessment approach builds assessments around what already happens or should be happening in the university.
- Principle 6: *Quality teaching and learning.*** Quality teaching, learning, research are essential to the University's mission, goals and activities. The University's quality assurance processes are intrinsic to the work of all staff, who are undertaking or supporting teaching and the promotion of learning and research.
- Principle 7: *Benchmarking and evidence-based approach.*** The University evaluates its achievements against appropriate national and international benchmarks. Its quality assurance methods are evidence-based, where outcomes and feedback from stakeholders (including students, staff, employers and the community) will provide the basis for analyses and conclusions on which improvements are planned.

Principle 8: *Team spirit.* The University's procedures reflect the principles of rigorous peer review in order to identify areas for improvement, foster collaboration, and team spirit, exchange of best practices and encourage a culture of critical self evaluation.

Principle 9: *Modus Operandi of the Audit Processes.* Members of audit teams will be independent of the department they are auditing and will be trained in auditing techniques. To assist both auditors and departments, academic audit guidelines will be developed collaboratively between the University Directorate of Quality Assurance and the Senate.

2.0 POLICY STATEMENT, LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND CITATION

2.1 Policy Statement

The Policy supports the University in ensuring that there is quality teaching, learning and research to meet students' needs. The Policy also commits the University to enhance and maintain the quality of its teaching, learning, research, innovation, creativity and community service provisions through the process of continuous improvement and quality assurance. The University commits to communicate this Policy to stakeholders.

2.2 Legal Framework

SEKU begun as SEUCO which was a Constituent College of the University of Nairobi established through Legal Notice No. 102 of 18th July, 2008. The University was subsequently granted University Charter on 1st March 2013 by the CUE to become SEKU. The University is governed in accordance with the Constitution of Kenya 2010 which is the supreme law of the Republic of Kenya, the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012, the Universities (Amendment) Act, 2016, the Employment Act and other relevant subsequent Subsidiary Legislations.

The formulation of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy of South Eastern Kenya University is in line with the South Eastern Kenya University Charter of 2013, the Commission for University Education Universities Standards and Guidelines 2014, the South Eastern Kenya University Statutes of 2023, the Kenya Development Blue-print Vision 2030 and the Public Officers Ethics of 2003 as revised in 2016. The policy is also consistent with the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework on Education, Training and Research.

The Academic Quality Assurance Policy will also contribute in the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly those focused on improving access to education.

2.3 Citation

The Academic Quality Assurance policy shall be implemented based on the following legal framework:

- (1) The Constitution of Kenya, 2010.
- (2) Universities Act No. 42 of 2012
- (3) Universities (Amendment) Act of 2016
- (4) Universities (Amendment) Act of 2020
- (5) University Regulations 2014
- (6) CUE Guidelines for Self-Assessment (2014)
- (7) CUE Universities Standards and Guidelines (2014)

3.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

3.1 Formulation of Academic Quality Assurance Policy

- (1) The University is under obligation to develop Academic Quality Assurance Policy as part of its effort to meet the requirements of CUE and also improve its academic standards. The Policy framework recommended for SEKU has thus adopted the best global practices in the provision of quality University education.
- (2) The Policy clarifies the roles of the University Senate, Management, Deans Committee, Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance, Schools, Directorate of Open, Distance and E-learning (ODEL) and Departmental Boards and recommend establishment of new processes where these are not existing at SEKU. The policy will provide the basis for internal processes of academic quality assurance and review, external accreditation, and formal reporting to the University Management and the Senate, including other statutory institutions such as the Commission for University Education.
- (3) The Policy focuses on quality assurance in key areas such as: recruitment and promotion of academic staff, development and accreditation of programmes, module development, admission of students, credit waivers and transfer, examinations, internal and external review of examinations, student internship and industrial attachments, staff and student research and evaluation of teaching effectiveness among others.

- (4) The primary focus of the Academic Quality Assurance is on teaching and learning, and is aimed at promoting the enhancement of student learning. Matters related to research are included in the research policy of the university.
- (5) The Policy will enable the University to maintain a reputation as a recognized institution of higher learning providing quality education. The implementation of the Policy will lead to the attainment and maintenance of appropriate management systems for teaching and learning, and the promotion of an effective environment in which teaching and learning in the University can prosper.
- (6) The Policy will continually create opportunities for change and present a dynamic process in which new changes within teaching are expected, respected and allowed to develop, in the context of thorough evaluation and dissemination. The Policy will also enable the University to comply with the requirements of the Universities Act 2012 as well as the standards and guidelines of CUE.

