

# GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE



**MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY**

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## **Preamble**

Quality has become one of the most critical factors in determining long-term success and survival (Sahney, Banwet, & Karunes, 2003). This is especially true of mainstream educational institutions. For instance, the decision of a parent as to which university to send his or her child is based on a number of factors, but perhaps the most important is the perceived quality of the institution and the graduate it produces. Educational institutions must therefore, improve the quality of their services in order to attract clients in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Quality assurance is a planned and systematic review process of an institution's activities to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education and scholarship are being met, maintained and enhanced. Quality assurance ensures that our graduates meet the standards and expectations of employers, professional bodies and the society at large. Differences in quality among institutions of higher learning are not uncommon. This has been demonstrated by some employers who prefer to employ graduates from certain institutions whose standards they perceive to be high as opposed to those from institutions whose standards they perceive to be low. It therefore, goes without saying that if Midlands State University graduates are to gain national and international recognition, we should promote a culture of high quality in our institution.

# **1. Recruitment of Teaching and Non- teaching staff**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The recruitment of high quality staff is crucial to the objectives and continued success of the University as a major teaching and research institution. This policy seeks to facilitate the attraction and selection of the most suitably qualified and experienced person, in a fair and consistent manner. The successful candidate must seek to achieve the University's vision, mission and core values.

## **1.2 Recruitment Policy**

- 1.2.1 All vacancies are advertised locally and internationally to ensure the widest possible pool of applicants. This includes advertisement on the University's notice board and web page. In the event that the University is unable to attract applicants through advertisement, headhunting is done in critical shortage departments.
- 1.2.2 Ideally a post should be filled in within a period of six weeks to ensure that posts are filled in timeously.
- 1.2.3 No post is advertised unless it is budgeted for.
- 1.2.4 All requisitions for new posts are submitted before the Planning Committee. Ideally six copies of applications must be submitted.
- 1.2.5 The selection process is conducted by means of an interview through a prescribed committee see Section 24(1) of the Midlands State University Act.
- 1.2.6 Ideally, three candidates should be short listed for a post.
- 1.2.7 Regret letters are issued out to all short listed candidates who would have been unsuccessful. This is be done soon after the successful candidate has accepted the offer.

### **1.3 Recruitment Procedure**

- 1.3.1 Departments declare that there is a vacant post by filling a staff requisition form (AP 15) and submitting it to the Human Resources Section.
- 1.3.2 Human Resources Section ascertains whether the post is budgeted for. This is done in liaison with the planning office.
- 1.3.3 The adverts are scrutinized to check whether they contain and comply with the University grading system. However, care is taken to ensure that no distortion occurs to the advertisement.

### **1.4 Selection Procedure**

- 1.4.1 The Human Resources Office receives all applications, record them and compile summary tables. These are forwarded to the respective departments for preliminary short listing.
- 1.4.2 Departments conduct their preliminary short-listing of candidates and return both the tables and applications to the Human Resources Office within three working days.
- 1.4.3 The Human Resources Section compiles a summary table for the final short-listing meeting. It normally should be done within a period of three days.
- 1.4.4 The Human Resources Section causes the short-listing committee to meet for the purpose of ratifying the final pool of candidates to be invited for interviews.
- 1.4.5 The Human Resources Section causes the Appointments Board to meet for the purpose of interviewing short-listed candidates. Interviews are conducted and the most qualified and skilled candidate is be selected for the vacant post. This is done within a period of five working days.
- 1.4.6 Interview minutes are produced within a period of five 48 hours.
- 1.4.7 Appointment letters are issued out to the successful candidate after the chairperson has signed the minutes.

## **1.5 Training**

### **1.5.1 Introduction**

The Human Resources Development office coordinates all training and induction of MSU staff under the guidelines of the Training and Development Policy and Procedure outlined below. This policy is made out of the University's own interest to train and develop its staff as a continuous process to raise the level of professional and technical competence for increased efficiency in its operations. While the University encourages training and development of its staff for self-betterment, it must be emphasized that the interests of the University and relevance of the training is paramount.

### **1.5.2 Scope**

The policy seeks to identify and assess the professional and technical needs of individuals in relation to the needs of the University, and where possible to organize training programmes to meet these needs. Under this document training refers to both short and long term courses.

### **1.5.3 Policy**

- 1.5.3.1** New members of staff are required to go through an induction-training programme.
- 1.5.3.2** Members of Staff serving their probationary period are not eligible for long-term courses (courses that run for more than one year) but can be considered for short-term courses.
- 1.5.3.3** Permission is sought by every member of staff to proceed for training (also apply to Academic Staff). Non –Teaching staff may apply through the Pursuance of academic Studies Committee.
- 1.5.3.4** Non-Teaching staff are reimbursed expenses incurred on acquisition of the relevant professional qualifications. Reimbursement may be done upon completion of either a recognised part of a professional qualification e.g. C.I.S Part A, or upon completion of a full qualification.
- 1.5.3.5** If a member of staff leaves the University during the course of the study or before completion of the bond he/ she is required to pay the balance of the loan computed starting from the date of completion plus compound interest at the current market rate.

#### **1.5.4 Academic Staff Training**

- 1.5.4.1** All members of staff may proceed on training whether locally or abroad only when the necessary approval has been granted through the Staff Development Committee.
- 1.5.4.2** All members of staff who have secured training opportunities on full-time basis are required to apply for study leave, through their heads of Departments, before they can proceed on such training. Final authority to proceed is granted by the Vice-Chancellor
- 1.5.4.3** Any member of staff proceeding for study locally or abroad under the full sponsorship of the University is bonded for a period twice as much as the period of study undertaken.
- 1.5.4.4** Any member of staff who is tenured may be granted a leave of absence if they have secured a training opportunity on full-time basis and it runs for a period of more than one year.
- 1.5.4.5** For new employees an induction-training programme is organised internally.
- 1.5.4.6** For employees promoted to senior positions, workshops or seminars are conducted and these are done within departments or faculties in order to orient them to their tasks.
- 1.5.4.7** Performance appraisal of both teaching and non-teaching staff is done on an annual basis in order to identify a skills gap. The departmental heads in conjunction with the Human Resources I conducts these in order to identify training needs.
- 1.5.4.8** In-house training intended for skills acquisition, improving or upgrading is done in the University. The Staff Development Committee, making use of the existing manpower may organise training.
- 1.5.4.9** Induction programme for Teaching Assistants designed to prepare them to deliver lecturers is conducted every semester to equip them with the necessary pedagogical skills.

