

**QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN  
UGANDA**

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in private universities in Western Uganda. Literature shows that the growth of private universities in Uganda led to a number of them to pay little attention to quality; therefore a number of demands rose up with a desire for quality service delivery in teaching and learning procedures. Therefore, this study begets a core question-is there a contribution of quality assurance practices to implementation of teaching and learning? This study explored the contribution of study program accreditation to implementation of teaching and learning; explored the effect of the quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning; investigated the contribution of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures to implementation of teaching and learning and explored the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda. Using the qualitative research design, the study targeted key university management figures, including 14 members of the non-teaching management and teaching administrative staff, 26 students and 2 quality assurance officers through purposive sampling. In-depth interviews, observations and document reviews were analyzed thematically by NVIVO software. This led to emergence of the following themes: minimal adherence to teaching-learning standards and procedures, moderate pedagogical competences; limited teaching and learning internal control mechanisms and gaps in compliance with NCHE standards for teaching and learning. The findings indicated that the implementation of study program accreditation faced notable challenges in fully adhering to the quality assurance standards set by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). These challenges underscore the need to strengthen teaching staff professional development and welfare mechanisms to ensure that students acquire relevant competences required amidst emerging complexities in today's globalized, knowledge-based economy. Notably, the study highlights the necessity for rigorous institutional monitoring of all academic and administrative procedures to assess their effectiveness and alignment with NCHE-driven quality assurance requirements to translate into improved student engagement, inclusive, transformative learning experiences and achieving sustainable compliance with national quality assurance standards.

## DECLARATION

I, Namara Mable declare that this dissertation titled ‘quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda’ is original in nature and has never been prepared at any university for the award of Doctoral Degree or any other academic qualification related to the same.



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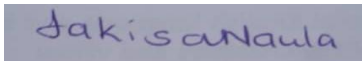
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## APPROVAL

This is to certify that that this research report by Namara Mable titled ‘quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda’ has been conducted under our supervision and is ready for submission with our approval.

1. Mary Jakisa Naula Owor, (PhD)

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2025    Signature



2. Christine Margaret Okurut-Ibore, (PhD)



Date: 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2025

Signature

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother Sanyu Christine, my late father Mr. Tumusiime Ernest; I owe them a lot. May their souls keep resting in Peace Eternal! Amen.

To my husband, Mr. Barigye Benard, thank you so much for the financial and emotional support all throughout my career journey.

To my beloved sons; Emmanuel, Clifford and Matthew Barigye, I am always grateful for your unwavering love, encouragement and prayers. Every page of this thesis bears the imprint of your love. I have come this far because you have kept me smiling and thriving. “I offer blossoms of my enduring love”.

God bless you all!

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*“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” (Lao Tzu).*

I am grateful to the Almighty God for life and His unfailing promises. He is an awesome, amazing God who fulfills every promise to those who trust in His word. Ebenezer!

This thesis ends the thousand-mile journey of my PhD research, yet it also engenders another to extend and apply that research.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AI	:	Artificial Intelligence
CUAP	:	Committee on University Academic Programmes
EER	:	External Evaluation and Review
EQA	:	External Quality Assurance
EQAA	:	External Quality Assurance Agencies
IQA	:	Internal Quality Assurance
NCHE	:	National Council for Higher Education
QAAHE	:	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QAMs	:	Quality Assurance Mechanisms
TQM	:	Total Quality Management
PU	:	Private Universities
OECD	:	Organisation of Economic Corporation for Development.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

According to Uganda's Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) 2001 through its amendment in 2006, the term university means a public or private institution of higher learning established to provide post-secondary education programs of study leading to the award of certificates, diplomas, degrees, and advance new knowledge, usually through research and publication of results (NCHE, 2011; 2014; Nshemereirwe, 2011; Aciro et al., 2023; Muganga et al., 2024).

Universities strive for the fulfillment of specific obligations. These mandates include; training, research and innovation, technology transfer, maximizing the stakeholders' interest, social responsibility, ethics and market leadership (Obwogi, 2011; Mugizi, 2021). Studies have highlighted a number of activities that higher educational institutions engage in to deliver quality education for instance; delivering teaching services, research and innovations, community outreach services, employing quality staff, admitting students that qualify for different programs, infrastructure and quality educational facilities, suitable and sufficient equipment so that students enjoy a secure and conducive learning environment (Ifeoma, 2013; Baiko et al., 2023; Basake et al., 2024)

There has been development of relevant quality assurance policies, standards and systems internationally, at regional, national and institutional levels making quality assurance an important aspect in developing countries as highlighted by Okebukola (2012) and Martin et al. (2020), this process plays a great role putting procedures in place to follow through the implementation of teaching and learning in universities.

