



Syllabi – upskilling African Professionals  
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Vice-Chancellor's Office, Ministry of Education, KN 7 Av, Kigali, Rwanda

# Quality Assurance Handbook

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## Section A: Introduction

The QA Handbook serves as a comprehensive guide to the quality assurance (QA) processes at Syllabi. It defines the policies, procedures, and standards necessary to ensure that the program delivers high-quality outcomes and aligns with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and stakeholder engagement, this Handbook supports excellence in program delivery, responsiveness to industry needs, and compliance with accreditation standards.

The Handbook covers all aspects of program management, from design and implementation to monitoring and review, ensuring that processes are transparent, consistent, and evidence-based. It is intended for use by program directors, teaching staff, industry partners, and other stakeholders involved in the program.

## Purpose and Scope

This document aims to:

1. Provide a detailed framework for the design, approval, and modification of programs and modules.
2. Define mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating teaching quality, learning outcomes, and infrastructure.
3. Establish clear guidelines for collaborative and validated provisions.
4. Promote adherence to ethical standards and professional conduct.
5. Ensure transparency, accountability, and compliance with external accreditation requirements.

## Governance and Responsibilities

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is responsible for upholding and continuously improving the quality of education at Syllabi. It ensures that all programs meet internal academic standards and the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The QAC provides strategic oversight, reviews new program proposals, evaluates modifications, and monitors compliance with accreditation bodies.

The QAC consists of at least one member of Syllabi's Governing Body, one industry representative, one professor or academic instructor, and one student representative, ensuring a balanced perspective on program quality and relevance. It is chaired by a member of the Governing Body and meets every quarter to review performance data, approve curriculum changes, and oversee program validation.



When reviewing proposals for new programs, the QAC convenes in a modified composition. The modified composition includes:

- a member of Syllabi's Governing Body
- an industry representative
- two student representatives
- four module coordinators or academic instructors of adjacent subjects
- any other relevant members of Syllabi's staff can be added to the committee

When reviewing monitoring and evaluation results for a specific program and modifications to a specific program, the QAC convenes in a modified composition. The modified composition includes:

- a member of Syllabi's Governing Body
- an industry representative
- all module coordinators of the program
- all instructors of the program
- two student representatives from among the students of the program
- the Program Director

Supporting the QAC's work is the Quality Assurance (QA) Team, which handles the operational aspects of quality assurance. This team collects and analyzes feedback from students, program administration, and industry partners, conducts program audits, and ensures that quality assurance policies are effectively implemented at the program level. While the QAC focuses on governance and decision-making, the QA Team executes day-to-day monitoring and reporting. If the workload is feasible for one person, this work may be delegated to one QA manager.

All program directors, module coordinators, instructors, and administrative staff are responsible for implementing the QA policies outlined in this handbook. They ensure that programs maintain high academic standards, assessments are fair and transparent, and students receive a high-quality learning experience. Regular program evaluations, student feedback mechanisms, and external reviews contribute to a continuous cycle of improvement.

The QAC is the final authority on quality assurance matters and holds the responsibility for ensuring that corrective actions are taken when needed. If compliance issues arise, the committee may request program adjustments, additional program staff training, or further review by external experts.

## Definitions and Abbreviations

- **QA:** Quality Assurance
- **QAC:** Quality Assurance Committee
- **ESG:** European Standards and Guidelines
- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicators
- **PSRB:** Professional, Statutory, and Regulatory Bodies