## **1.6 Staff Promotion**

### **1.6.1 Promotional Policy and Procedures**

#### **1.6.1.1 Introduction**

In an attempt to motivate and retain a unique cohort of employees, the University recognises all performers and rewards them commensurately. All promotions are justified on the basis of the performance of the employee concerned.

### **1.6.2 Promotion Procedure for Teaching Staff**

All promotions for teaching staff are in keeping with section 6.6 of Ordinance 3 headed “promotion procedures” in the Midlands State University General Information and Regulations Year Book.

**1.6.2.1** The Human Resources Section initiates a memorandum calling for applications for promotion.

**1.6.2.2** A member of staff wishing to apply for promotion fills in the appropriate section of the Application for Promotion form AP31 and submits to the Chairperson of the Department.

**1.6.2.3** Chairpersons of Departments complete the appropriate sections of Form AP31, cause the Departmental Promotions Board to convene and submit the applications to the Dean of Faculty.

**1.6.2.4** Deans of Faculties complete the appropriate sections of Form AP31 and cause the Faculty Promotions Board to convene. The Faculty Administrators submit the applications to the Human Resource office together with the applicant’s

**1.6.2.5** The Human Resources Department causes the Academic Staff Promotions Board to convene and consider candidates for promotion as spelt out according to Academic Staff Grading Tenure and Promotions ordinance 3 Section 6.5.

**1.6.2.6** The criterion for granting promotion as spelt out in Ordinance 3 is also guided by the following number of publications;

- Senior lecturer- eight publications in refereed journals
- Associate professor – fourteen to sixteen publications in refereed journals
- Full professor- twenty to twenty five publications in refereed journals and books are also considered.
- One publication in a refereed journal is considered for the award of tenure.

**1.6.2.7** These publications are sent for external assessment by credible senior academics in the field of study. The applicant is informed thereafter of the outcome of their applications.

### **1.6.3 Promotion Procedure for Non-Teaching Staff**

#### **Promotion**

**1.6.3.1** The Human Resources Department initiates a memorandum calling for applications for promotion or place an internal advertisement for all vacant promotional posts.

**1.6.3.2** The Head of Department completes the appropriate sections of the AP9 form.

**1.6.3.3** The promotions committee has the final authority in all promotion matters.

## **1.7 Advancement**

Accelerated advancement applies in cases where the Supervisor or Head of Department (initiated by head of Department), intends to promote a member of his department on the basis of;

**1.7.1** Evidence of exceptional merit.

**1.7.2** Evidence of undertaking tasks beyond those normally assigned to the post in question.

**1.7.3** The Head of Department completes the appropriate sections of the AP9 form together with the candidate's job description. The job description

should either demonstrate exceptional merit on the part of the appropriate or additional responsibilities, which however would not merit an increase in the establishment or the upgrading of the post.

**1.7.4** Accelerated advancement granted by the Non-Teaching Staff promotions committee should be within the member of staff's own grade and not more than three notches.

**1.7.5** The promotions committee has the final authority in all promotion matters.

## **1.8 Contractual Obligations**

### **1.8.1 Contact Leave**

**1.8.1.1** Is given to tenured staff.

**1.8.1.2** Individual terms and conditions of service clearly set out the requirements for this entitlement.

**1.8.1.3** The University determines the allowance for contact from time to time.

**1.8.1.4** Upon return from the leave a member is required to submit a report to the Vice Chancellor.

### **1.8.2 Sabbatical Leave**

**1.8.2.1** This type of leave is for permanent and tenured academic staff and their terms and conditions of service set the requirements.

**1.8.2.2** The period is 240 days and the University issues staff dependants with travel tickets.

### **1.8.3 Employee Relations**

#### **1.8.3.1 Introduction**

The University strives to maintain a stable and amicable employee relations climate through promoting a culture of dialogue and discourse as opposed to antagonism.

#### **1.8.3.2 Scope**

Staff relations are catered for under various staff associations and employees may choose to be a member of an appropriate association.

The Associations are:

- i) Midlands State University Lecturers Association (MSULA)
- ii) Midlands State University Non-Teaching Staff Association (MSUN TSA)
- iii) Workers' Committee (made up of representatives from Management, Lecturing, Administrative, Secretarial, Clerical, Technical and Operative Staff)
- iv) University Works Council (a committee that is made up of equal management and employee representatives)

### **1.8.4 Disciplinary Procedures**

#### **1.8.4.1 Scope**

- i) The University draws its disciplinary procedure from the Midlands State University Code of Conduct of 2005.
- ii) The prime reason for disciplinary action is to encourage better conduct and induce a sense of responsibility in order to make the employee a more efficient and productive worker. Thus disciplinary action should be initially, educational, constructive and corrective and thereafter punitive.
- iii) The Human Resources Department is charged with maintaining sound employee relations at the workplace and must be consulted by everyone at all times.

## **2.0 Student selection, admission and registration**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The Academic Registry Department is responsible for a number of activities relating to quality assurance. The Department provides information and advice across the University to support the University's core business of teaching, learning, research and community service.

The services offered by the Department include:

- student enrolment
- student registration
- student statistics
- examination administration
- committees secretariat
- monitoring student database
- advisory services relating to academic rules and regulations
- student general enquiries
- issuing certificates and academic transcripts

The Department has four sections viz: Admissions and Academic Affairs Office, Post Graduate Office, Student Record and Registration Office and Examinations Office

### **2.2 Admissions and Academic Affairs Office**

**2.2.1** The Admissions Office advertises for programmes on offer through the print media and University website, stating the entry requirements for each programme, and application procedures. Applicants submit their applications and the applicant's details are captured for selection.