In Europe, there was a need to hasten the implementation and expansion of an institutionalized quality assurance system; therefore, the Bologna Declaration was launched in 1999 by 29 countries. The aim was to build an integrated European Higher Education Area (EHEA), with the main goal of facilitating employability and increasing staff and students' mobility (Matei et al., 2016; Sotiria & Russell, 2023).

With regard to increasing mobility for students and staff, the Bologna Process aimed at making student learning outcomes and credentials more similar across European university systems (Teichler, 2012; Zeleza, 2012; Abdul-Razak, 2012; Kinser & Hill, 2011; Kohoutek & Antonoulez, 2025). Therefore, this comparability of students' qualifications has become core in the reforms carried out resulting in the establishment of internal quality assurance procedures and external quality assurance mechanisms for instance external programme accreditation in the European Higher education area (Bollaert, 2014).

Students are significant stakeholders in the design and implementation of quality assurance mechanisms, guidelines and standards for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA); the European Students' Union plays a crucial role for both internal and external quality assurance systems (Liviu et al., 2016). The same idea of ensuring quality assurance in universities has spread to East, Central and West Africa, and many other regions of the world (Tuning, 2011).

In Africa, for various reasons, the quality of higher education had declined since the 1980s. By the mid-1990s, the level of quality had fallen so low that all stakeholders in higher education, including institutions, governments, and donors agreed on the need and urgency of taking sustainable actions to reverse this trend and revitalize higher education. This situation has been used as a rationale for the organisation of

the 1998 World Conference on Higher Education by UNESCO and its partners. Several initiatives have followed to implement the recommendations of that 1998 conference. They include establishment of quality assurance agencies, capacity building in the fields of quality assurance and teaching and learning in higher education among others. A rapid increase in the number of students in a university erodes the minimum quality standards related to students and teaching and learning processes unless such increases are accompanied by planned and purposeful measures to prevent such deterioration (Materu, 2007; Shabani, 2013; Shabani, et al., 2014).

Van der Bank and Popoola (2014, as cited in Baiko et al., 2024) noted that in Africa Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAM) in the higher education sector are as old as the establishment of university education in the continent. In Africa, at least two regional organisations are actively involved in quality assurance. These are the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA).

The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) was established in 1968, with the main objective of harmonising and coordinating higher education policies and programmes in the 19 member countries. These countries are; Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Chad, Senegal, and Togo (Shabani & Okebukola, 2014; Atwebembeire et al., 2018).

CAMES implements three quality assurance programmes; the Licence-Master-Doctorate (LMD; also Bachelor/Master/Doctorate) Reform which began in Europe in

1999 with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration; a convention on mutual recognition of higher education degrees in the CAMES member states was signed in 1972 in Lomé, Togo and Since 2007, in collaboration with the Association of African Universities and the Francophone Universities Agency, CAMES implements a series of annual workshops aimed at building the capacity of higher education stakeholders in quality assurance (Otieno, 2024).

Also, there are four organisations that are involved in the design and implementation of quality assurance initiatives. These are, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) that provides technical and financial support to organisations involved in quality assurance enhancement in Africa, including the African Union Commission, the Association of African Universities (AAU), the African Quality Assurance Network, and CAMES; the Association of African Universities; the African Union Commission, and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa with efforts to establish an African higher education and research space in accordance with a recommendation of the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (Shabani, 2013; Shabani et al., 2014).

In East Africa, in a bid to harmonize and streamline the higher education process quality assurance guidelines, standards, systems, procedures and accreditation standards and processes in higher education in the region in 2006 three East African higher education regulatory agencies - the National Council of Higher Education in Uganda, Tanzania Commission for Universities and The Commission for higher Education in Kenya - signed a memorandum of cooperation (Buchere, 2009; Alabiet al., 2018).

Later on, after the republic of Rwanda and Burundi were welcomed as members of the East African Community, the Rwandan Council for Higher Education and Burundi's National Council for Higher Education joined the effort. In 2006, there was an initiative to set up a regional quality assurance system to harmonize higher education in the region (IUCEA, 2010).

In Uganda, Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAMs) have been in existence since the opening of Makerere Technical College in 1922 as the first higher education institution (HEI) in the country. By 1949, the technical college became a constituent college of University of London and adopted the QAMs of the university. However, towards the end of the 20th century, with the rise in demand for Higher Education (HE) in the country there was a marked increase in the number of government and private universities associated with a sharp rise in enrolment, poor funding, and poor quality of learning facilities that existed since the colonial days (Government white paper, 2008) all creating a lot of challenges for quality assurance (Mugabi, 2012; Mamdani, 2007 & Materu, 2007, as cited in Baiko et al., 2024; Muganga et al., 2024).

