DR. HILLA LIMANN TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY

September, 2021

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

QA	Quality Assurance
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
CTVET	Commission for Technical, Vocational Education and Training
DHLTU	Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University
DAPQA	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
QAU	Quality Assurance Unit
PU	Planning Unit
QAS	Quality Assurance System
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
HND	Higher National Diploma
GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
NAB	National Accreditation Board
VC	Vice-Chancellor
Pro-VC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
HoD	Head of Department
PQA	Planning and Quality Assurance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Dr. Hilla Limann Technical University (DHLTU) started in September 1999 as a Polytechnic. However, it was not until 2002 that the interim Governing Council was appointed by Government to provide policy direction to the Institution. The first batch of tertiary students was admitted in 2003 to pursue Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes in Agricultural Engineering and Secretaryship and Management Studies. Following the passing of the Technical Universities Act, 2016 (Act 922), the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act 2018 (Act 974) and the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act 2020 (Act1016), Wa Polytechnic was converted into a Technical University.

As the only Technical University that started without the requisite infrastructure and seed money, DHLTU faced very challenging teething problems. For nearly a decade after its establishment, DHLTU operated from borrowed facilities. For example, while the Wa Municipal Education Directorate released its former offices to house the Central Administration of the University, the Wa Secondary Technical School offered a four-classroom block to serve as classrooms, library, and computer laboratory as well as departmental offices. The Controller and Accountant General's Department and the Institute of Adult Education, Wa also provided a hall each to serve as additional temporary classrooms.

The University later acquired land for its permanent site and developed a masterplan to guide the orderly development of physical infrastructure. With funding from the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund), the University was able to build a modern administration block, a lecture theatre complex, a multipurpose workshop, and some bungalows for staff.

In order for the University to achieve its mandate, in accordance with the Technical Universities Acts, and realise its vision of becoming a centre for academic excellence, this Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) is developed to guide the operations and activities of the University towards maintenance of quality standards and improvement.

1.2 Organogram of DHLTU

Figure 1 below shows the administrative and management structure of the University
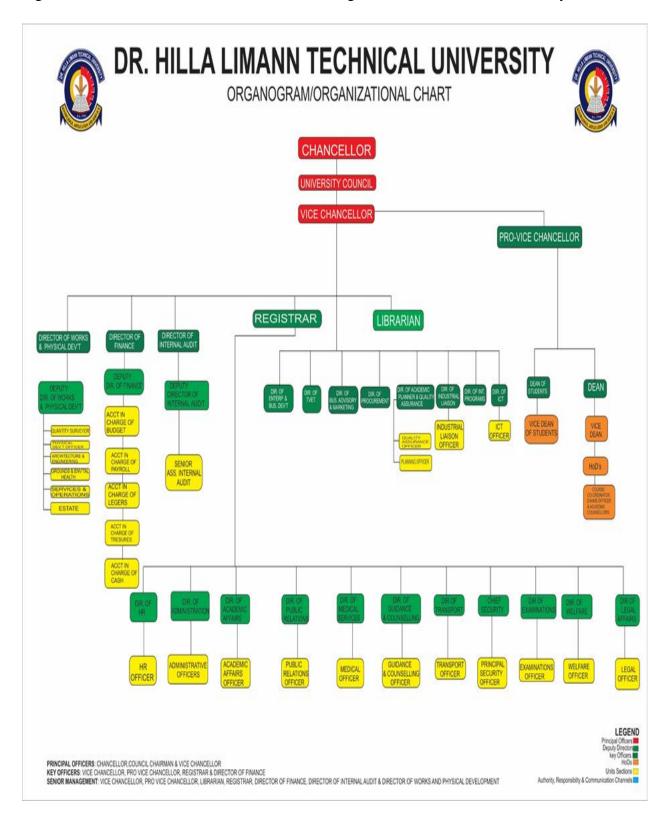

Figure 1: DHLTU Administrative and Management Structure

2.0 QUALITY STATEMENT

DHLTU is committed to ensuring continuous excellence in governance, teaching and learning, research and development, innovation and community engagement.

2.1 QAP Philosophy

The QAP shall operate with the following guiding principles:

   i.   Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation;

  ii.   Quality and industry-focused programmes,

 iii.   Research and development;

 iv.   Teamwork for effective services;

  v.   Compliance with internal and external requirements;

 vi.   Continuous improvement in services;

vii.   Rapid and effective feedback.