**2.2.2** Outreach programmes and visits to other gatherings.

**2.2.3** Information on programmes on offer get to prospective applicants through The Admissions Committee oversees the admissions process to ensure that students who satisfy the minimum entry requirements are admitted into the University. The Admissions Office works closely with Chairpersons of teaching departments and Executive Deans of Faculties. Successful applicants are notified using the following communication channels:- print media, radio, University Website and Offer letters.

## **2.3 Student Records and Registration Office**

Procedures for registration promote transparency and ensure that quality information is released to stakeholders.

Registration procedures are outlined in the registration brochure (Appendix 1)

Registration information makes available accurate data for:

- module registration
- shortage planning of enrolments
- finance forecasting
- creating data-base for examinations and venues
- researchers to get relevant information ( Information in our database helps in tacking down students and their profiles)

Accurate registration procedures enable appropriate Information Technology to be implemented as is the case with “Changamire” soft ware.

**2.3.1** The Office handles all issues related to student registration and records management. The office registers students who meet the stipulated registration requirements i.e. payment of the requisite fees and completion of module registration. Students who complete the registration process are given a registration confirmation receipt and a student identity card.

**2.3.2** A number of forms are available for students who:

**2.3.2.1** want to defer studies

**2.3.2.2** want to resume studies

**2.3.2.3** want to change programmes during the first two weeks of the first semester in Level 1.

**2.3.2.4** want to amend registration details

**2.3.3** The Office is also responsible for the generation of statistics for both internal and external reporting. Monthly statistical returns are submitted to the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. Daily statistics are produced during the registration period giving details of students who have registered by faculty, mode of entry into the University, gender and programme etc.

**2.3.4** Student funding issues are also handled jointly by Student Records and Registration Office and the Student Accounts Office in the Bursar’s Department. Processing of cadetship forms from the Ministry of Higher and

Tertiary Education is done by Student Records and Registration Office. The Student Accounts Office deals with payment queries and submits schedules of students who receive Government financial assistance.

- 2.3.5 A Student Handbook giving information on University academic policies and procedures is being prepared as part of information dissemination. Level 1.1 students and returning students have received a brochure outlining registration procedures at the beginning of this academic year.
- 2.3.6 The Information Technology Services Department is working closely with Academic Registry Department to develop the admissions module, registration module, and the examinations module to manage student data.

## **3.0 Faculty and Departmental Governance**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to outline the administrative functions of the Faculty and Departments that enhance quality in teaching and research. Both levels operate as independent units under university statutes and ordinances but at the same time they are complimentary to each as well as with other units and departments in the university. The paper examines briefly functions of the Department then moves on to the Faculty. These are drawn from Ordinances and Statutes in the Year Book.

### **3.1 The Faculty**

**3.2.1** Faculty Administration is guided by Ordinance 4 of the university which clearly spells out duties of the Executive Dean and the Administrator as well as the Faculty Board. Each of these is briefly described below:

3.2.1.1 The Executive Dean is head of the Faculty and is assisted by the Faculty Administrator.

3.2.1.2 The Executive Dean is responsible among other things, for the supervision of the Chairs in the Faculty: to ensure teaching, research and university service is carried out well. He/she also carries out duties as delegated by the Vice Chancellor.

**3.2.2** Full details of the Executive Dean's duties are as spelt out in Ordinance 4. He/she manages the Faculty through four main units.

3.2.2.1 The Faculty Board which among other things, lays down policy on teaching, university service and research, It also carries out duties as delegated by the Senate The Faculty Board is composed of all lecturers in the Faculty and is serviced by the Faculty Administrator: Full details of the Board's functions are spelt out in the statutes in the year book. It meets twice or thrice per year as laid down in the university calendar. Faculty Board among other things, receives reports of Faculty Representatives in the various university committees.

3.2.2.2 The Faculty Planning Committee is the executive arm of the Faculty Board. Its membership comprises all Chairs and Professors in the Faculty. It guides the Dean in the day to day affairs of the Faculty, scrutinizes regulations, examination promotions, tenure etc. Full details of its function are spelt out in the statutes in the year book. This Committee meets regularly as and when required to deliberate on

critical issues that are tabled from the different departments. It is serviced by the Faculty Administrator.

3.2.2.3 The Faculty Board of Examiners is an important body whose composition is determined by the statutes in the yearbook. It peruses all examination results presented to it from the different departments. It is serviced by the Faculty Administrator.

3.2.2.4 A fourth Committee is the Higher Degrees Committee. It supervises applications, regulates supervision and examination of higher degrees i.e MPhil, PHD and DPhil.

### **3.3 The Faculty Administrator**

All Faculty Committees are serviced by the Faculty Administrator. The Faculty Administrator implements policies and decisions made by the academic arm of the Faculty.

The Administrator supervises the secretaries in the departments and reports to the Deputy Registrar on all matters pertaining to administration in the Faculty. The Administrator is the custodian of university regulations in the Faculty and final interpretation of the same rests in her/his hands. While the Administrator does not contribute in meetings she/he can advise the meetings on procedure and interpretation of regulations.

Three Faculties have found it necessary to appoint Deputy Deans and other Faculties are following suit. Other Faculties also have Administrative Assistants to support the Administrator. All this is to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the management of teaching, research and university service.

### **3.4 The Department**

**Departmental Governance:** The Department is guided by Ordinance 5 of the University.

**3.4.1** The Chair is head of the department and supervises lecturers and teaching assistants in his/her department. He ensures that effective teaching takes place as well as other departmental activities such as examination processes and research. Full details of his/her duties are laid out in Ordinance 4 that clearly spells out departmental governance.

**3.4.2** The Chair is appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the members of the department, the Executive Dean and Pro Vice Chancellor.

**3.4.3** The Chair is a member of the Faculty Planning Committee and Senate.

3.4.4 Normally every Chair has a secretary who assists in administrative work at departmental level. Currently, one secretary serves two or more departments and the system seems to be coping.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This paper is a brief survey of the major points of quality assurance at two levels of university: Faculty and department. However, they can only be effective when they operate in full cooperation with other units within the University.

## **4.0 Programme Design**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this section is to outline the procedure followed by the Faculty and its Departments in the introduction of new programmes. Both levels operate as independent units but at the same time they compliment each other. The paper also examines briefly the functions of both the Faculty and the Departments in the introduction of new programmes.

