National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	Policy on Accreditation in the National Open University of Nigeria
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/032
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Academic Planning
Date of Approval:	7th October, 2024
Date of Next Review:	October, 2027

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Accreditation is the process by which an agency or organization evaluates and recognizes an institution as meeting standards necessary for providing a particular service. It is the external recognition of an institution's adherence to a set of standards to perform an activity or hold a certain status.

Accreditation gives confidence in your standards and your ability to comply with regulations and laws to external regulators, customers or service users. This, inturn, leads to more business or more engagements.

The National Universities Commission (NUC) has the statutory mandate to accredit academic programmes in all Nigerian Universities. The process is designed to determine whether universities meet the Minimum Academic Standard (MAS) and whether universities achieve its mission and stated objectives.

Currently, the university is in transition from the Benchmark Academic Standards (BMAS) to Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) as proposed by the National Universities Commission (NUC). In accordance with the NUC guidelines, there are several stages in the accreditation process. These are *application, resource verification, accreditation and re-accreditation*.

2.0 Purpose

The policy on accreditation in the National Open University of Nigeria is aimed at ensuring that the university achieves its mission of providing high quality, functional, cost- effective, flexible learning which adds life-long value to quality education for all who seek knowledge. It will also ensure that we actualize the university's vision of being one of the foremost ODL institutions.

3.0   Scope

This policy covers all programmes offered by the university ranging from   diploma, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees.

4.0   Definitions

4.1 Accreditation: The process of officially recognizing a programme as having a particular status or being qualified to be offered in a university.

4.2 Academic: Education, especially studying in schools and universities.

4.3 Benchmark: A standard or point of reference against which a programme may be compared.

4.4 Core: The central or most important part of a programme.

4.5 Criteria: A principle or standard by which a programme may be judged or decided.

4.6 Commission: Institution assigned to have been given the official job of finding information about something or controlling some committees.

4.7 Minimum: The least or smallest amount or quantity possible, attainable, or required for a programme.

4.8 Re-accreditation: The re-establishment or re-statement (usually on a fixed periodic cycle) of the status, legitimacy or appropriateness of an institution's programme.

4.9 Resource: A stock or materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by an organisation in order to function effectively.

4.10 Standard: A level of quality or attainment for a programme.

4.11 Verification: The process of establishing the true, accuracy, or validity of a programme.

5.0 Principles

Accreditation is used to evaluate whether an institution clearly specifies educational objectives that are consistent with its mission and are appropriate in the light of the degrees it awards. Programme accreditation ensures that students are trained in a manner that, equip them with the critical skills and aptitudes that will enable them to analyse, appreciate and theorise on concepts in their chosen field of study and the connection of these to personal, social affairs and national objectives.

6.0 Policy Statements

6.1   All degree programmes offered by the university must be subjected to the NUC accreditation process.

6.2   No student can be admitted into a programme that fails NUC Accreditation. However, students already on the programme shall be allowed to graduate.

6.3   Accreditation is not permanent. Programmes that have full accreditation status must undergo a new process of accreditation after 5 years. Where a programme has interim accreditation status, it must undergo re-accreditation after 2 years.

7.0 Policy Implementation

Accreditation decisions are based solely on the policies and procedures as defined in the Accreditation Procedures Manual. In accordance with the NUC guidelines, there are several stages in the accreditation process. These are application, resource verification, accreditation and re- accreditation.

7.1 Programme Application

I.   The department must first fill the NUC application form and attach all relevant information that would make the proposal viable for execution

II.   The application must be presented at the Faculty Board and minutes of proceedings attached to the application for further processing in the University Senate.

III. If validated, the proceedings of the Senate Minutes in addition to the Minutes Decision Extract will be added to the application forms and forwarded to the NUC.

IV. NUC will respond appropriately while proposing a date and the financial implications for the exercise.

V. If the application is successful, the NUC will advise the university that a resource verification exercise should be undertaken under the NUC supervision and a recommended date proposed for the exercise.

7.2 Resource Verification

Provided that the resource verification is successful, the university may advertise for admissions into the programme immediately. The following are documents required for the exercise:

I. Completed Application Forms for eEach Proposed Programme;
II. Signed Senate and Governing Council Extracts respectively approving and ratifying the establishment of the programme;
III. University Academic Brief, University Law, Master Plan, Strategic Plan Documents;
IV. Evidence of review of the University's Strategic Policy Documents to accommodate the establishment of the proposed programme.

