



Policy for Quality Assurance

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Contents

I.	General Terms	3
I.1	Principles and Scope	3
I.2	Changing this Policy.....	3
I.3	Definitions	3
II.	Concept of the Quality Assurance Framework.....	4
II.1	Mission Statement for Education	4
II.2	Processes	5
III.	Organization of the Quality Assurance System	6
III.1	Scope of Application	6
III.2	Participants and Responsibilities	7
III.3	Conflict of Interest within the Quality Assurance System	9
III.4	Quality Assurance Tools	9
III.5	Data Protection	9
III.6	Involvement of External Stakeholders	10
IV.	Monitoring and Review	10
V.	Annex.....	11
-	Mission Statement for Education.....	11

I. General Terms

I.1 Principles and Scope

The Academic Constitution of Constructor University is based on a joint commitment to excellence and the highest quality standards in study, teaching, research, and management, to academic freedom and integrity in research and teaching, to the equality of different social groups at the university, and to the wise and efficient handling of existing human, material, and non-material resources, and the specifics of a private university. Quality management at Constructor University strives towards continuously improving teaching and research.

Constructor University has defined a Mission Statement for Education (*Bildungsleitbild*) that adheres to these principles and values.

The Quality Assurance System aligns with the Mission Statement for Education and is committed to continuously enhancing the quality of education and of student experience. Additionally, the system includes mechanisms for its own ongoing improvement.

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Policy is to serve as an effective tool, enabling all participants, whether directly or indirectly involved, to actively engage in the continuous improvement cycle of all processes within the Quality Assurance System.

I.2 Changing this Policy

In accordance with the Academic Constitution, which assigns the responsibility for implementing all QM measures to the Academic Senate, changes to the Quality Assurance Policy must be approved by the Academic Senate. The Evaluation Board can make recommendations for changes.

I.3 Definitions

The following definitions are adapted from the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 2015 and ISO 9000 - Quality Management 2015.

- Continuous improvement: recurring activity to enhance performance.
- Monitoring: the process of determining the status of a system, process, product, service, or activity. Involves checking, supervising, or critically observing. Usually entails determining the status of an object at different stages or times.
- PDCA Cycle: Plan–Do–Check–Act. Plan phase: establish objectives and processes required to deliver the desired results. Do phase: carry out the objectives from the previous step. Check phase: the data and results gathered from the do phase are evaluated. Data is compared to the expected outcomes to see any similarities and differences. Act phase: also called "adjust", this act phase is where a process is improved. Records from the "do" and "check" phases help identify issues with the process.
- Process: set of interrelated or interacting activities that use inputs to deliver an intended result.
- Procedure: specified way to carry out an activity or a process.
- Quality: degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfills requirements. Note 1 to entry: The term " quality " can be used with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent. Note 2 to entry: "Inherent", as opposed to "assigned", means existing in the object.
- Quality Assurance: encompasses all activities within the continuous improvement cycle, including assurance and enhancement activities.

- **Quality Assurance System:** an integrated set of policies, processes, and procedures used by a higher education institution to ensure and improve the quality of its education and related services in alignment with the institution's goals and in accordance with external standards and guidelines. This system is characterized by its focus on continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and the establishment of a quality culture within the institution. Organizations implement quality assurance systems to ensure that quality is maintained and continuously improved at all levels, both internally and externally.
- **Quality Management:** the aspect of overall management function that determines and implements the quality policy, including setting quality objectives and the processes to achieve these objectives through quality planning, quality assurance, and quality improvement.
- **Quality Policy:** a policy related to quality, generally consistent with the overall policy of the organization; provides a framework for the setting of quality objectives.
- **Review:** determination of the suitability, adequacy or effectiveness of an object to achieve established objectives.

Abbreviations used in the Policy for Quality Assurance:

AS	Academic Senate
EB	Executive Board
GSA	Graduate Student Association
QA	Quality Assurance
QAS	Quality Assurance System
QM	Quality Management
UCE	University Committee on Education
UCQM	University Committee on Quality Management
USG	Undergraduate Student Government
SPC	Study Program Chair

II. Concept of the Quality Assurance Framework

II.1 Mission Statement for Education

With the Mission Statement for Education, the University commits to a multi-disciplinary, holistic approach alongside exposure to cutting-edge digital technologies and societal challenges. Through this commitment, Constructor University aims to cultivate academic excellence, intellectual competencies, societal engagement, as well as professional and scientific skills, thereby preparing tomorrow's leaders for a sustainable and peaceful future.

The diagram (see annex) unpacks the high-level Mission Statement for Education into four fundamental concepts:

- *Foundational principles* - these are key strategic drivers shaping our academic programs and practices.
- *Core goals* - the core achievements or educational goals we aim to foster within and on behalf of our students: academic excellence, personal development, employability.
- *Building blocks* - the fundamental learning inputs necessary to achieve the educational goals.
- *Main instruments* - procedural and operational interventions underpinning the creation or emergence of the learning inputs.