#### **4.1.1 Departments**

4.1.1.1 Chairpersons of Departments initiates the introduction of a new programme.

4.1.1.2 The Departmental Board is responsible for drafting the regulations after consultation with all affected stakeholders.

4.1.1.3 The Chairperson with the advice of the Faculty Administrator forwards the proposed regulations to the Faculty Planning Committee for consideration.

#### **4.1.2 Faculty**

4.1.2.1 Executive Deans of Faculties chair the Faculty Planning Committee. The Faculty Planning Committee convenes to consider new programmes from departments

4.1.2.2 The Faculty Planning Committee makes its recommendations and forward these to the Deans Committee on Academic Regulations for further scrutiny.

#### **4.1.3 Deans Committee on Academic Regulations**

4.1.3.1 The Deans Committee on Academic Regulations meets to consider applications for the introduction of new programmes.

4.1.3.2 The Deans Committee on Academic Regulations makes its recommendations to Senate for approval.

4.1.3.3 The new programme is only introduced after approval by Senate.

## **5.0 Teaching**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Teaching is the core business of the institution. The section therefore, outlines the teaching guidelines that help to enhance quality in teaching.

#### **5.1.1 Departments**

5.1.1.1 Teaching loads are allocated to members of the Department by the Departmental Board. However the supervision of allocation of modules is done by the Chairperson.

5.1.1.2 Individual lecturers prepare module outlines and these are approved by the Departmental Board.

5.1.1.3 A Lecturers' performance is evaluated at least once a semester through peer and student evaluation.

5.1.1.4 Assignments which are part of students' continuous assessment are marked by the respective lecturers. These are marked and returned to students during the agreed time by the Departmental Board.

5.1.1.5 At the end of each semester the Departmental Panel of Examiners meets to consider students' results before forwarding its recommendations to the Faculty Board of Examiners.

#### **5.1.2 Faculty**

5.1.2.1 The Faculty Board selects a representative who will sit in the University Time Table Committee. The committee coordinates the utilization of teaching space and teaching venues.

5.1.2.2 The Faculty Board of Examiners meets at the end of each semester to consider the academic results of students before forwarding its recommendations to the University Academic Board.

5.1.2.3 Students' results are only published after approval by the University Academic Board.

## **6. Laboratory Equipment**

### **6.1 Faculty of Science and Technology**

The Faculty of Science and Technology has seven departments: Computer Science and Information Systems, Biological Sciences, Chemical Technology, Food Science and Nutrition, Mathematics, Surveying and Geomatics and Physics.

Each department has two laboratories. These labs are manned by degreed Chief Technicians. Since these laboratories were meant for Teachers' diploma training, they have been upgraded to meet degree training requirements. Also the upgrading is an on-going process to establish state of the art laboratories. To date laboratories are now equipped with most basic equipment.

In addition our students are trained in collaboration with the following institutions: (Zim Alloys, Anchor Yeast, Bata Shoe Co, Dairiboard Zimbabwe, Go-Beer, Sable Chemicals, ZIMASCO, ORIAMED Diagnostic Laboratories), University of Zimbabwe ( Chemistry, Surveying and Physics departments), National University of Science and Technology (Biochemistry, Applied Chemistry departments), Natural history museum – Bulawayo, ICRISAT, Matopos Research Station, DAT Labs: Bulawayo; Delta Beverages: Bulawayo, Cotton Research Institute: Kadoma, Kadoma Paper Mills, Tobacco Research Board, Central Veterinary laboratories, Standard Association of Zimbabwe, ZIMVET, Blair Research laboratory, Government Analyst laboratory, Varichem, Plant protection research Institute, National herbarium and botanic gardens, SIRDC, Biothenology Trust of Zimbabwe, Parirenyatwa hospital , Beatrix infectious diseases hospital , CAPS, Lake Kariba Research Station: Kariba, Lake Harvest: Kariba , National Parks: Kariba , EMA , Telone: Harare and Econet: Harare.

### **6.2 Faculty of Natural Resources Management and Agriculture**

#### **6.2.1 Scope**

This document summarises the Faculty of Natural Resources Management's approach to practicals done concurrently with teaching in various modules. The Faculty seeks to maintain academic standards to the assurance and enhancement of the quality of learning opportunities it offers to students and to match that of competing Universities locally, regionally and internationally. Faculty is made up of five Departments offering six undergraduate degree programmes and two MSc degree programmes. The Faculty offers a BSc in Natural Resources and Agriculture in the following areas:

- a. Agricultural Economics and Development,
- b. Agronomy [plus an MSc in Crop Science (Crop Production and Crop Improvement options)]
- c. Horticulture (plus MSc Crop Protection),
- d. Land and Water Resources Management,
- e. Livestock and Wildlife Management and,

f. A General Degree in Natural Resources Management and Agriculture

### **6.2.2 Laboratory Practicals**

Well resourced laboratories are key to effective teaching and research in the Faculty in the form laboratory practicals. The Faculty has three laboratories, a classroom and a resource centre that are utilised by five teaching Departments. Ideally, each module needs consumerate time for practicals ie three hours an week for lectures and 3 hours a week for practicals (translating to one credit hour). However, this has not been possible due to lack of sufficient space for teaching purposes. To mitigate the effects of lack of lab space, the Faculty organises field trips to various organisations for practicals e.g at the Tobacco Research Board (TRB), SIRDC, SEEDCO etc as well as field trips around Gweru and throughout the country. Additionally, students enhance their laboratory and practical knowledge through the Work Related Learning (WRL) programme that is undertaken in their third year. Added to this, when time permits, our students do practicals in the Biological Sciences Department labs as well as the Chemical Technology Labs. Experimental Design and Analysis practicals are held in a small lab that has 24 computers. Other labs across campus are also used during biometry practicals.

As a way forward in increasing access to lab space in the Faculty, it is proposed that an extra lab from the Faculty of Science and Technology belonging to Chemical Technology be swapped with NSB 36 which is a classroom. That will leave the Department with two state of the art labs and a teaching classroom.