4.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION FRAMEWORK

4.1 University Organs

The University organs and Management structures that will be involved in coordination of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy are as follows:

4.1.1 The Council

The University Council shall approve the policy for implementation

4.1.2 The University Senate/ Management Board

The University Management Board shall provide advisory to the VC on the scope of critical issues relating to academic quality assurance processes and reviewing of the policy. The Senate shall be responsible for public participation in academic programmes and policies and making recommendations to the University Council on regulation governing academic standards.

4.1.3 The Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA)

The Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA) shall be answerable to the Vice-Chancellor and shall, in conjunction with the other units be responsible for the following functions:

- (1) Formulate policies, procedures and guidelines for academic quality assurance in the University;
- (2) Ensure academic programmes are prepared in accordance with CUE guidelines;
- (3) Analyse the Schools' academic data including examination results, report grades, attendance figures and other specific academic areas;
- (4) Coordinate the student/lecturer quality evaluation/audit exercise in liaison with school administrators;
- (5) Create, oversee and develop the schools' use of data for the university management and auditing by external bodies;
- (6) Produce clear, concise, accurate information to support Senior Leaders in raising standards of academic performance in the University including underachieving students;
- (7) Determine the need for and arrange provision, analysis and evaluation of data and detailed reports/information such as; Module and Course enhancement plans;
- (8) Produce KPI information for Quality Assurance Board and other committees;
- (9) Produce data returns on annual basis in liaison with Academic Registrar;
- (10) Produce data when requested to the senior leadership team and outside agencies;
- (11) Assist Deans of Schools and Chairmen of academic departments with University programme data management;
- (12) Be responsible for evaluation of all course records and submission of evaluation results to the Academic Quality Assurance Board;
- (13) Line manage a team that supports Quality Academic Evaluation (QAE) and ensure compliance with CUE regulatory processes and procedures administration;
- (14) Support the Curriculum implementation with general administration tasks as directed.

The Directorate is responsible for coordinating all academic quality assurance activities in the University and is therefore responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy in conjunction with other units in the University.

4.2.2 Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Research and Innovation (DVC, ARI)

The DVC (ARI) shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

5.0 UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

(1) Recruitment and Admission

- (a) The University shall admit students on the basis of an evaluation of their potential to succeed in their studies based on their performance in KCSE or equivalent as approved by KNEC. Such admission shall be based on the minimum requirement for admission to a degree programme as approved by the University Senate and the CUE.
- (b) Placement into degree programmes in the University for government sponsored students shall be undertaken by the KUCCPS based on the capacities declared by the Schools of the University. The University shall admit self-sponsored students who have attained minimum entry requirements.
- (c) The admission of undergraduate students shall be undertaken according to the University's admission rules and regulations.
- (d) The granting of credit waiver to applicants holding Diploma Certificate including other equivalent qualifications from institutions recognized by the University Senate, shall be according to the University Policy on credit waiver and the Commission for University Guidelines on credit waiver.
- (e) The granting of credit transfers to applicants pursuing degree programmes from institutions recognized by the University Senate shall be undertaken according to the University policy on credit transfer and the Commission for University Guidelines on credit transfer.
- (f) Members of staff of South Eastern Kenya University wishing to be enrolled for undergraduate studies in the University shall not be admitted to academic programmes offered in the departments in which they are stationed.

(2) Quality Assurance in Undergraduate Studies

Quality Assurance in this area shall be considered in four dimensions as follows:

- (a) The “enabling environment” in which undergraduate education is offered;

- (b) The evaluation of academic programmes;
- (c) The review of students' academic performance and
- (d) The evaluation of undergraduate teaching.

(a) The Enabling Environment

- (i) The enabling environment encompasses a full range of services, support activities and practices that facilitate good quality teaching and learning. This shall encompass the University residences, lecture rooms and classrooms, information technology, other teaching technology, friendly Learning Management Systems, active call Centre, laboratories and studios, and library services.
- (ii) The University shall enable effective teaching and learning, through provision of health, counseling, catering and accommodation services and chaplaincy services to students. The University shall strive to ensure quality of these wide ranges of provisions where applicable since this is important in view of increasing competition among the public and private universities in Kenya.
- (iii) The University shall strive to provide adequate resources such as lecturers, books and e-learning resources, classrooms and shall comply with ratios stipulated in the standards and guidelines of the Commission for University Education.
- (iv) The University shall undertake Teaching and Learning Assessment (TLA), which shall include ratings for the condition of classrooms, Learning Management System and other features of the environment in a system for evaluation of teaching departments. Evaluation of teaching departments to be undertaken each year.
- (v) The University will also establish acceptable quality standards for supporting teaching and learning by relying on Service Level Assessments (SLAs). SLAs shall define the support services that are required by the Schools and the Directorate of ODeL, and establish the level at which these services should be provided, and allocate appropriate budgets.