Three core quality goals in the Mission Statement for Education are academic excellence, personal development, and employability.

A. Academic excellence

Building blocks: relevance, research, student-centered learning. Main instruments:

- Appointment and promotion policies fostering the excellence of academic staff.
- Innovative forms of learning and teaching.
- Recruitment of talented students.
- Academic advising.
- Research-oriented modules.
- Spectrum of in-presence and online education.

B. Personal development

Building blocks: individual competence; intercultural competence; societal agency. Main instruments:

- Multi-disciplinary approach.
- Community Impact Project.
- International and diverse classroom and campus.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- Intercultural exposure.

C. Employability

Building blocks: professional competence; multidisciplinary competence; career skills. Main instruments:

- CONSTRUCTOR track (4C model).
- Industry-based instructors.
- Industry projects.
- Student Career Support.
- Internships.
- Partnerships with companies in the CONSTRUCTOR ecosystem.

These outlined instruments are central to achieving the core goals, though they are not the only ones available. Operational examples providing an institutional context for each of these instruments, aimed at facilitating their realization within the study programs or student experience, have been defined.

II.2 Processes

Constructor University has defined the decision-making processes, functions, and responsibilities for the lifecycle of study programs. This includes their introduction, monitoring, review, further development, and discontinuation.

Additionally, the university has established its own processes and procedures for the accreditation and reaccreditation of these programs, all within the framework of its Quality Assurance System (QAS).

All processes related to study programs are compliant with accreditation requirements and have been formally approved by the Academic Senate. Accessible on the university's intranet, they provide detailed information on each step of the processes, who is involved, what their

role and responsibilities are, and which documents need to be taken into consideration or be produced. They also include clear timelines. An overview of these processes is provided below.

- Program initiation, approval and accreditation: this process outlines the steps from the program proposal, through the plausibility check and strategic assessment, to the academic-technical review, approval, and finally accreditation.
- Program monitoring and development: this process involves the annual monitoring of study programs to ensure their continuous improvement in alignment with high academic quality standards. The annual program monitoring takes place during the Round Tables with students in each study program.
- Substantial and nonsubstantial changes to study programs. This process distinguishes between "substantial changes," and "non-substantial changes," managed solely according to the internal quality assurance decision-making processes. Substantial changes, on the other hand, require the approval of the Academic Senate and the Executive Board, as well as the notification of the Evaluation Board.
- Reaccreditation: programs require first-time accreditation and then reaccreditation at eight-year intervals or earlier in the case of substantial changes to the program, unless the program is to be discontinued, in which case the discontinuation process applies. In the case of reaccreditation, an internal review is conducted prior to the Academic Round Table. This offers an excellent opportunity for making program changes before the external evaluation based on the subject-related accreditation criteria. This process outlines the steps from periodic internal review through handling substantial and non-substantial changes to reaccreditation.
- Discontinuation of a program: a study program may be discontinued for various reasons, such as loss of strategic relevance, organizational challenges, or academic considerations. This process outlines the steps from making the discontinuation decision to implementing the discontinuation.

Constructor University is committed to providing quality assurance for every dimension that impacts students, beyond the design and approval of study programs. This includes student-centered learning, teaching and assessment, student admission, progression, recognition, and certification processes. The main policies of reference include the Regulation on the Entrance Examination for University Admission, Admission and Enrollment Policy, Policies for Bachelor Studies, and Policies for Master Studies.

III. Organization of the Quality Assurance System

III.1 Scope of Application

The Quality Assurance System at Constructor University is organized according to the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

- The Academic Senate and the Executive Board are actively contributing to and are responsible for the PLAN phase. They define strategic documents and policies, ensuring the establishment of a QA system capable of effectively promoting, guiding, and verifying the achievement of the goals outlined in the Mission Statement for Education. Academic Operations, QM Department, UCE, UCQM promote and support the implementation of the planned initiatives.
- The Schools, including Study Program Chairs, Faculty, and Students, are actively involved in the DO phase, engaging in and contributing to teaching activities. Academic Operations, QM Department, UCE, and UCQM play supportive roles in monitoring all activities carried out in this phase, thereby contributing significantly to the CHECK phase.

- The Evaluation Board and the External Experts are the main actors responsible for the CHECK phase. They provide suggestions for the continuous improvement of teaching and, where applicable, provide recommendations and conditions. The Evaluation Board also plays an essential role in disseminating internal best practices, which is crucial for the ongoing enhancement of the QAS.
- The Academic Senate, the Executive Board, and the Schools, including Study Program Chairs, Faculty, and students, are the main actors responsible in the ACT phase. This phase focuses on identifying and implementing improvement actions, with the Executive Board and the Academic Senate having the authority to revise decisions made in the PLAN phase as necessary. Academic Operations, QM, UCE, and UCQM support the implementation of these actions and/or the dissemination of best practices. Ultimately, the Academic Senate makes the final decision on the accreditation or reaccreditation of programs.