### **6.2.3. Equipment**

In terms of equipment, the Faculty has been able to buy a few equipment from 2003. The major obstacle to buying adequate equipment was the macro-economic environment between 2000 and 2009 where the value of the Zimbabwean dollar diminished to insignificant levels. Basic equipment like microscopes has now been bought although there is need to increase the number of microscopes to a ratio of 1 microscope per student. With the little space that we have, efforts are being made to buy equipment that will enable the Departments to carryout speciality practicals in microbiology, biochemistry and nutrition, anatomy, plant physiology, biotechnology (animal and plant), soil chemistry and analysis, entomology, nematology, plant breeding, molecular physiology and genetics, an animal room, a soil chemistry, hydrology, farm engineering etc.

### **6.2.4 Land for experiments and field practicals**

Although the Faculty boasts of a small farm on campus and the MSU Farm in Shurugwi, land for research and teaching is still in short supply. The land which we have can only be used for first year production courses but cannot be used for research by second and final year students as well as lecturers. Ideally each Department should have access to between 10 and 15 ha of irrigated land for

field experiments but because of the slope on the main campus and at the MSU Farm, land which can be tilled is very small. The little arable land available can only be tilled under strict conservation works to reduce soil erosion. This has meant that collaborations between the Faculty and stakeholders in the private and public sectors has been hampered an example being situations where private companies need to hire land for external evaluations of their products. Currently, research institutions like the Agronomy Institute, TRB, ART farm etc are charging US\$2000.00 for a row of crops measuring 10 m. This means that the Faculty is losing out on this kind of partnership with the private sector. There is need to engage Government to offer MSU a small farm with good arable land that can be set up as a research station to solve this problem. The Faculty has however been encouraging its staff to rent land from people with extra pieces of land they are not using. The problem with that strategy is that the lease agreements tend to be loose and open to abuse. The University can also not invest in capital expenditure such as irrigation infrastructure. The Faculty is grateful that resources have been availed for the purchase of three greenhouses. Four more greenhouses are in process of being bought to be used strictly in research.

In terms of animal research, the campus and MSU Farms can host basic animal experimentation. However, there is still need to build modern requisite physical structures that can be used as poultry and animal houses specifically for teaching purposes.

#### **6.2.5 On-Farm Research**

Most agricultural research and training institutions complement on-station research with on-farm research to test their technology in the farmer's environment. The Faculty has in the past carried out field trails in Lower Gweru, Chivi and Lupane in farmers fields. In the future, the Faculty intends to identify permanent sites for their on-farm research where permanent accommodation and field labs are available in such areas such as Chiundura communal lands, Lower Gweru, Gokwe and Chivi. The Faculty is hopeful that the MSU Community Engagement through Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge site in Mberengwa can be developed to become a centre of on-farm research for that area.

## **7. Library Facilities**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Currently, the MSU Library encompasses a network of individual libraries; the Main Library and three branch libraries, namely, the Law Library, the Graduate School of Business Leadership Library and the Batanai Library. Through this network, the MSU Library is able to provide comprehensive services and facilities, taking a discipline-based approach. For instance, the Law Library serves students who do law modules, the Graduate School of Business Leadership serves post graduate students in the Faculty of Commerce and the Batanai Library serves students pursuing studies in Tourism and Hospitality Management, Marketing and Business Management. These Libraries are managed and supervised by professional librarians.

For efficient and effective service delivery, the Library is divided into four sections, namely, the Acquisitions, the Electronic Learning Resource Centre, the Readers Services and the Technical Services Sections.

The MSU Library is run by a Library Committee composed of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Chairman), the University Librarian (Secretary), the Deputy Librarian, Faculty representatives and the ITS Director. The Library also has a Library Management Committee composed of the Librarian (Chairing), Deputy Librarian, Acquisitions Librarian, Branch Libraries Librarian, Electronic Resource Centre Librarian, Reader Services Librarian and the Technical Services Librarian.

Standards for operations, staff performance and services are drawn from policies and decisions arrived at by the University committees. At different levels of the hierarchy, policies are shaped and standards are set up to ensure quality of staff performance, resources, operations and services of the MSU Library.

### **7.2 Funding**

Depending on resources the Library is allocated at least 6% of the University's operating expenditure. The University has also introduced a library levy that is channeled towards the procurement of Library security equipment for all the University Libraries and subscriptions to electronic resources.

### **7.3 Library Acquisitions**

The MSU Library acquisitions policy gives guidelines on proper procedures to be followed in the acquisitions of relevant and recent Library resources. The Library actively involves both academic staff and students in the selection of resources for acquisition.

## **7.2 Library resources**

The MSU Library resources consist of both print and electronic resources which include hard copy books, electronic books, hard copy periodicals, electronic journals, dissertations, research papers and pamphlets.

### **7.4.1 Collection**

The value of a Library collection is measured by its usability and size. The holdings of any academic Library should adequately support user needs. The Library holdings should be adequate to support the teaching, learning and research activities of the university. The collection should also consist of up to date and relevant books and periodicals.

#### **7.4.1 Books**

A core collection of 50 000 well selected, recent and relevant titles of books is necessary for the university to effectively supports its teaching, learning and research functions. The MSU Library currently holds over 72 000 volumes of print books. Currently the average student to book ratio is at 7:1.

#### **7.4.2 Electronic Books**

In order to complete the book collection the MSU Library offers access to over 2 000 000 titles of electronic books covering various disciplines. Both academic staff and students actively participate in the selection of these resources.

The following is a list of the e-book collections available in the library:

- a) African Digital Library – over 8000 titles
- b) Dawsonera – 45 titles
- c) Ebrary – over 170 000 titles
- d) Emeraldinsight – 750 titles
- e) Online Books over 1 000 000 titles
- f) Project Gutenberg – over 33 000 titles
- g) E-granary – over 1 000 000 titles

#### **7.4.3 Periodicals**

For hard copy periodicals a core collection of five titles per Department is necessary to support the teaching, research and learning needs of the university. Currently the Library has about 5 610 volumes of print journals covering 865 titles covering all of our programmes.