2.2 Objectives of QAP

   i.   To safeguard and improve academic standards and quality of education;

  ii.   To ensure that all programmes are of continued relevance to industry;

 iii.   To satisfy the internal and external stakeholders that the whole range of resources across academic and support areas is of the highest standard;

 iv.   To develop and sustain a culture of quality-seeking and quality assurance among members of the University community;

  v.   To provide accessible and adequate infrastructure for dealing with quality assurance at all levels.

2.3 Scope

This policy shall apply to all operations of the University as well as activities of its divisions, affiliated programmes and in dealing with stakeholders.

3.0   IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The University shall use a variety of strategies and methods to implement this policy:

1. Establishment of quality benchmark and parameters for every department.

2. Rigorous, comprehensive and evidence-based:

    I. Course assessment

    II. Internal quality audit of teaching and non-teaching functions

    III. Peer observation of teaching and learning

    IV. Supervision, assessment and validation of the following:

        a. Conduct of examinations

        b. Admissions processes

        c. Certification processes

        d. Process for issuing of transcripts and certificates

    V. Supervision and assessment of the management of the institution's strong rooms (examinations, admissions, etc.)

    VI. Assessment of curricula

    VII. Internal and external ranking of the institution and its programmes

    VIII. Collation and integration of feedback from students and other stakeholders on quality related issues in the institution

    IX. Development, dissemination and application of quality benchmarks/parameters on:

        a. Research

        b. Industrial attachment

        c. Community service

    X. Other administrative activities not limited to the following:

        a. Sanitation

        b. Maintenance

        c. Accommodation (staff and students)

        d. Security

        e. Health

        f. Energy management

        g. Maintaining a database on quality-related information

3.0   STAKEHOLDERS

The institution shall thrive to meet the norms, requirements and expectations of its stakeholders and embrace their participation with focus on quality delivery of services. The identified stakeholders include:

i.   Government and Regulatory Bodies
ii. Staff
iii. Students and Prospective Students
iv. Suppliers
v.   Collaborators
vi. General Public

3.1   Government and Regulatory Bodies

The University shall work closely with Government on matters relating to tertiary education policy development and implementation. DHLTU shall comply with the requirements of the regulatory bodies which are in conformity with all applicable laws such as the Technical Universities Act 2016, (Act 922), the Technical Universities (amendment) Act, 2018 (Act 974) and the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act 1016). DHLTU recognizes the following regulatory bodies and any other such bodies as may be established by law:

• Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC)
• Commission for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (CTVET)

3.2   Staff

The institution recognizes the relevance of staff in the realization of its mission and vision. It shall therefore provide support, resources and training to develop the staff to meet the current and future challenges of tertiary education. This shall be governed by the Statutes, Administrative Manual, Staff Development Policy, Leave Policy, Appointments and Promotions Policy, Disability Policy, Workplace HIV/AIDS Policy, Gender Policy, Housing Policy, Conditions of Services, and any other relevant policies.

3.3   Students and Prospective Students

a. *Students*

The University shall thrive to meet the expectation of students. The conduct of students shall be guided by the Statutes, Students' Handbook, Examinations Policy, Research Ethics Policy, Library Policy, Disability Policy, Industrial Attachment Policy,

Thesis/Dissertation Policy, ICT Resource Use Policy, Workplace HIV/AIDS Policy, Gender Policy, and other relevant policies.

b. Prospective Students

The University shall embark on outreach programmes to attract prospective students. DHLTU shall strive to encourage the interest of technical education by reaching out to students of Senior High Schools, Vocational and Technical Institutions, and Junior High schools. Members of the public and international students with the minimum admission requirements would also be targeted.

3.4   Suppliers
The University shall comply with all procurement regulations in dealing with its suppliers.

3.5   Collaborators
DHLTU shall strongly collaborate with industry and its partner institutions as required by the Technical Universities Act 2016 (Act 922), the Technical Universities (amendment) Act, 2018 (Act 974) and the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act 1016).

3.6   General Public
The University shall conduct its business to win the confidence of the Ghanaian public and the larger international community as a world-class institution of higher learning.