(b) Evaluation of Academic Programmes

- (i) The university shall make provision for a range of controls over the quality of the Academic Programmes. These controls include:
 - a. Approval of academic programmes by the Departmental Academic Boards, School Academic Boards, Deans Committee and the University Senate.

- b. Evaluation of the Academic programme by the Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance.
 - c. External review of academic programmes by professionals and stakeholders in the field.
 - d. Accreditation of academic programmes by the Commission for University Education.
 - e. Where appropriate, interaction with, and accreditation by professional bodies and councils.
 - f. Continual oversight of academic programme structure and content by School Academic Boards.
- (ii) Formal responsibility for the implementation of academic programmes shall rest with the Chairman of Department who shall report to the Dean of the School in which the programme is housed.
- (iii) The course units shall be the building blocks of academic programmes offered by University's academic departments. The Chairman of Department shall have the responsibility for the delivery of a course unit. The control of the quality of the curriculum at the course unit level shall be achieved by:
- a. Department level consideration of course design and content, through regular Departmental Board meetings.
 - b. Motivation for new courses or for major changes in course content as directed by Departmental and/or Schools Academic Boards.
 - c. Review and moderation of course curricula, examination papers and examination results by external examiners, who shall prepare and submit a report directly to the Vice Chancellor.
 - d. The formal consideration of examination results by the Departmental and School Academic Boards and approval by Senate.
 - e. Consideration of issues of Policy by the Deans Committee and approval by Senate.
 - f. Review of the academic programmes/curricula after every cycle as it may be appropriate.
- (iv) In order for the SEKU's system of programme evaluation to meet the requirements of an integrated academic quality assurance system, the following shall be undertaken:
- a. Establish a system for systematic review of Academic Programmes and Departments.

- b. Each School's Academic Quality Assurance Committee shall submit to the Senate, an annual consolidated report on the implementation of approved academic programmes accredited by CUE.
 - c. The Deans Committee shall review the system of external examination particularly its effectiveness as a system of academic quality assurance.
- (v) The Academic Boards shall take account of more qualitative and quantitative information that indicates programme quality through student evaluations. The student evaluations shall focus on in-class and online performance of lecturers and the evaluation of tutorials, assignments and reading materials.
 - (vi) The student evaluations shall be the responsibility of Chairmen of academic Departments and Director, ODeL. The summaries on the analyses of student evaluations provided by the Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance shall be tabled to the School's Academic Boards and the Senate.
 - (vii) The University shall promote a system for mentorship of students who shall be exposed to senior, experienced academic staff in order to motivate them and enhance their enthusiastic engagement with their disciplines. Where large classes are a feature of a programme, the university shall introduce small-group opportunities so as to minimise the alienation experienced by many (especially first-year) undergraduate students.
 - (viii) Wherever possible, students at senior undergraduate levels should have the opportunity of engaging with practical and community-based issues as an integral part of their curriculum in ways that bring them into fruitful interaction with constituencies outside the university.
- (c) Student academic performance**
- (i) The key agencies for student academic performance shall be the University Senate, Academic Departments and Schools.
 - (ii) The Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance (DAQA) shall have the responsibility of monitoring the performance of students across Schools and the directorate of ODeL. The process of continual oversight of student performance by DAQA shall be a key element in academic quality assurance system.
 - (iii) The Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance shall report regularly to Deans Committee and the Senate.

- (iv) The Academic departments and directorate of ODeL shall play a key role in the area of student academic performance through assessment of coursework, setting and marking examinations and, recommending consolidated results to School Academic Boards and to the Senate.
- (v) The system of external examination shall be the principal means of quality assurance that offers comprehensive mechanism of checks and balances. External Examiners shall be required to evaluate the curriculum as a whole, making an important contribution to programme evaluation and to moderate students' academic performance by checking at least 30% of work (scripts) submitted.
- (vi) The University shall establish a requirement for a partnered approach to student learning that is recognized formally in the university. Under such a system, students to varying degrees will receive teaching in order to learn, but progressively should learn to learn for themselves. Students' responsibilities in this regard shall be made explicit in the Student's handbook, to which students shall subscribe as a condition of admission to the University.