#### **7.4.4 Electronic Journals**

The MSU Library will continue to prefer online publications over print and will seek to replace the majority of the print journal collections with digital versions. This is crucial in enhancing access to information and freeing space for other purposes. Library services are also not only limited to Library buildings but are available on connected computers from the following computer laboratories;

- a)** Main Library Electronic Resource Centre
- b)** Mathematics Electronic Resource Centre
- c)** Computer Science Electronic Resource Centre
- d)** Room 62 Electronic Resource Centre
- e)** Skills Centre Electronic Resource Centre
- f)** AVU Electronic Resource Centre
- g)** Media Studies Electronic Resource Centre
- h)** Geography Electronic Resource Centre
- i)** NRMA Electronic Resource Centre
- j)** Batanai Library Electronic Resource Centre
- k)** Batanai Library Electronic Resource Centre
- l)** Law Library Electronic Resource Centre
- m)** Training Centre Electronic Resource Centre
- n)** Hellenic Hall Electronic Resource Centre

The Library provides access to 174 online journal databases that are accessed either with a username and password or through IP authentication. The Library also provides access to two (2) LAN based databases namely,

- a)** The Essential Electronic Agricultural Library (TEEAL) – contains publications relevant to users in the Faculty of Natural Resources Management and Agriculture.

- b) The Southern African Legal Information Institute (SAFLII) collects and publishes legal materials from Southern and Eastern Africa for free online access.

#### **7.4.5 Digital Library**

In an effort to decongest the Library, the Library has established an Institutional Repository. An Institutional Repository is a set of services that a University offers to the members of its community for the management and dissemination of digital materials created by the institution. Currently the Institutional Repository contains:

- a) Past Examination papers;
- b) All issues of the Dyke;
- c) Research papers from the Social Sciences Society; and,
- d) Zimbabwe Law Articles.

The Library envisages a situation where all the University's research output will be available online 24/7. Users will not have to come to the physical facilities of the Library for these resources.

#### **7.5.1 Seating Space**

Sitting capacity is another crucial area for standards. The sitting capacity of the MSU Libraries is as follows:

##### **7.5.1.1 Main Campus Sitting Space**

a) Main Library Reading Hall	-	330
b) Main Library Electronic Resource Centre	-	54
c) Room 62 Electronic Resource Centre	-	105
d) Skills Centre Electronic Resource Centre	-	40
e) AVU Electronic Resource Centre	-	60
f) Media Studies Electronic Resource Centre	-	20
g) Geography Electronic Resource Centre	-	30
h) Computer Science Electronic Resource Centre	-	60
i) Mathematics Electronic Resource Centre	-	120

j) NRMA Electronic Resource Centre	-	8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b><u>827</u></b>

#### 7.5.1.2 Branch Libraries Sitting Space

a) Training Centre Electronic Resource Centre		50
b) Batanai Library Reading Hall		56
c) Batanai Library Electronic Resource Centre 1		45
d) Batanai Library Electronic Resource Centre 2		70
e) Law Library Reading Rooms		63
f) Law Library Electronic Resource Centre		60
g) Graduate School Library Reading Hall		40
h) Hellenic Hall Electronic Resource Centre		268
<b>Total</b>		<b><u>652</u></b>

#### 7.5.1.3 Total Seating Space

a) Main Campus Sitting Space		<b>827</b>
b) Branch Libraries Sitting Space		<b>652</b>
<b>Total seating space</b>		<b><u>1 479</u></b>

Plans are at an advanced stage to start building a new state of the art MSU Library with a sitting capacity of over 2 000 as from August 2011. The Library is also in the process of digitizing its collection. All members of the University Community are able to access online Library resources (e-books, e- journals and the Institutional Repository collection) from any of the University's Electronic Resource Centres. This enables staff and students to undertake their research independent of the Library's physical facilities and opening hours.

## 7.6 Library accessibility

In an effort to afford the University community enough time to access Library resources during the semester the Library is opened everyday of the week except on public holidays. The Library's opening hours are determined by the Library Committee. The current Library opening hours are as follows:

<b>Day</b>	<b>Opening Hours</b>
Monday to Friday	9:00am – 10:30pm
Saturday & Sunday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Public Holidays	Closed

## **7.7 Library ICT and Information Technology**

The importance of Information and Communication Technologies to quality library service provision is crucial

### **7.7.1 Library Management System**

The MSU Library uses the Mandarin Library Management System in managing its collection. The system has the following distinctive modules and features:

- a)** Circulation module for carrying out circulation of library materials.
- b)** Cataloguing module for metadata creation.
- c)** Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) for searching the Library holdings.
- d)** Group Editor – the administrator interface for controlling the whole M3 System.
- e)** Utilities for:
  - i)** Barcode generation
  - ii)** Statistics generation
  - iii)** Reports generation
  - iv)** Database Cleanup and repair
  - v)** Collection analysis
  - vi)** Inventory generation
- f)** Marc compatibility which allows one to download or copy similarly machine readable records from databases such as the Library of Congress Online Catalog.
- g)** Automatic overdue notification and fine generation.

### **7.7.2 Information Literacy Skills Training**

As part of the library's mandate of producing information literate researchers and to ensure that users fully utilize Library resources, the Library has introduced an Information Literacy Skills (ILS) programme for both staff and students. ILS is being taught as a compulsory module to all level 1.1 students. All other students are encouraged to book with the Library for ILS training.

The aim of the programme is to enable staff and students to be aware of all the research materials the library has and how to effectively use these resources.

### **7.7.3 Basic E-Resources User Guide**

The Library has compiled a Basic E-Resources User Guide that is intended to guide students and staff on the use of all Library electronic resources thereby helping to increase the use of the e-resources. The User Guides are tied to all the computers in Electronic Resource Centres in the Main Campus, Training Centre, Batanai Campus, Tel One Campus and Hellenic Hall.

### **7.7.4 Library Web Page**

The MSU Library has got an interactive web page which also provides links to the Library electronic resources, Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC), rules and regulations and the other services that the MSU Library offers.

## **7.8 Services To Students With Disabilities**

The MSU Library provides the following specialized services to students with disabilities:

- a) The disabled students are served by a dedicated Librarian.
- b) The loan period for disabled students is 2 weeks for long term books and 3 days for reserve books.

## **7.9. Security**

7.9.1 In order to see a growth in the Library collection, the Library has to provide a total Library security system in all the MSU Libraries. The Main Library and the Law Library have a dual security system of both manual and an electronic security system.