III.2 Participants and Responsibilities

This section delineates the key stakeholders involved within the QAS of Constructor University. These include: Academic Operations, Academic Senate, Evaluation Board, Executive Board, External Experts, Faculty, Students, UCE, UCQM, and the QM Department. Each stakeholder has specific functions and responsibilities within the Quality Assurance System. Additionally, the section specifies relevant documentation, including inputs required and outputs generated within the system.

- Academic Operations is concerned with the strategic and operational matters related to research and teaching. This includes the planning and development of research profiles, as well as ensuring quality assurance in study programs through monitoring and upholding high-quality standards in collaboration with faculty and Study Program Chairs. The Head of Academic Operations (Provost) leads this department, overseeing all faculty, research, and teaching staff. Key documents such as student surveys, academic data reports, and preparations for Round Tables and Yearly Orientation Talks form the input. A report detailing action points is produced as the output. Academic Operations receives support from the Deans' Office, the QM Department, and UCQM and consults with student representatives and Administrative Service Departments.
- The Academic Senate is the main executive body for academic co-determination at Constructor University. Its tasks comprise the participation in and the monitoring of all academic matters in teaching and research. The university-wide regulations for quality management are determined by the Academic Senate, who is responsible for the implementation of all measures, including deciding on the accreditation or the reaccreditation of programs and on appeals against an accreditation decision or parts of it. Documents such as the mission statement for education, academic policies, minutes, and records of improvement measures serve as key materials. The Academic Senate receives support from Academic and University Committees, the QM Department, and consults with the Executive Board.
- Alumni representatives participate in the evaluation of study programs; in the program review panel (academic-technical review) during the introduction of a new study program and in the internal review workshop during the periodic review for reaccreditation. Furthermore, an alumni representative is a member of the Evaluation Board.
- The Evaluation Board is the main body responsible for the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the Quality Assurance system at Constructor University. Furthermore, it plays a critical role in the central processes of monitoring, accrediting, and reaccrediting study programs. Documents such as Round Table Reports and preliminary Accreditation and Reaccreditation Reports serve as input, with the Annual Report on the Quality Assurance System as output. The Evaluation Board receives support from the QM Department and UCQM, and consults with External Experts.

- The Executive Board implements strategic content, financial, and personnel development based on the strategic plan adopted by the Board of Governors. Once the Academic Senate has decided on the accreditation or the reaccreditation of a program, the Executive Board issues its own decision, focusing solely on financial and strategic considerations. The Executive Board evaluates the financial and strategic viability of student intake and may decide against the implementation of a program for financial or strategic reasons. Key document: strategic plan. The EB is supported by the Strategy Unit, QM Department, and Academic Operations, and consults with the Academic Senate.
- External Experts are responsible for the subject-specific assessment of programs during the accreditation or reaccreditation processes. Documents include the Annual Report on the Quality Assurance System from the Evaluation Board and the preliminary Accreditation and Reaccreditation Reports as inputs, along with the evaluation of subject-specific criteria as output. They receive support from the Evaluation Board and the QM Department.
- Faculty provides high-quality education and supports the continuous improvement of education quality, in alignment with the Mission Statement for Education. Key documents include student surveys and the Yearly Orientation Report with action points. The Faculty receives support from Academic Operations, the Deans' Office, and the QM Department. They consult with students and Administrative Service Departments.
- Students play a central role in the QAS, including in the decision-making processes related to study programs and their accreditation and reaccreditation. Through their elected representatives (USG and GSA), students are regular members of the Academic Senate, Evaluation Board, UCQM, and UCE. Furthermore, students provide essential feedback on the quality of study programs and the overall student experience, contributing to the continuous improvement of education at Constructor University. They contribute to the development, implementation, and evaluation of academic policies and practices. Key documents include surveys. e.g. course evaluations and the student experience survey. Students receive support from the Academic Senate, Academic Operations, specific Academic Committees (such as the UCQM and UCE), and the QM Department. They consult with Administrative Service Departments, Faculty, and Study Program Chairs.
- Study Program Chairs participate in Round Tables with students, organized and coordinated by the QM department. They act as a contact point for students regarding critical issues in the design, delivery of study programs, and the assessment of outcomes. They regularly evaluate feedback from students, instructors, and external reviewers, share these insights with the study program team, and initiate appropriate action where required. Study Program Chairs also support program and system accreditation by providing relevant input for regular program reviews in response to independent review panels, considering their feedback, and implementing agreed-upon changes. Key documents include student surveys and academic data reports, with action points after the Round Tables serving as output. They receive support from Academic Operations, the Deans' Office, and the QM Department and consult with Faculty, Students, and Administrative Service Departments.
- University Committee on Education. The main tasks of the UCE include drafting and monitoring policies, developments, decisions, and processes related to teaching, learning, and assessment. The Committee's output consists of minutes and draft decision papers for the Academic Senate. It receives support from the QM department and the Deans' Office and consults with other Academic University Committees to ensure comprehensive consideration of educational matters.
- The University Committee on Quality Management is responsible for ensuring the smooth, effective, and efficient functioning of the QAS, including its processes,

