

# AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTES QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

DIRECTORATE: SECTORAL COLLEGES



agriculture,  
forestry & fisheries

Department:  
Agriculture, forestry & fisheries  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DRAFT: August 2012

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Preamble	3
2.	Purpose	3
3	Objectives	3
4.	The approach of the Agricultural Training Institute to Quality Assurance	4
5.	Quality assurance with regard to core and support functions	5
6.	Administration of the policy	6
7.	Amendments / Review	7

## **1. PREAMBLE**

The quality assurance policy takes into account:

- 1.1 The external context within which the Agricultural Training Institute operates: namely national, statutory and national higher education policy environments.
- 1.2 The internal context of the Agricultural Training Institute and is founded on the vision, mission and values of the Agricultural Training Institute
- 1.3 Historical context and development of the Agricultural Training Institute, and acknowledges the quality assurance practices institutionalized over time.

## **2. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Agricultural Training Institute quality assurance policy is to ensure excellence in teaching, research and community service, supported by excellent staff, excellence in service delivery by academic and administrative support services with quality infrastructure and physical facilities to ensure the realization of the vision, mission and strategic priorities the Agricultural Training Institute commits itself to.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

More specifically the Agricultural Training Institute Quality Assurance Policy aims to provide a framework for an efficient quality assurance system with enforceable requirements and norms:

- 3.1 Establishment and development of a quality assurance culture.
- 3.2 Establishment and development of a functional institutional quality assurance and management system for the Agricultural Training Institute.
- 3.3 Promotion of quality assurance and improvement actions at institutional level.
- 3.4 Empowerment of staff in the execution and implementation of quality assurance systems, processes and mechanisms.

- 3.5 Co-ordination and monitoring of the quality assurance actions within functional units of the Agricultural Training Institute.
- 3.6 Co-ordination of feedback received from the different role players and stakeholders regarding academic, social, service and quality experiences at the Agricultural Training Institute.
- 3.7 The institutional quality assurance accountability required of the Agricultural Training Institute on a national and statutory level.

#### **4. THE APPROACH OF THE AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTE TO QUALITY ASSURANCE**

- 4.1 Quality assurance is not seen as an objective in itself, but is aimed at the identification and addressing of quality gaps to assure a continuous cycle of planning, action, evaluation and improvement with a view to effecting quality improvement.
- 4.2 Self-evaluation is accepted as the primary mechanism for quality assurance. It is the responsibility of each functional unit at the Agricultural Training Institute to establish and apply effective procedures for regular self-evaluation.
- 4.3 Self-evaluation is complemented and validated by external peer evaluation. External evaluation takes place according to a specific cycle for the academic and support functions at the Agricultural Training Institute.
- 4.4 The responsibility for establishing and applying effective procedures for regular critical self-evaluation and for performing external evaluation for the academic and support service according to a specific cycle, rests with the Principal, Academic Head and Heads of Departments.
- 4.5 Quality assurance comprises the policies, procedures and mechanisms according to which the Agricultural Training Institute, or a specific unit or function, ensures that specified quality specifications and standards are maintained. These policies, procedures and mechanisms include continuous revision and monitoring activities to evaluate aspects such as suitability, efficiency, applicability and efficacy of all activities with a view to improvement

4.6 Quality improvement takes place through processes of continuous improvement of academic and support-service functions and activities aimed at promoting excellence at the Agricultural Training Institute.

## **5. QUALITY ASSURANCE WITH REGARD TO CORE AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS AND FUNCTIONAL UNITS**

### **5.1 Teaching and learning**

5.1.1 The internal development, approval and modification/termination of formal and non formal academic programs occur according to the prescribed policy and procedures. External approval, accreditation, registration, recording and termination of formal program of the Agricultural Training Institute take place in accordance with the national policy requirements. The above mentioned are described in the Agricultural Training Institute policy document guidelines for the approval, accreditation, registration, recording and termination of formal and non-forma/ academic programs.

5.1.2 Continuous assurance and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in and of programs at the Agricultural Training Institute take place on a cyclic basis through the application of self-evaluation mechanisms and procedures. The existing Diploma in Agriculture programme is evaluated every five years or less.

5.1.3 Internal moderation of all final assessment takes place during each round of assessment (examination) and is the responsibility of each faculty.

#### **5.1.4 External moderation**

- All examination papers of exit-level modules must be moderated externally.
- At least a representative sample of 10% of the scripts (with a minimum of 20 scripts or all scripts if the total is less than 20) of the final assessment of all exit-level modules (highest-level modules) in the final year of the qualification, must be moderated.

- Details of the arrangements for the internal and external moderation are the responsibility of the Assessment Officer and Departments.

## 5.2 **Research**

5.2.1 Research outputs are, according to existing practice formally or non-formally, subjected to external and/or peer evaluation.

## 5.3 **Support services**

5.3.1 Institutional functions and services rendered by the academic and support services must pass through a self-evaluation process on the basis of acceptable relevant criteria at least every five years, followed by external peer review. If necessary, this process must be followed by an improvement and development plan with actions to address the results or weaknesses identified during the evaluation process.

5.3.2 Ad hoc evaluation of services, activities, systems, projects and service levels is done from time to time at the request of and in cooperation with line managers.

5.3.3 Information with regard to finances, human resources and students is audited externally on an annual basis for quality and reported to the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

## 6. **ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY**

6.1 The institutional responsibility for the management of the quality assurance system resides in the line function of the Academic Head.

6.2 The Academic Head represents the quality assurance office within the Agricultural Training Institute and is responsible for the overall co-ordination of quality assurance at the Agricultural Training Institute, assisted by an institutional quality assurance committee appointed for each self-evaluation.

**7. AMENDMENTS / REVIEW**

- 7.1 Since quality assurance has been identified by the Agricultural Training Institute as a strategic priority, amendments to this policy, where these imply substantial changes to its objectives, are subject to the approval of the Council and the Management.
- 7.2 This policy must be reviewed at least every five years.