7.9.2 The Main Library also has an electronic book check facility at the Library exit point to verify whether all books being taken out of the library would have been properly checked out.

## **7.10. Rules and Regulations**

Specified in the rules and regulations of the Library are the type of library users the MSU Library serves with corresponding Library and borrowing privileges and loan periods. The rules also specify cost of fines for late return of circulation and reserve books and charges for lost books.

## **7.11. Other Library Services**

The MSU Library offers a variety of other services such as,

- a) Internet access
- b) Interlibrary loans (for books that are not available in the MSU Library).
- c) Library orientation; and,
- d) Client advisory services.
- e) E-Resources training programmes for staff and students
- f) Photocopying
- g) Binding

### **7.12 Conclusion**

The services highlighted in this document are provided by the Midlands State University Library in its endeavor to realize its mission of providing access to appropriate information resources that support quality research, teaching and learning experiences of the University Community and other stakeholders

## **8. Work Related Learning**

### **8.0 Background to the Concept and Philosophy of Work Related Learning**

Industry realized that it took nine to twelve months before new graduates from universities became fully integrated and productive in the organizations they would have joined after graduation. They were found to be academic and theoretical in their approach to work. In response to the challenge, the Midlands State University established a Work Related Learning training module as an integrated part of the curriculum for all its undergraduate students. Our approach is both adaptive and developmental in nature. The aim is to equip students with relevant practical knowledge and skills. The core business of the university in this regard is to ensure that knowledge and skills acquired get transformed into the ability to apply them where and when it matters most, the place of work. Students go for their work related in the fifth semester except those in the faculty of Law and Department of surveying who go in their seventh semester for a period of one year.

### **8.1 Key Components of Work Related Learning (WRL)**

The key Components of WRL include Orientation, placement, supervision, assessment and public relations. To ensure that all operations are coordinated and managed efficiently, WRL Office in the Vice -Chancellor's office was established. To ensure continued ownership, the operations of WRL have to run in full consultation with various stakeholders representing different professions in government, civil society, commerce and industry. This is to strengthen our links and adapt to the needs of these stakeholders. The Work Related Advisory Board provides this link.

#### 8.1.1 How quality is maintained in all components?

#### *8.1.2 Lecturer's role in quality assurance*

The teaching is integrated with practical experience where Lecturers link the theory they teach with real world of work. This includes inviting practitioners to come and speak to students and in addition educational trips by students and lecturers are planned and carried out to the relevant industry so that students can apply the theoretical concept they would have learnt

### **8.2 Preparing for Work Related Learning**

Each department produces guidelines giving all requirements regarding learning objectives, planning, report writing and details for specific submission of reports.

The most important criteria for quality assurance is identifying specific attributes that have to be developed and measured. The students are made aware of the skills and attributes to be measured. These are communicated to the work supervisor where the students are going to be placed for their Work-Related-Learning. The skills, knowledge and attributes are all specified in the assessment instruments that are used by the lecturer and the work place supervisor.

### **8.3 Orientation and Quality Assurance**

Quality management is the integral part of quality assurance. Work Related Learning office ensures quality assurance through

- a) Providing every student with a student guide and employer's manual so that everybody is clear about the procedure and processes
- b) *Orientation:*

All students get orientation before they go out for work related learning. The orientation covers among others Work Ethics so that all students know what is expected of them before they go out for their Work Related Learning and academic requirements.

During the Work Related Learning orientation students go through the concept of WRL and the need for reflective thinking that is relating their daily operations to theory and principles.

### **8.4 Employer-University Interaction**

The Work Related Learning office organizes meetings with employers in different towns and cities to discuss issues to do with our students and the relevance of their curricular. Work Related Learning process is also a tool for reviewing and evaluating our curriculum.

### **8.5 Student feedback**

When students come back from work-related learning they give us the feedback of their experience, challenges and realities in the work place. This has made our operations better because of feedback from employers.

### **8.6 Employer's assessment**

The employer would have been given a manual which explains the concept of WRL and the employer's role and responsibility in the training, supervision and assessment of students. The work place supervisor monitors the day to day operations of the student and fills the assessment instrument. The employer's assessment is also discussed by the lecturer in the presence of the student.

### **8.7 Lecturer's Supervision and Assessment form**

#### **8.7.1 Supervision**

To ensure clarity on all parties involved, the lecturers visit students immediately they are placed in an organization to clarify assessment instrument and the format for both the log book and report which student has to produce to fulfill WRL requirements. The supervision is to lay a plain field for the three parties involved so i.e. the lecturer, student and work place supervisor so that there is no misinterpretation of terms used in the assessment instrument. The lecturers use a guide to supervision which spells out areas to be covered during this first visit.

### **8.7.2 Assessment**

Each department has an assessment instrument which specifies attributes, knowledge, skills and applications to be developed and assessed. These are specified in the assessment form. The lecturer's assessment focuses on the students' logbook and how the objectives stated on the work plan will have been achieved. The logbook is a record of all activities carried out by the student. It is the window through which the lecturer can see all the work that was carried out by the student. Using the logbook the lecturer can ask why the student used a particular method in preference to the others. The lecturer's assessment is based on his discussion with the workplace supervisor and the student log book.

### **8.7.3 The student report**

Every student is expected to submit a report towards the end of work related learning period. The student report gives an indication of how a student understood and appreciated the structure and operations of the organization, where student would have been placed for his/her work related learning

Work Related Learning quality assurance is a product of quality control through teaching, management of WRL processes including supervision and assessment by both university and employers complemented by the students' feedback.

## **9. Examination Procedures**

### **9.1 Departmental Quality Control Teams**

- 9.1.1.1 Each department has a Quality Control Team, which is comprised of Chairpersons and three senior members in the department.
- 9.1.2 Members of the Quality Control Team are nominated by the department and approved by the Academic Board.
- 9.1.3 The Quality Control Team moderates questions set for the module. The Chairperson then selects a combination of questions for each question paper.
- 9.1.4 The departmental Chairperson is the Chief Examiner in the Department.