Appointment of academic staff and heads of academic units

- (i) The university shall establish system of academic staff recruitment, which requires external advertisement of vacant positions and a selection process that requires a selection committee to shortlist candidates for interview by the University Appointments and Promotions Committee or the Council as established by the university statutes.
- (ii) The University shall ensure that the positions of Chairmen of Departments, Deans of Schools, Directors of Campuses and Institutes, Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Director of ODeL are filled as per the university statutes.
- (iii) The university shall ensure that the newly appointed Chairmen of Departments, Deans of Schools, Directors of Campuses and Institutes Director of Academic Quality Assurance and Director of ODeL of the university are orientated on their functions, roles and expected performance contracting deliverables. The orientation exercise shall be carried out within one (1) month of their appointments.

(3) Enhancing quality teaching at undergraduate level

- (a) The university shall ensure that each academic programme shall be headed by a fulltime appropriate and qualified Senior Lecturer and above with at least five (5) years university teaching experience, who shall hold a doctorate degree in the relevant field of study.
- (b) Each academic programme shall be supported by at least two (2) other appropriate fulltime academic staff members with appropriate qualifications and experience
- (c) The recruitment of staff shall take into account constitutional requirements on gender parity and disability mainstreaming.
- (d) The university shall provide academic staff with optimal opportunities for professional development and career advancement. This shall be undertaken as follows:
 - (i) The academic staff member shall plan their activities with the Chairman of Department on an annual basis.
 - (ii) The Chairman of Department shall review each year, a staff work portfolio or its equivalent and ensure this is consistent with the set performance targets of the department and the job descriptions for the academic staff members.
 - (iii) The performance of all Chairmen of academic Departments shall be reviewed annually by the Deans of the Schools and the performance of all Deans shall be reviewed annually by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (ARI).
 - (iv) The academic staff performance appraisals shall cover the fields of teaching, research, administration and other activities. Areas of weakness shall be identified and developmental strategies to address these weaknesses shall be discussed with the concerned staff member.
 - (v) The outcomes of the academic staff performance appraisals/reviews shall be recorded so that expectations are clear both to the Chairman of Department and to the academic staff member.
 - (vi) The annual performance appraisals/ reviews are important in their own right, and shall apply to all academic staff, whether or not they wish to be considered for promotion.
 - (vii) The university shall make the creative and critical engagement with teaching and learning more visible in the institution, and shall acknowledge and reward such work more effectively.

- (e) The university shall implement a benchmark of basic acceptable teaching practice that shall include the following:
- (i) The provision of clearly written course outlines, setting out what is expected of students for the complete course. These shall be availed to the students well in advance at the beginning of the course, to allow students adequate time to prepare.
 - (ii) Provision of a list of required and recommended reference materials for courses, at the beginning of the course, and the provision of this material either in the University Library (in adequate numbers of copies) or in the local bookshop.
 - (iii) A clear and well-designed system of assessment for the course, which sets out what is expected of a student, and the relative value of different coursework, continuous assessment tests and examination components.
 - (iv) Provision to all students within the first week of the semester, of the proposed dates and schedule of CATs.
 - (v) A fair and consistent approach to hearing requests for concessions and remarking of examinations and assignments and for leave of absence from lectures, tutorials and other class sessions.
 - (vi) Adherence to an agreed and published timetable for lectures, tutorials and other teaching sessions that respects the need of students to plan their class attendance and study time.
 - (vii) Adherence to the scheduled times of classes, including prompt arrival, completing lectures on time, and cancelling a scheduled class only as a last resort.
 - (viii) The availability of lecturers and other teaching staff to meet with students within the advertised office hours or online.
 - (ix) Return of work submitted for assessment within a reasonable period of time, preferably within 2 weeks, and with adequate and appropriate comments and other forms of evaluation.
 - (x) Adherence to time set for setting and moderating examination papers at departmental level.
 - (xi) Consistent marking of examination papers and effective moderation of examination marking by the lecturer concerned.
 - (xii) The university shall ensure that the above considerations are contained in academic procedures of the university.