procedures, and tools. Additionally, it organizes the implementation of all QM measures. The Committee creates and utilizes documents such as QM templates, surveys, guidelines, minutes, and decision papers to fulfill its responsibilities. It receives support from the QM Department and consults with other Academic University Committees to ensure comprehensive consideration of quality management matters.

- The Quality Management Department is tasked with creating academic data reports and managing QA related documents. It facilitates top-down and bottom-up information flows within the institution. Additionally, the department drafts and submits the Quality Report following each program accreditation to the Accreditation Council. Key documents managed by the department include minutes, reports, QA tools, and the Quality Report. It receives support from Administrative Service Departments and consults with UCQM, Academic Operations, Students, Faculty, including Study Program Chairs, to ensure comprehensive quality management processes.

III.3 Conflict of Interest within the Quality Assurance System

Academic Operations and the Evaluation Board play central roles in supporting and promoting quality management measures, including monitoring the processes within the Quality Assurance System. To ensure the system is as effective as possible, academic members of the Evaluation Board may not simultaneously serve as members of Academic Operations (as Provost or Deans).

There are no incompatibilities within the system related to student participation and participation by administrative staff at any level.

III.4 Quality Assurance Tools

Constructor University utilizes several quality assurance tools to support the implementation of the Quality Assurance System. The main ones are described below.

- Academic data reports: Constructor University collects, analyzes, and uses relevant information for the effective management of its study programs and student support services. It conducts data-supported, cohort-based student progress monitoring to gather insights on the academic experience and the demographics of the student body.
- Student surveys: Constructor University conducts several surveys with the student body. The surveys are described in detail in the Policy for Student Surveys and Evaluations. The survey questions are defined together with students and approved by the Academic Senate. Every time the surveys are revised, students are involved.
- Internal analyses of study programs: these analyses are conducted by the Evaluation Board in case critical issues described in the Round Table Reports require in-depth analysis.
- Annual Report on the Quality Assurance System: this report provides an analysis of the annual monitoring of study programs with a focus on positive highlights as well as critical aspects, initiatives, and achievements of the university with respect to quality culture. It also includes a report on the implementation of the Mission Statement for Education.

III.5 Data Protection

The provisions of the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Federal Data Protection Act (BDSG) and the Bremen Implementation Act to the EU General Data Protection Regulation, along with Constructor University's Regulation on the collection and processing of personal data, are applicable.

Access to the results of student surveys is regulated by the Policy for Student Surveys and Evaluations. Academic data reports are available to the Provost, Deans, and Study Program Chairs.

The Evaluation Board has access to aggregated data regarding the perceived quality of study programs by students and may request disaggregated data if justified by severe critical issues, which must be properly documented.

III.6 Involvement of External Stakeholders

The involvement of external stakeholders in the QAS and its processes is essential for Constructor University. External Experts participate in the academic-technical review for the introduction and approval of new study programs, in the internal periodic review of study programs for the reaccreditation process, and in the evaluation of study programs during the Academic Round Table for accreditation purposes. Additionally, one of the academic members of the Evaluation Board is external. The details of their involvement and contributions are described in Section II.2.

IV. Monitoring and Review

As part of its comprehensive Quality Assurance Framework, Constructor University conducts regular annual reviews. These reviews occur at various levels, including the study program and student support levels, as well as within the Quality Assurance System itself.

- Study programs and student support services: Student experience and academic quality are reviewed annually through Round Tables, academic data and student surveys. The results, including defined improvement actions, are consolidated in the Round Table Reports and reflected in the Annual Report on the Quality Assurance System, which includes suggestions and recommendations for continuous improvement, if necessary.
- Quality Assurance System: The annual monitoring review provides an opportunity for the Evaluation Board to evaluate the effectiveness of the various processes that contribute to the implementation of the Quality Assurance System as well as the reflection of the Mission Statement for Education in the study programs.

The Annual Report on the Quality Assurance System is submitted to the Academic Senate and the Executive Board for consideration during the PLAN phase.

V. Annex

- Mission Statement for Education