### **9.2 Examinations Questions Bank**

- 9.2.1 The lecturer sets three times the number of questions required for each section.
- 9.2.2 The choice that the Chairperson selects is 1 out of 3.
- 9.2.3 The Quality Control Team moderates all the questions to ensure that they are of acceptable standard, clear and accurate.
- 9.2.4 The Chairperson saves the questions on a memory stick which is kept under lock and key.
- 9.2.5 The Chairperson then selects the final questions for the examination paper.
- 9.2.6 The Chairperson sends the paper to the External Examiner and effects suggestions made by the External assessor.
- 9.2.7 The Chairperson keeps a backup of a hard copy for each question paper in a sealed envelope under lock and key.
- 9.2.8 He/she oversees the printing process and seals the papers in envelopes, signs the envelopes and destroys any rejects.
- 9.2.9 The questions not selected remain with the Chairperson as the Department's Questions Bank, secured under lock and key.

### **9.3 Typing of the Questions**

- 9.3.1 This is the responsibility of the Chairperson.

### **9.4 Marking of Scripts**

- 9.4.1 Marking is done by the lecturer who taught the module.
- 9.4.2 Before marking commences, the examiner prepares a detailed marking guide/scheme for each question.

### **9.5 Internal moderation**

- 9.5.1 Chairperson organizes the moderation of scripts
- 9.5.2 Ideally, all failing and distinction cases should be moderated by other lecturers in the Department.

### **9.6 External Examination**

9.6.1 Examination scripts are also moderated by External assessors.

### **9.7 Departmental Panel of Examiners**

9.7.1 The Departmental Panel of Examiners comprises of all full-time lecturing staff in that Department, the External Examiner and where appropriate part-time and teaching assistants.

9.7.2 The Departmental Panel of Examiners agrees, for each candidate, on marks in terms of percentages, for continuous assessment and examinations.

9.7.3 The Departmental Panel of Examiners recommends to the Faculty Board of Examiners whether a candidate should pass or fail a module.

### **9.8 Faculty Board of Examiners**

9.8.1 Faculty Boards of Examiners comprise of the Executive Dean, Deputy Dean, all Chairpersons of Departments, External Examiners and one member from each Department nominated by the Departmental Panel of Examiners.

9.8.2 The Faculty Board of Examiners considers the recommendations of the Departmental Panel of Examiners and recommends to Senate through the Academic Board an overall result for each candidate.

### **9.9 Publication of Results**

9.9.1 Results are published by the Registrar's Department in terms of the General Academic Regulations.

## **10. Research and Academic Excellence**

**10.1** Research is a defining character of universities and plays a crucial role in academic excellence. Midlands State University is committed to conducting research to create knowledge that will help to alleviate poverty. The University annually allocates 5% of its budget to research. This money is used to fund research activities and conference /workshop attendance. It also supports the production of the University journals, The Dyke and Midlands State University Journal of Science, Agriculture and Technology. The Research Board and Editorial and Publications ensure that research activities of academic staff are funded and the research output published and disseminated.

**10.2** Faculties are required to establish research committees to support the research activities of their staff and postgraduate thesis students. Faculties are also required to hold workshops or seminar series once a semester in order to cultivate a culture of research. Workshops on research grant application and manuscript writing are held annually to equip new and existing staff with research skills. Each teaching department should have at least one DPhil registered staff member for every lecturer with an MSc qualification.

**10.3** All teaching and research staff are required to submit their research plans to the Chairperson of the Department at the beginning of each year. Progress will be reviewed during submission of annual reports at the end of the year. Teaching staff should spend at least 4 hours per week doing research. MPhil/DPhil students and their supervisors are required to submit progress reports every semester to the Postgraduate Studies Office. It is recommended that a lecturer should publish at least 1 paper, a Senior Lecturer at least 2 papers and a Professor at least 3 papers per year. MPhil and DPhil students should have published at least 2 and 3 papers respectively, in refereed journals before thesis submission.

# 11. Programme Review

## 11.1 Introduction

Designing and developing a programme or a module pre-supposes that one has a purpose for it in the lives of the participants. The development of the programme is therefore, guided by objectives which will then be used when reviewing the programme. Programme review is a phrase used to describe different purposes for several purposes.

The basic purpose for a programme review is to stimulate growth and improvement on existing operations. Whatever other operations exist are only factors of all inclusive effort to assess present conditions as a basis for achieving better ones. Any programme designed should have among other criteria.

- a. *Internal validity*
- b. *External validity*
- c. *Concurrent validity*
- d. *Content validity*

The above therefore, forms the basis of programme review. As a university, our quality assurance processes and procedures are buttressed against our university vision and mission which form the social heart since MSU is the stakeholder – driven institution and our programme review is a continuous process of collecting data from all the stakeholders who were also involved in the establishment of our strategic plan. Our strategic plan is reviewed from time to time to meet the changing socio-economic landscape and the emerging academic challenges. The chief participants in our module review are :

- a. Students
- b. Lecturers
- c. External subject experts
- d. Commerce and industry
- e. Other institutions and organizations who directly interact with us through our students on work related learning

All these different organizations and institutions assess the performance of our students in terms of skills, values and knowledge against the tasks of the work place. The work related learning office and the lecturers discuss with employers on what they find lacking in our students. When students complete their work related learning, the work-related-learning office gives them questionnaires to

complete identifying any areas they found difficult to cope with during the their work related learning.

The university ensures that the internal validity of our modules is maintained through department and faculty modules review meetings. This is further consolidated by external examiners who analyse each module against examination questions set and continuous assessment.

## **11.2 Content validity**

To achieve the set objectives for each module, relevant content has to be provided. However, the university makes modifications to content in response to stakeholders' comments on their module content. An example of the content modification was in Computer Science when students came back from their WRL and indicated in their evaluation questionnaires that Cobol programming language was no longer in use in the industry and the department immediately dropped COBOL from their programme.

## **11.3 Concurrent validity**

Information Technology changes so rapidly to the extent that industrial and commercial operations are affected. The modules may therefore not meet the current approach and new technology. The role of our stakeholders was positively demonstrated in the tax system. While in the university, teaching was initially on old tax systems, our students and employers quickly made us aware of the changes. When the department gets such feedback, they do not wait for the full year to review the program. They include the current changes so that their modules continue to be relevant.