V. Evidence of constitution of Faculty PG Board, Departmental PG Committee and Management Committees, and so on for the proposed programme and evidence of their meetings (minutes).

VI. Staff Files for the staff of the proposed programme with CVs, Letters of Appointment, Qualifications and other relevant credentials

VII. Staff Files for Visiting Professors and Part -Time Lecturers and Academics on sabbatical from other universities should contain letters of approval and release from their primary institutions of employment, duly signed by their respective Vice-Chancellors.

VIII. The Head of the Department for the proposed programmes are to ensure that existing staff for the proposed programmes are seated in their respective offices for verification purposes;

IX. Staff Personnel Lists for the proposed programme containing the following information: - Name, Designation, Qualifications, Date of First Appointment, Status i.e. Full Time, Adjunct (from another dept in the university), Sabbatical or Part Time/Visiting (from another university). Staff Personnel Lists should be grouped (i.e. Academic, Non-Academic – Administrative, Help Desk/Learner Support, Technical ICT Support, etc.);

X. File(s) containing evidence of University Training Policy/evidence of Staff (Academic, Non-Academic, Technical etc) Development (with emphasis on ODL skills acquisition etc) (Training – Local and International, conferences, workshops, further degrees etc) *A stamped and signed List of Staff for the proposed programmes who have benefitted from*

the Staff Development Programme (Name, Designation, Nature/Date of Training etc) should be prepared with copies of documented supporting evidence);

XI. Information on Budget allocations for the Business School and proposed Programme;

XII. University Open and Distance Learning Policy Document;

XIII. Course materials for all main courses for the proposed programme in the required mixed media formats (print and electronic versions);

XIV. Practical Handbook(s) (as applicable);

XV. Hard copies of Handbooks (University, Postgraduate School, Business School, Programme Specific Student Handbooks);

XVI. General/Programme Specific Student Study Guides;

XVII. Comprehensive lists of physical facilities/structures etc within and outside the university available for the takeoff of the proposed programme (stamped and signed by Head of Department. Memorandum of Understanding (-MoU) should be presented for non- NOUN facilities to be utilized;

XVIII. Memoranda of Understanding with one or more courier companies (e.g. UPS) for the delivery of course materials to learners;

XIX. List(s) of Central and Departmental Library Holdings (i.e. Library books, Journals, e-books and e-journals stamped and signed by Head Librarian. Information on sitting capacities and student population serviced, e-library facilities, subscriptions etc. also required);

XX. Curriculum for each Proposed Programme (stamped and signed by Head of Department of the programme).

XXI. Evidence of the existence of a Curriculum Design/ Review Committee made up of experienced persons in ODL.

After resource verification, a programme is allowed to run for 2 years after which it will require accreditation before students will be eligible to graduate and their programmes recognised as a nationally accepted certificate.

7.3. ACCREDITATION

The accreditation exercise involves re-evaluating the programme - its stipulated objectives, its resources and the qualifications of those coordinating the programme. There is a checklist for evaluation, however; the list is also subject to modification as is required to meet national objectives of the curriculum and national education interests. Below is the

list of criteria for which each programme is evaluated as it pertains to accreditation depending on the competencies required.

1	Application form for establishment of the programme.
2	Evidence of Resource Verification.
3	Technical report of last accreditation visit to the programme (where applicable).
4	List of academic staff with their qualifications and area of specialization as well as assigned courses for facilitation.
5	Tutor Marked Assignment/Continuous Assessment Scores
6	Results released to students.
7	Past question papers with marking guides
8	Evidence of external moderation of examination papers and marking guides
9	Used answer booklets
10	Project essays with evidence/reports of external moderation.
11	List of Non-Teaching Staff with their qualification/designation serving the programme
12	Student lists, level by level.
13	Student files (at Study Centres).