4.0   MAJOR THRUST AREAS

The following shall be the major thrust areas of the QAP of the University:

  i.   Governance
  ii.   Programmes Development and Accreditation
 iii.   Admissions
 iv.   Documentation and Records
  v.   Teaching and Learning
 vi.   Research
vii.   Examinations
viii.   Recruitment and Retention
 ix.   Assessment and Review
  x.   Information, Communication and Technology

4.1 Governance

The University is governed by Technical Universities Act 2016 (Act 922), the Technical Universities (amendment) Act, 2018 (Act 974) and the Technical Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (Act 1016), and the University Statutes which set out among other things the governance structure, aims and powers of the University. The University shall also operate within the other laws and policies that regulate its activities in the pursuit of its mission and vision.

4.1.1 Governance of the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA)

  i.   *Council*

The Council of the University is responsible for determining the strategic direction of the University, monitoring the implementation of decisions and ensuring the creation and maintenance of an environment that creates equal opportunity for the members of the University regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, gender or creed.

  ii.   *Academic Board and Faculty/School Boards*

The Academic Board is vested with the authority and responsibility for authorizing course additions, changes, and deletions. The Academic Board also ratifies degrees and approves programmes/courses as well as approving the status of Affiliate Institutions. Documents

to the Academic Board emanate from the Faculty/School Boards which are the first line of due diligence in the quality assurance process.

iii.   Planning and Quality Assurance Sub-Committee

The DAPQA shall have a sub-committee to oversee academic curriculum. This sub-committee shall be charged with the following:

a. Provide oversight responsibility for all matters relating to academic curricular
b. Plan new academic programmes and new courses
c. Develop policies in support of the Directorate
d. Establish a staff development programme for staff

iv.   Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance

The DAPQA is the main division with direct responsibility for overseeing quality in all departments/units and all affiliated institutions, and is charged with other duties as enshrined in the University's Statutes.

4.2   Accreditation

Accreditation of all programmes shall be in line with the guidelines for accreditation provided by the regulatory bodies and shall be in consonance with the policies of the University.

4.3   Admissions

Admission of candidates into programmes shall be in conformity with the DHLTU Admissions Policy and the National guideline for admission of candidates to tertiary institutions provided for by regulatory bodies unless otherwise stated.

The Head of Academic Affairs shall among other functions be responsible for the operation of all admission procedures to all programmes at the University and have oversight responsibility on the admissions of affiliate institutions.

The Head of Academic Affairs implements decisions of the Admissions Board. These include the validation of student entry qualifications and the observance of admission quotas.

The DAPQA works closely with the Admissions Unit under the Registry to ensure that students admitted satisfy regulatory requirements.

4.3.1   Central Admissions Board

The assessment of all potential students for admission to the University shall be governed by the Admissions Board which shall regulate and implement the admission policy. The Admissions Board ensures that key policies and procedures relating to the requirements and admission of all students are consistent with Faculty admission requirements. The Board is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor and include all Deans and Directors or their representatives and the Head of Academic Affairs. The Dean of Students' Affairs or a representative may be present to facilitate admission of physically challenged applicants.

4.3.2 Graduate School

The University commits itself to promoting quality research and graduate training. The Graduate School shall be responsible for graduate programmes and research. The Graduate School shall work with the Academic Affairs Unit in all matters regarding graduate admissions. The School shall supports the expansion and strengthening of graduate programmes in areas that build on strengths of undergraduate programmes; have a unique educational focus and prepare students for viable careers.

4.4   Documentation and Records

There shall be proper procedure for documentation and record of processes, staff and students' data in conformity with documentation and record procedures as may be outlined by the Registry.

4.4.1   Documentation

It is the responsibility of all staff to document appropriately all processes, correspondence and transactions in accordance with the specified policy or guideline.

4.4.2   Records
  i.   *Student Records*

   The Admissions Unit shall ensure that admission's records are kept on individual applicant for easy reference and follow-ups.

   The Academic Affairs in conjunction with the Academic Deans/Directors, HoDs shall update and synchronize students' records where required. The Academic Affairs has oversight responsibility on matters related to student records and certifications.

  ii.   *Staff Records*

The Human Resource Office shall update staff records upon approval of the appropriate authority and in line with the relevant procedures.

4.5   Teaching & Learning

DHLTU shall provide the required environment that promotes effective teaching and learning and this shall among other things include adequately furnished and tidy classroom space and washrooms, a well-kept and equipped laboratories and workshops. The quality of teaching and training shall be assessed by the DAPQA through but not limited to students' assessment at the end of each semester.

The University's Library shall be stocked with the relevant texts in the various disciplines to aid teaching, learning and research.

