

Policy on Student Engagement in Quality Assurance

Section A

- 1. Policy Title:** Student Engagement in Quality Assurance
- 2. Policy Number:** P/CQA/2020/05
- 3. Policy Functional Area:** Academic, Academic support, Students

Section B

1. Introduction

Students are the primary stakeholders and beneficiaries in any university. Constructive feedback from students regarding their experiences and understanding can be used effectively to the quality improvement, aid strategic decision making, better shape the services and facilities to meet student needs and result in increased student satisfaction. It is indeed a prime importance and relevance for a university to make arrangements for the full engagement of its entire student community in the quality assurance. Within this context, University of Kelaniya wishes that student engagement in quality assurance as a matter of very significant for the entire stakeholders, specially the student category for achieving the objectives, vision and mission of the University. The students being a key stakeholder, their involvements in students, academic, administrative, social and outreach activities have to be measured through a proper mechanism of obtaining feedbacks, which eventually can be used for the quality assurance of the institute. Within this context, this policy highlights the validity, implementation and the, evaluation how student's engagement in quality assurance contribute for the expected aims and objectives of this policy. Being listened to and having a role in bringing about changes in an organization can be very motivating for students and may improve their active participation, achievements, progression and retention. Moreover, good opportunities for participation in enhancing the quality of their own education will produce more confident, more acquainted and more resilient students. It is encouraged to engage and empower students in the process of shaping their learning experiences on their journey towards becoming autonomous, self-motivated and independent learners who will be responsible and accountable individuals benefitted by free education in Sri Lanka.

The University is expected to demonstrate a firm commitment to:

- recognize the students as a principal category of stakeholders in the internal quality assurance mechanism
- provide mechanisms for the management of quality and standards through student engagement and partnership
- provide students with the opportunity to make their views on their educational experience known to the university, and ensure that these opportunities are made known to students
- ensure that it allows sufficient opportunity for students to provide feedback
- consider and act on constructive feedback from students
- inform students of what has been done in response to feedback
- working with all students, either as individuals, and/or as small groups, to help them develop the essential skills and confidence to be actively involved in student feedback mechanisms, regardless of mode of study, age, sex, religion or disability
- working with students to be responsible and accountable individuals in their learning as well as matters related to life as a student in the university.

Activities through which students may be given opportunities for engagement

include:

- Questionnaire-based surveys (online or paper-based) that seek student feedback on teaching-learning activities, and student satisfaction with common facilities and support mechanisms
- Student representation as appropriate, at different levels of Boards and Committees. Example: Faculty Board, Department Level Curriculum Development Committee, Student-staff committee, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell, Student welfare committee, Library Committee, Hostel committee, Canteen committee, Alumni associations – University/Faculty/Department level, ‘Kalana mithuru sevana’, Sports Council, Art Council, Faculty level Career Guidance committee, Gavel club,etc.
- Establishment of a Student Society for Quality Enhancement at Faculty Level

- Naming of 'Student Ambassadors' – Student participation can be selected considering the Deans List, Most outstanding student at University Colours Night, Active engagements in Arts council & Subject societies, Student Union representation and representation of differently able students' community.

2. Policy Principles

Objectives of the policy is to:

- provide mechanisms for the management of quality and standards through student engagement and partnership
- provide students with the opportunity to make their views on their educational and student life experience known to the university and ensure that these opportunities are made known to the students
- ensure that it allows sufficient opportunity for students to provide feedback
- consider and act on constructive feedback from students
- inform students of what has been done in response to feedback

3. Policy Statements

All students will be actively encouraged and supported to be involved in activities to improve quality processes in a manner and at a level that is appropriate to them. The university will foster an appropriate range of activities to establish a culture where students are encouraged to take up the opportunities on offer while being responsible and accountable in their activities. Quality assurance processes adopted by the university will facilitate obtaining individual and collective feedback from students, as well as considering and implementing their constructive suggestions, and informing students of what has been done in response to their feedback.

4. Applicability and Scope

Students should be encouraged to participate in the following aspects of university life, all of which impact on the student learning experience, and are subject to quality assurance.

The university ensures that student participation is representative of the entire student body through such student societies, including gender balance considering the male female distribution of the student population.

- Induction and orientation of new students - student representatives from different societies/unions are invited to address students during the orientation programme under various events
- Evaluation of teaching - learning activities – Feedback through questionnaire, Student Staff Committee Meeting, Representation at Faculty Board
- Programme design, delivery and organization - Department Level Curriculum Development Committee
- Learning resources – representation at Library Committee
- Student welfare and well-being – Welfare Committee, Representation of differently abled students
- Career guidance and employability – Faculty level Career Guidance committees
- Community outreach - subject societies
- University infrastructure development through Green society, Center for sustainable Solutions development.
- Development of the university’s strategic and action plans in areas relating to the student experience – at the Department level committee
- Development of common graduate attributes - Department Level Curriculum Development Committee

5. The level of contribution expected from student representatives;

Participatory, Feedback and Leadership.

The strategy ensures that student views are gathered using a variety of means including the completion of questionnaires, student representation and direct access to academic staff and administrators.

6. Responsibilities and Procedures for Implementation of Policy

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deans of the Faculties, Chief /Senior Student counselor, Director/ Students affairs, SAR /Student welfare, Director/ CQA, Coordinator/ FQACs,

7. Glossary

Student engagement is the involvement and empowerment of students in the process of shaping the student learning strategies, to inform a University's quality system with the purpose of improving the student educational experience for both current and future cohorts.

Dimensions of engagement: student engagement is a complex construct influenced by multiple factors.

1. Three dimensions of engagement have been proposed:

Behavioural engagement: Students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the University.

2. **Emotional engagement:** Students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the University

3. **Cognitive engagement:** Students' investment in their learning (motivation and self-regulation)

Factors that influence engagement: some of the factors that influence student engagement at the University are:

- **Lecturer factors:** Lecturer interaction style (enjoyment and shared focus, support, responsiveness, directiveness, verbal praise), behavioral and academic expectations.
- **Institutional factors:** This includes physical setting factors (physical layout and arrangement of classroom, sensory factors/noise levels, lighting etc), and consistent and structured approaches to the provision of student support and disciplinary measures.
- **Student factors:** A student's physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural state, including health issues and disability, peer relationships.

- **Family and community factors:** A student's residential circumstances, family support for/involvement in education, and relationships with their family.
- **Curriculum and resources factors:** Availability and type of learning resources including technology, dimensions of the learning tasks (level of difficulty, interest, meaningfulness to learner), task design, learning goals and objectives, and assessment approaches.
- **Opportunities for community outreach:** availability of opportunities to learn from, and contribute to, the community.
- **The 'whole' student:** The five dimensions of health and wellbeing of students may be taken into consideration when deciding on the strategy for implementation of the university policy on student engagement.
- **Engagement in learning:** Includes active participation and engagement in learning, having functional skills to participate meaningfully in all aspects of one's life; being competent as a learner and problem-solver; and having a sense of meaning.
- **Social and emotional wellbeing:** This includes positive mental health / absence of mental health problems; self-awareness; emotional intelligence; self-regulation; resilience; interpreting the world positively; pro-social values and behaviour.
- **Supportive relationships:** This includes having positive family bonds and friendship, ability to rely on a trusted adult, experiencing a sense of belonging, and engagement / involvement in age appropriate learning and activity.
- **Physical health:** This includes physical health / absence of health problems; oral health; nutrition and weight; physical fitness; and self-management, including sleeping.
- **Safety and material wellbeing:** This includes the sense of safety at home, while travelling and at University, being safe from injury and harm, having access to daily essentials, adequate and stable study environment and housing