14	Evidence of robust Information and Guidance (I&AG) (at Study Centres).
15	Evidence of students help desk (at the Study Centres).
16	Evidence of facilitation that meets basic ODL standards
17	Evidence of Learning Management System (LMS) and interactive Self-Learning Materials (SLF).
18	Digital Language Laboratory for All Language-based programmes.
19	Evidence of Science Laboratory Experience for all Science-based programmes
20	Evidence of Farm/Agric Extension Services/Experience for Agric-based programmes (at Study Centres).
21	Evidence of Science Teaching (at Study Centres).
22	Evidence of Micro-Teaching (at Study Centres).
23	Evidence of students entrepreneurship skills development (at Study Centres).
24	Evidence that course materials are less than 5 years old (all SLMs at Study Centres and in the Headquarters).
25	Evidence of ICT support to students for the programmes.
26	Evidence of graduate tracer and employer's report.
27	Clearly stated philosophy of the programme that aligns with NOUN mission and vision (staff and students of the programme should be familiar with this philosophy).
28	Current library holdings for the programme (at Department and Study Centre) with evidence that these are accessible to students of the programme.
29	Evidence of staff development.
30	Evidence of collaboration with other departments/institutions and organizations.
31	Evidence of Quality Assurance mechanism, also stated in students handbook.
32	Minutes of Quality Assurance Committee Meetings.
33	Minutes of Departmental Board Meetings where academic matters related to the programme were discussed.

34	List of e-library database with resources for the programme (at Study Centre and Headquarters).
35	All physical facilities are well maintained: Halls, Offices/Conveniences for staff and students are kept clean
36	Sample videos for courses in the programme (there should be evidence that students have access to them).
37	Video recording studios
38	Computer laboratory accessible to students
39	Mathematics laboratory available to students of mathematics and physics education
40	Counseling log book at Study Centres.
41	Enough Counselors (1 per 150 students at Study Centre
42	Student handbook for the programme
43	Curriculum for the programme showing evidence of innovation (courses are above minimum standard in the NUC BMAS & CCMAS) there should be evidence of compliance with the BMAS & CCMAS.
44	Evidence of group counseling hall or evidence of functional e-counseling platform
45	Evidence of fire-fighting equipment in strategic places. These are extinguishers and sand buckets.
46	List of laboratory attendants and their qualifications for all laboratories listed for the programme.

47	Senate minutes and decision extract approving establishment/re-establishment of the programme

A programme that is due for accreditation is notified by the Directorate of Academic Planning to prepare for this exercise by doing the following;

1. Training the concerned department on how to fill the Self Study Form SSF and ensuring that they do so.
2. Writing the NUC to inform them of the Universities readiness to present the course for resource verification.
3. Mock Accreditation is carried out by the Directorate of Academic Planning on behalf of the University to ensure that the programme is ready for NUC Accreditation.
4. NUC then responds with its proposed date to undertake the exercise and the financial implication of the exercise.

7.3 RE-ACCREDITATION

Programmes are required to return for re-accreditation provided they meet 1 of 3 assessment grades which include the following;

- *Passed: W*ith this result a programme is granted a tenure period of 5 years to continue to admit students and carry on with its activities. After 5 years the programme must undergo a new process of accreditation.

- *Interim:* This result is given to a programme that may have registered an average result but is lacking in certain key areas that require immediate improvement. To this end the programme is required to undergo re-accreditation within 2 calendar years, after which a repeat interim result will result in the assumed failure of the programme and the university will be required to close admissions into the programme until the programme meets full accreditation. The current enrolled students however may be allowed to graduate.

- *Failed:* The programme is prevented from seeking new admission until it meets appropriate accreditations benchmarks.

The processes of re-accreditation are as follows;

1. The Directorate of Academic Planning (DAP) writes to NUC informing them about the programmes that are due for accreditation.
2. The NUC replies the university stating the cost implication and the number of programmes due for accreditation.
3. The DAP informs the university of the NUC responses and seeks approval for the release of funds for payment.
4. The DAP processes that payment and forwards the funds to the NUC.
5. The DAP notifies the affected departments of the upcoming exercise and requires/requests them to prepare accordingly, specifically guiding them on how to fill the SSF forms.

6. The Dap serves as liaison between the NUC and the university while ensuring that Protocol, Transport Unit and the various Academic Departments are doing their duties appropriately to ensure a successful exercise.

8.0 Sanctions

Any Head of Department or staff that violates this policy shall be referred to the Staff

Disciplinary Committee of the University for appropriate sanction.

9. Policy Alignment

Course   accreditation   guidelines   in   Nigerian   tertiary   schools **https://exced.ucoz.com/index/course_accreditation_guidelines/0-145**

Manual for accreditation procedures of academic programmes in Nigerian Universities (MAP) https://docplayer.net/17891671-Manual-for-accreditation-procedures-of-academic-programmes-in-nigerian-universities-map.html

10.0 Team of Developers

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