(4) Monitoring of teaching at undergraduate level

- (a) The mechanisms of monitoring teaching shall include lecture audit forms that shall be signed by the lecturer and the class representative after each lesson. At the end of the semester, the class representative shall submit the signed lecture audit form to the Chairman of the respective Department.
- (b) In addition, the students shall be required to sign a class attendance register at the end of every lecture that they attend. The signed lecture attendance register shall be submitted to the Chairman of Department at the end of the Semester. For online students, data analytics shall be implemented by tracking student interactions and behaviors during online learning sessions and the logs shall be forwarded to Director, ODeL at the end of the Semester.
- (c) The university shall set a minimum number of course units that a lecturer can teach in any given semester, including those offered to learners in the Directorate of ODeL. No lecturer shall be allowed to teach more than 6 course units in a semester, unless authorised by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (ARI).
- (d) The maximum lecturer workload shall be 40 hours per week and shall include teaching; preparation of examination papers; marking of examination scripts; tutorials; preparation of teaching; supervision of academic work; administrative work; laboratory and laboratory preparation; and research/research assignments.
- (e) Lecturers who fail or refuse to teach a minimum number of course unit topics as indicated in the course unit descriptions/syllabus shall be subjected to a disciplinary process.
- (f) Students who fail to attend 2/3 of the lectures shall not be allowed to sit for end of semester examinations.

(5) Duration of a semester

- (a) The minimum and maximum duration of a semester shall be consistent with the requirements of CUE as approved by the University Senate. The minimum and maximum duration of a semester shall therefore be 12 and 15 weeks, respectively.
- (b) In an academic year, the minimum and maximum number of semesters shall be 2 and 4, respectively. The normal number of semesters in an academic year shall be 3 that shall be reviewed by the Senate as may be necessary or appropriate.

- (c) The Senate shall retain powers to amend the periods of semesters in an academic year but shall not reduce the duration of a semester below the minimum requirements set by CUE.

(6) Students Assessment and Examinations

- (a) The assessment and examination of students in the university shall be according to the university examination regulations and the university statutes.
- (b) The mode and process of student assessment shall be based on CATS, ordinary university examinations at the end of every semester, special examinations, supplementary examinations, retake examinations and project examinations.

(7) Administration of examinations

- (a) Examinations in the university shall be administered according to the university regulations and procedures as defined in the academic procedures and the university statutes.

(8) Academic Integrity

- (a) Matters related to academic integrity shall be handled according to the university regulations and the academic integrity policy.

(9) Industrial Attachment and Teaching Practice

- (a) All students undertaking education programmes shall go for teaching practice whereas all the students undertaking other academic programmes shall go for Industrial Attachment. This is intended to provide students with an opportunity to acquire and improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes from a real work environment.
- (b) The maximum duration for each industrial attachment or teaching practice shall be a minimum of two (2) months. The students shall proceed for industrial attachment or teaching practice at the end of third year of their studies.
- (c) Industrial attachments shall be carried out according to the Industrial attachment policy of the university and the teaching practice shall be carried out according to the teaching practice policy of the university.

(10) Beyond graduation

- (a) The university shall recognize the long term factors that constitute the key domain of the University's general quality-by-reputation particularly the employability and career success of the university graduates.
- (b) Systematic and regular destination studies (tracer studies) shall be undertaken to collect information about graduate careers and for feeding back intelligence about job market requirements and for improving the academic programmes contents.

6.0 POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

(1) Postgraduate recruitment and enrolment

- (a) The admission of postgraduate students into various postgraduate degree programmes shall be according to the university rules and regulations and statutes as defined further in the academic procedures.
- (b) The processing of applications for admission into postgraduate degree programmes shall be according to the procedures of the University as stated in the university Statutes, clause fifteen (15).
- (c) Members of staff of South Eastern Kenya University wishing to be enrolled for postgraduate studies in the university shall not be admitted to academic programmes offered in the departments in which they are stationed.

(2) Credit Transfer and Exemptions

The granting of Credit Transfer and Exemptions to applicants for candidates applying for admission into postgraduate programmes shall be according to the university policy on credit transfer and exemptions.

(3) Course Requirements

(a) Student Class Attendance

With the exception of students on the distance learning mode of study, student registered for a postgraduate degree programme shall be required to regularly attend lectures, tutorials, group discussions, seminars, among others, either on face to face mode or virtually. A candidate must have attended an equivalent of 2/3 of lectures to be allowed to sit for the end of semester examinations.