## Section B: Procedures for Program and Module Approval and Modification

### 1. Program and Module Design

- 1.1 The program and module design process emphasizes alignment with industry demands, stakeholder expectations, and accreditation standards. A rigid design and approval process is the quality assurance mechanism by which a proposed program of study is scrutinised in order to assure that the program meets Syllabi's expectations for quality and academic standards. This process is mandatory for all new undergraduate and taught postgraduate programs at Syllabi's, including degree apprenticeships.
- 1.2 The University's annual planning process taking place yearly in August should identify any new programs by one of two means: First, any organ, group or individual in the university leadership may wish to introduce a new program, and notifies their intention through submission to the QA team through the annual reporting mechanism. The QA team further conducts a yearly needs analysis in consultation with the university leadership that includes structured consultations with industry partners and alumni. A skills gap analysis is created, synthesizing market data and employment trends to identify emerging needs. The results may lead to the proposition of the introduction of a new program, and the conducted analysis with identified new program opportunities will be submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee.
- 1.3 In the submitted documents, a curriculum mapping needs to be included. In it, the proponents of the program (e.g. a partner company representative) map the proposed curriculum to ensure a logical progression of learning objectives. The documents must show that each module is aligned with both the program's intended outcomes and national qualification frameworks. A detailed plan identifies required staff expertise, digital tools, physical spaces, and associated costs. This plan is reviewed and approved by the Vice-Chancellor to ensure feasibility.
- 1.4 Informal engagement with a range of stakeholders should take place during the program development phase, including but not limited to students, staff, industry partners. They should be made aware of the proposal, asked for initial feedback on the plans, included in discussion about any potential resource implications at an early stage, program development and to ensure that considerations about how employability is embedded into the curriculum are addressed from the outset, discussion about the viability of delivering learning opportunities with a collaborative partner by assessing any risks at the outset and establishing risk management strategies. The outcomes of these discussions will need to be included in the documentation submitted.

### 2. Approval Process

Approval involves multiple stages with clear accountability:

- 2.1 Phase 1: Initial Proposal Review** The program's proponents prepare the documentation as outlined in 1.2.-1.4 and add a concept note outlining program objectives, preliminary module descriptions, and expected outcomes. This is reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) for strategic alignment and resource feasibility.



**2.2 Phase 2: Full Submission** A comprehensive document is submitted, including detailed module descriptions, assessment strategies, workload calculations, and alignment with ESG standards. The QAC reviews the submitted documents and evaluates them. Following their analysis, the QAC will determine their decision regarding the proposed curriculum in their meeting and document any conditions or recommendations for improvement. The QAC may reject the proposal, request incorporation of conditions and resubmission, or approve it to proceed to Phase 3 of the approval process.

**2.3 Phase 3: Final Approval** The proposal is presented to the Academic Senate and upon their approval to the Governing Body for final sign-off. Approval is contingent on addressing all recommendations from internal and external reviewers.

The main purposes of the process are to ensure that new program proposals:

- Do not overlap significantly with existing programs elsewhere in the university.
- Align with Syllabi's strategy and vision;
- Are academically desirable, financially viable, and in terms of student recruitment;
- Meet threshold academic standards;
- Make appropriate student learning opportunities available;
- Consider employability at the outset and that embedded employability is clearly articulated in the program specifications;
- Provision of students with clear information about their studies is complete with regard to program content, structure, learning outcomes, modes of assessment, embedded employability and extra-curricular employability opportunities.

**2.4 Following the introduction of the program**, international accreditation by an accreditation agency is sought, along with the relevant national accreditations. A yearly review will be conducted by the QAC. The review will provide assurance to the university that the predicted student numbers noted at the time of program proposal have been met, the program remains marketable for future students, and the program remains consistent with Syllabi's strategies.

### **3. Program and Module Modification**

Modifications to the program and modules follow a structured workflow:

**1.1 Minor Adjustments**, including changes such as updated reading lists or minor adjustments to assessments can be suggested by any Module Coordinator and are reviewed and approved by the Program Director.

**1.2 Major Modifications** leading to significant changes, such as adding a new module or restructuring outcomes require a formal submission to the QAC. The QAC evaluates the changes using the same rigor as for new program proposals, and presents the proposal, if approved, to the Governing Body for final sign-off.