4.6   Research Output

The conduct of research by staff, students or individuals authorized by DHLTU shall be guided by the Research and Ethics Policy and other relevant policies in line with the research specification with approval by the mandated outfit or body.

4.7   Assessment of Teaching of Courses

4.7.1   Faculty/School Boards

The Faculty/School Boards are responsible for developing and regulating internal guidelines related to academic programmes, including teaching, learning, research, and assessment. The Boards shall have oversight responsibility for all committees established for these purposes. They will receive advice and recommendations on issues pertaining to teaching, learning, research and assessment at the Faculty/School level, and report to relevant University committees on these issues.

4.7.2   Departments and other Academic Units

Departments shall be responsible for undergraduate and graduate level teaching and research. Where appropriate, Institutes and Centres, in addition to promoting multidisciplinary research and the provision of extension services, shall be responsible for any undergraduate and graduate level teaching that they carry out.

4.7.3   Programme/Course Review Committees

All Academic units must have in place Programmes/Course Review Committee comprising at least three faculty members, one undergraduate and one post-graduate student, a representation from industry where appropriate, for the purpose of conducting curriculum reviews in accordance with the University policy guidelines.

4.7.4   Course Review and New Course Development

All Academic Units must have in place Competency Based Training (CBT) Programmes Committee per the Technical Universities Act. The purpose of the Course Review and Development Procedure is to ensure understanding and a standardized approach concerning curriculum changes and that the appropriate standard of content is assured. The Academic Board approves all additions, deletions, and changes (including changes in method of delivery) of courses for the University. The review process will include departmental recommendations as well as Faculty/School Board and the School of Graduate Studies where appropriate, as well as the DAPQA. It should be noted that even where a new programme draws on existing courses, there is the need for accreditation by GTEC. This additional time element needs to be allowed for in the planning for introduction of new programmes.

4.7.5   External Examiners

External examiners have an important role in assuring the standards and academic quality of courses. They are required to submit examiners report to the Vice-Chancellor on the conduct of the course and issues related to standards and assessment. The external examiners for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes shall be nominated by Faculty/School Boards on recommendation from Departments. CTVET shall continue to play their external moderation role for all HND programmes. The external examiners so appointed shall be responsible for moderation and arbitration purposes. They shall also serve as external examiners for student Dissertation and Thesis. The rules governing appointments of external examiners and their mode of operation are given in the University's Examination Regulations.

4.8   Student Evaluation of Teaching and Courses

This policy focuses on the minimum requirements that Departments should meet concerning the collection and evaluation of feedback from students on teaching by lecturers and the content of courses. Meanwhile, departments are not limited by these minimum requirements but are encouraged to go further where necessary.

Student-Staff Consultative Committees should be formed in every department with representation from all levels. The Student-Staff Consultative Committee should meet at least once a semester. It is considered good practice that such meetings take place prior to departmental meetings so that any issues raised can be addressed at these meetings.

Departments should at least, seek feedback on individual courses as well as lecturers within programmes of study at the end of each semester or academic year. It should be noted that both qualitative and quantitative responses are vital for evaluation. This regular assessment of lecturers and courses will help the departments to know whether the purpose for which the course was introduced has been achieved.

Departments should institute tracer studies to find out the fate of their graduating students.

4.8.1   Student Evaluation of Teaching
Evaluating teaching by students may include any of the following methods:

- Paper questionnaire
- Electronic questionnaire
- Staff-student liaison committees
- Informal feedback
- Open meetings with the student body
- Focus groups

The choice of method will depend on the specific circumstances for a particular course.

Informal feedback

i. Students may call at a lecturer's office, Academic Advisor, Head of Department or the Departmental Office to discuss problems in person, or drop their written comments in a suggestion box provided by the Department for this purpose.

ii. Departments should ensure that students have the opportunity to provide feedback on the teaching of a course within the semester that the course is taught.

Response Rate and Reporting Structures

A specific response rate is not required, but it is expected that the majority of students will provide feedback on teaching when requested. Where feedback is low, departments should give consideration to ways in which the response rate might be improved.

Departments should monitor the response rate and take it into account when evaluating the feedback and developing the action plan. A response of at least 60% should be considered adequate. The reports and action plans arising from feedback questionnaires should be approved by the Faculty/School Board. Where it is felt that an issue cannot be addressed by

the department, the Head of Department should ensure that it is brought to the attention of the University via the Faculty/School Board. The decision of the Faculty/School Board shall be communicated to DAPQA.