(b) Research proposal

- (i) Candidates registered for a Master's degree programme shall be required to prepare and submit a concept paper and ultimately a research proposal after completing coursework.
- (ii) Candidates applying to be registered for a PhD degree programme shall be required to prepare and submit a draft research proposal.

(c) Obligation of the lecturer

The lecturers responsible for the delivery of postgraduate academic programmes shall have the following obligations:

- (i) Conduct research to obtain the most current knowledge, ideas, tools, methodologies and processes to be shared with the students.
- (ii) Facilitate critical thinking and development of analytical capabilities of the students.
- (iii) Introduce students to key topics and guide students in problem-solving assignments.
- (iv) Monitor the progress of each student and advice on the corrective action where progress of the students is unsatisfactory.
- (v) Regularly review the progress of each of the candidate and provide feedbacks on the research carried out by the students.
- (vi) Ensure teaching meets the highest academic standards possible.
- (vii) Set and mark continuous assessment tests and the final examinations.
- (viii) Guide students on group discussions and seminar presentations.

(4) Postgraduate learning

- (a) The university shall promote effective teaching and supervision of postgraduate students.
- (b) Effective guidance at the postgraduate level shall focus not only on the intellectual input, but also on the "life skills" for successful research activity.
- (c) The university shall recognize the need for a focus on mentorship in general, and the enhancement of the ability of academic staff to provide such mentorship.
- (d) The postgraduate education at both Masters and Doctoral levels shall involve either (i) coursework, research and examination or (ii) thesis only.

- (e) The university shall establish a system of formal agreements between postgraduate students and their supervisors. Such agreements shall set out expectations of the supervisors (frequency of meetings, return time for draft work, levels of practical support, intellectual property rights) and of the research student (commitment to the research topic, participation in the life of the academic department, ethics and the avoidance of plagiarism, acquisition of additional skills).
- (f) The agreements stated above shall serve to limit the general liability of a supervisor and of the university.
- (g) The university shall give a special focus on the quality of life of postgraduate students by providing social and recreational facilities to postgraduate student community.

(5) Postgraduate Examination and Assessment

- (a) The postgraduate examinations and assessments shall be undertaken according to the university examination rules and common regulations and as per the university statutes.
- (b) The assessments shall be carried in the form of:
 - (i) CATS that shall be done throughout the first and second semester;
 - (ii) End of the Semester Examinations that shall be given at the end of every semester for each of the course units taught during the semester;
 - (iii) supplementary examinations that shall be given to candidates who fails the end of semester examinations;
 - (iv) special examinations that shall be given to students who fail to sit for ordinary end of semester examination due to reasons that are acceptable to the School Academic Board and the University Senate, and
 - (v) Thesis or research project, where applicable, that shall be examined at the end of the study period.
- (c) The grading of the postgraduate course units shall be according to university examination rules and regulations as expounded in the University statutes.
- (d) PhD students shall publish 2 journal publications and Masters students 1 journal publication in refereed journals, based on their thesis or project research.

(6) Examination of Thesis and Project Reports:

The examination of thesis and research projects shall be according to university rules and regulations as expounded in the University statutes.

(7) Reviewing postgraduate programmes

The university shall ensure postgraduate programmes are reviewed at the end of every four year cycle by the School and Department in which the programme is offered.

The university shall allocate resources for the review of postgraduate programmes at the end of a defined cycle period.

7.0 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE

- (1) In recognition of the advancement in artificial intelligence and its application in academic and research, the university shall put in place policies and regulations to mainstream and control the use of AI in academic and research activity.
- (2) The university will adopt and introduce systems that will help to control limit use of AI that may compromise quality in academic and research activities;

8.0 IMPLEMENTING THE ACADEMIC QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

(1) A system approach

- (a) The academic quality assurance policy shall be integrated into a SEKU's Quality Assurance System that meet both university's internal requirements, and the requirements of CUE.
- (b) The policy shall rely on the role of the Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance, the Senate and of a number of key committees of the Senate and shall be effected by means of internal quality reviews, which are based on departmental self-evaluations/assessments and peer assessments.
- (c) Internal quality reviews shall be conducted by panels that include external advisors appointed by the Vice-Chancellor on the advice of the Dean of the respective School in which the programme is offered.
- (d) The university shall establish appropriate quality assurance mechanism that shall have the responsibility of ensuring effective implementation of the Academic Quality Assurance Policy of the university, including regular review and updating of the system.