## Section C: Monitoring and Evaluation

### 1. Monitoring Framework

A robust framework ensures continuous evaluation:

- **Module Evaluations:** At the end of each module, students complete anonymous surveys addressing content relevance, teaching quality, and workload. Surveys are analyzed by the QA team, and results are shared with module coordinators to address concerns.  
Module coordinators, instructors and Program Directors can conduct additional qualitative evaluations of Modules in group conversations with students at the end of individual modules or at the end of a semester.
- **Study Program Evaluations:** After each academic year, students complete an anonymous survey addressing effectiveness of the program in achieving its intended learning outcomes, its relevance, the quality of students' learning experiences, employability and the program's alignment with industry demands and open-ended feedback on program strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Graduate Employment Evaluations:** Graduate employment surveys are conducted 6 and 18 months post-graduation. Graduates complete the anonymous survey addressing the graduates' employment status, the study program's alignment with requirements of their current employment, their career path, their satisfaction with their career path, the time between graduation and employment, the impact of the study program on the job search.
- **Employability Evaluations (Employer Perspective):** After each academic year, the Program Director goes into intensive 1:1 discussions with hiring companies in Syllabi's network about the fit between a study program's taught content and learning goals and the hiring companies' needs to assure relevance to industry requirements.
- **University Leadership and Student Service Evaluation:** An anonymous survey is sent out to students annually to receive feedback on students' perception of university leadership and central university services such as Student Advisory Service, Complaints processes, Infrastructure.
- **University Leadership and Employment Satisfaction Evaluation:** An anonymous survey is sent out to instructors and other academic and non academic staff to receive feedback on their perception of university leadership, employee satisfaction, and areas of improvement.
- **Data Analysis:** Metrics such as attendance rates, assessment grades, and progression rates are analyzed semi-annually to identify patterns.
- Module Evaluations are conducted by the QA Team and submitted to the instructors and the Program Director. If the results have overarching significance those are submitted to the QAC.
- Study Program Evaluations, Graduate Employment Evaluations and Data Analysis are conducted by the QA Team and submitted to the Program Director and the QAC.



- Employability Evaluations are conducted by the Program Director, they can enlist the assistance of the QA Team. Their results are presented to the QAC.
- University Leadership and Student Service / Employment Satisfaction Evaluations are conducted by the QA Team and submitted to the QAC.

## 2. Annual Program Reviews

Annual reviews provide a comprehensive evaluation, synthesizing data from:

- Module evaluations.
- Student and employer feedback.
- Graduate employment surveys conducted 6 and 18 months post-graduation.

The findings are compiled into a Program Review Report, which includes action plans with designated responsibilities and timelines.

## 3. Validation Procedures

Validation assesses whether a module or study program meets its stated objectives. The process involves:

1. **Document Analysis:** Review of module specifications, assessment rubrics, and learning outcomes.
2. **Stakeholder Interviews:** Students, employers, program director and module coordinator provide qualitative feedback on the module's applicability.
3. **Pilot Implementation:** New modules are piloted with a small cohort, and outcomes are evaluated to determine scalability.
4. **Final Assessment:** External reviewers evaluate the module against national and international benchmarks.

## Section D: Collaborative and Validated Provisions

Collaborative programs involve partnerships with external organizations. Each collaboration is governed by:

- **Detailed MOUs:** Memorandums of Understanding outline expectations, deliverables, and evaluation protocols.
- **Joint Review Panels:** Representatives from both organizations conduct biannual evaluations to ensure compliance and identify areas for improvement.
- **Continuous Oversight:** An QA Team monitors performance metrics such as student outcomes and satisfaction rates, and informs the Joint Review panel.



## Section E: Infrastructure and Resource Audit

Audits ensure resources remain fit-for-purpose:

- **Checklist-Based Inspections:** The QA team assesses classroom technology, library resources, and digital platforms annually.
- **Feedback Integration:** Student feedback is incorporated into audit findings to ensure alignment with user needs.
- **Strategic Planning:** Audit results inform budgetary and operational planning for the subsequent year.

## Section F: Ethics and Conduct

Syllabi has specified its ethics and conduct principles in the following policies:

- **Academic Integrity:** Clear guidelines on plagiarism and assessment misconduct in the General Study and Examination Regulations.
- **Inclusivity:** The sexual harassment and discrimination policy ensures anti-discrimination policies for equitable access for all students.
- **Dispute Resolution:** A system that addresses grievances, starting with informal mediation and escalating to formal investigations if necessary, as specified in the Complaints Policy.

## Section G: Continuous Improvement

The QA Handbook undergoes an annual review led by the Quality Assurance Committee.