4.8.2 Student Evaluation of Courses and Programmes

Process of evaluation

The University should ensure that all departments have a procedure in place for dealing with student evaluation of courses, and that this is clearly communicated to students. All students taking the course should complete a questionnaire that will be prepared by the DAPQA and administered by the department. The questionnaire will be analysed by the DAPQA and the results sent back to the departments.

The findings should be communicated to students indicating any actions to be taken to address any problems raised, or reasons for not taking action. The Head of Department should designate a person or group for the course under review to confirm that the report provides an appropriate summary of the feedback and response. The process should be monitored by the appropriate Faculty/School Board, which should ensure that feedback is sought for all courses and programmes on a regular basis.

Feedback

As feedback from students is intended to enhance the current as well as future student experience of their courses, the opportunity to provide feedback should be well-timed. The Departments should grant students the chance to provide feedback:

i. Immediately, so that problems that arise during a course can be addressed as quickly as possible. Feedback can be provided, for example, by discussions with the lecturer or the Head of Department or through the Joint Staff-Student Consultative Committee.

ii. At the end of a course so that students can provide their opinions on all aspects of the course and the lecturer. It is expected that such feedback will be derived by means of a questionnaire.

Course evaluation

i. Each course should be reviewed at least once every other year, although some departments may be obliged by professional or accrediting bodies to obtain feedback from students on a more regular basis.

ii. All new courses should be reviewed at the end of their third year of operation. Departments should however be aware of the risk of 'questionnaire fatigue' and are advised to structure course questionnaires carefully to avoid the same cohort of students being asked for their views continually and in the same format. Departments should ensure that it is clear to all staff and students which module will be reviewed during the course of the academic year.

Programme evaluation

It is recommended that Departments consider evaluating programmes they run every other year. This should be carefully co-ordinated with the other evaluations to avoid questionnaire fatigue.

4.8.3   Communicating the Results of Evaluation

At the end of every evaluation process, the University will ask the various departments to comment on the feedback from students, how it is gathered and the usefulness of it to the development and operations of programmes through an Annual Programme Monitoring Process. The results of any evaluation should be made available to students along with any comments a lecturer may wish to make in response. Feedback on evaluations should be communicated to students and to the lecturer as soon as possible to promote a process of continual improvement.

A summary of the analysed data (the objective portion of the instrument) and a copy of the unedited subjective/written portion are sent to the Lecturer concerned. Copies of the same materials are sent to the Lecturer's Head of Department and Dean. The Director of the DAPQA is required to send comments on the analyzed data to the Dean concerned. Everything is done under strict confidentiality. Heads of the departments are required to discuss their evaluation report with teaching staff. Deans are required to talk to teaching staff whose teaching is found to be below expectation. [The Deans could delegate; i.e., making use of experienced and respected senior members to talk to the staff concerned]. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) would serve as discussant in cases where Deans have a teaching load.

4.9   Recruitment & Retention

i.   Recruitment

The recruitment of staff shall be in consonance with the University Statutes, Scheme of Service for Technical Universities, and Appointments and Promotions Policy of the University. The University Appointments and Promotions Board shall be responsible for ensuring that prospective academic and administrative staff have the requisite qualification and competence. The Board shall be assisted by the Human Resource Unit in carrying out its responsibilities.

ii.   Retention

   a)   Training and Development

This shall be guided by the Statutes and Staff Development policy.

   b)   Other Incentives

Measures of incentives geared toward retention of staff shall be guided by the relevant policies and the conditions of service of staff.

4.10   Rapid and Effective Feedback

Rapid and effective feedback from both students and staff are the bases for key information about quality. Student feedback, which can be obtained at course, departmental or other levels, is a critical part of the University's Planning and Quality Assurance Strategy. Staff feedback may be obtained through a range of methods including departmental meetings, committee reports, position papers, and evaluations of staff development sessions, questionnaires about validation and review of events and consultation exercises about specific projects.

5.0   VALIDITY OF THE POLICY PROVISIONS

These policy provisions shall become operational immediately upon approval by the University Council, and shall remain valid until when they are revoked by the same authority. However, given the changing circumstances under which the University operates, this document is subject to periodic reviews and alterations, and, whenever such alterations happen, the revised version of the document shall take precedence over the previous one.

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DHLTU QAP