(2) Review of academic programmes and academic institutions

- (a) The university shall conduct Institutional and Academic Programmes self assessments according to CUE Guidelines for Self-Assessment. Such assessments shall culminate in the preparation of Self-Assessment reports (SARs).
- (b) The Academic Programmes Self Assessments shall focus on the review of academic programmes offered in various Schools of the University.
- (c) The Institutional Self Assessments shall focus on the review of Schools and Departments of the University. Both Institutional and Academic Programmes Assessments shall be carried out in five year cycles or as it may be appropriate and shall be organized so that assessments and or reviews are staggered and distributed between Schools to ensure that individual workloads are appropriately spread.

(3) Self-Assessment and Review of Academic Programmes

- (a) The Academic Programmes shall be subjected to periodic reviews and or self assessments as per the requirements of the Commission for University Education (CUE) and Universities Act 2012.
- (b) The reviews of Academic Programmes shall concentrate on the management and delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula offered in various schools of the university.

(4) Self-Assessment and Review of Academic Departments and Schools

Reviews of Academic Departments and Schools shall focus on the learning and teaching environment – the day-to-day quality of intellectual life in a department or school, and the ways in which this environment constitutes the quality of courses offered by the department or school, of research, and of community service.

The Institutional and Academic programmes review or self-assessments shall be undertaken by a Self-Assessment Committee appointed by the Vice Chancellor in consultation with the Dean of the School and the Senate. Such a committee shall include at least two members of staff of the department or school under review, Dean of the School and at least two professors from other schools of the university.

(5) Implementation of the policy

Accountability for quality assurance shall rest with Senate, Schools and Departmental Academic Boards.

The primary responsibility for academic quality assurance in the University shall rest with the Vice Chancellor.

The day to day implementation of the academic quality assurance policy shall be overseen by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic, Research and Innovation).

The Directorate of Academic Quality Assurance shall oversee and spearhead the implementation of this policy in the University.

The University shall also constitute Self-Assessment Committees for the institutional (Departments, Schools and Directorate of ODeL) self-assessment and academic programmes self-assessment according the Commission for University Education Guidelines for SelfAssessments (2014).

The University commits to review this policy from time to time to be consistent with the changing trends in higher education in the country and abroad. Such a review shall be undertaken by a Committee appointed by the Vice Chancellor in consultation with the University Senate and the Council.

8.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION, REPORTING AND LEARNING

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) provides regular and timely information in support of evidence-based decision-making serving as a key driver towards the realization of an organization's goals. The University shall set-up an effective and results-based monitoring and evaluation system that will guarantee continuous monitoring using the identified indicators and evaluation.

8.1 Monitoring

The DVC, Academic, Research and Innovation (DVC, ARI) will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. The monitoring process will ensure that the established

performance targets on academic quality assurance are met by each unit and appropriate feedback for continual improvement are recommended. The University shall ensure that:

- (1) Effective instruments and indicators are used to evaluate whether the academic quality assurance objectives have been achieved.
- (2) Constraints and challenges in the academic quality assurance process have been identified.
- (3) Ways to improve academic quality have been devised.
- (4) Lessons learnt from the process have been documented and used in planning future public participation initiatives.

8.2 Evaluation

The Vice-Chancellor will ensure coordination of periodic evaluation is done. The evaluation of the policy will focus on efficiency, effectiveness and measurement of actual performance against set targets arising from activities derived from the policy objectives. The differences, if any, will be identified and appropriate recommendations and intervention measures recommended.

8.3 Reporting and Learning

The Director, Academic Quality Assurance shall prepare and submit reports of academic quality assurance exercises as and when required. The information prepared includes progress made, challenges encountered and identified emerging issues. This information can also be used to promote a culture of learning and application of lessons learned. The lessons learnt shall be considered at the time of review of the policy.

8.4 Review

The policy will be reviewed after every five (5) years or earlier as need arises in order to address emerging issues and with an aim to enhance efficient delivery of effective outcomes.

REFERENCES

Universities Act No. 42 of 2012

Universities (Amendment) Act of 2016, 2020

University Regulations 2014

Statutes of South Eastern Kenya University (2022)

University Examination Rules and Regulations

CUE Guidelines for Self-Assessment (2014)

CUE Universities Standards and Guidelines (2014)