In the Post-Colonial time (ie 1988), the first private university was established in Uganda during the time when higher education was privatized due to the high demand of higher education with a hope of improving the provision of services, quality and accessibility of higher education (Bunoti, 2012; Kidega, 2023; Muganga et al., 2024). This is the time when the government expanded the system of education, signaling an important turn from the decade's previous colonial strategy; since then, private universities have become one of the fastest growing aspects of higher education.

Initially, higher education in Uganda was regarded as a public good to be provided freely by public higher education institutions. However, increases in demand for higher education Tumwesigye (2006, as cited in Mugabi, 2012), coupled with limited budget allocations for public universities Otieno (2007, as cited in Mugabi, 2012) that characterized the late 1980s and early 1990s created ideal conditions for the growth of private universities.

Introducing free primary education in 1997 and secondary education in 2007 also led to a significant rise in university enrolment Ochwe-Echel (2016, as cited in Muganga et al., 2024) and the subsequent emergence of private universities (Atwebembeire et al., 2018, as cited in Muganga et al., 2024). Therefore, the growth of private universities can be attributed largely, to the unprecedented demand for higher education, which is reflected by growing student enrolments. Such excess demand, coupled with favourable government policies created ideal conditions for individual entrepreneurs, religious and other non-profit organisations to establish universities to provide university education largely to supplement rather than supplant higher education supply by public universities (Mugabi, 2012). During this period, ten times the usual number of students was admitted (Rwaboni, 2010; Lucander & Christersson, 2020).

There were challenges relating to a vast number of private higher education institutions in place, a number of them were operating as for-profit institutions paying little attention to quality; a number of demands rose up for greater relevance of the university curriculum to societal demands, the government and universities themselves too desired for quality in higher education (Lucander & Christersson, 2020; Muganga et al., 2024).

Major players criticized the system for failing to recognize the importance of education in addressing societal problems like global issues, governance problems and sustainability problems in development initiatives (Kidega et al., 2023). This raised eyebrows with regard to the quality of higher education in many ways because more issues like admission of poor-quality students who lacked the minimum entry requirements and the quality of teaching and learning facilities hindered the quality-of service delivery in these Universities (Alemiga and Kibukamusoke 2019; Neema, 2016; Briggs et al., 2012). This led to the establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Uganda to promote QA by regulating the new HE providers (Materu & Righet, 2010 as cited in Baiko et al., 2023).

The National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), an agency founded by Act of Parliament No. 7 of 2001 to execute the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of Parliament 2001 as amended in 2006, is Uganda's higher education regulator. The mandate of the NCHE includes among others: to regulate, accredit and to ensure that higher education institutions effectively deliver quality, relevant and standard education to society (The Uganda Higher Education Review, 2024; Baiko et al., 2024).

Notwithstanding the presence of higher learning institutions that are privately owned, the standard and availability of these institutions are still falling short of the requirements and desires of stakeholders in many Sub-Saharan nations, Uganda inclusive Kasenene (2010, as cited by Bunoti 2012) and Amal et al. (2020), with each stakeholder, both internal and external, having specific expectations about the quality of education of higher education institutions (Iradel, 2018; Wandera, et al., 2023).

In reference to private higher education in Africa, it is pertinent to identify which elements in the definition of quality assurance are relevant in terms of the expectations; so there seems to be a challenge for providers of private education to develop the conditions that make quality possible as well as assuring quality (Lemaitre, 2002:p.36 as cited in Kwame 2014; Muganga et al., 2024). This stresses that the task of determining what constitutes quality in implementation of teaching and learning in higher education is far more pressing and critical.

Quality assurance, like quality in general, is difficult to define. Quality assurance practices involve policies, strategies, standards and procedures used to measure the level of compliance NCHES standards and guidelines to improve the quality of education in higher institutions of learning for students' life-long self-directed learning (Haruni 2014; Lucander & Christersson, 2020). A number of existing definitions describe the concept of quality assurance practices as setting guidelines or standards externally by quality assurance agencies and accrediting bodies or the process of monitoring and evaluation carried out internally within the institution; these definitions encompass features of quality such as accountability and ongoing improvement.

Quality assurance is among the most crucial notions that require regal address in higher institutions of learning due to the fact that it is much more than meeting some standard measures because it addresses issues of almost every aspect of the system (Altbach, et al., 2017; Yahiaoui et al., 2022). Some studies have noted that in higher institutions of learning, there are minimum standards to adhere to, to ensure that quality education is offered despite the growing enrolments of students. If quality assurance procedures are to yield positive results, the process must be

seen as important to those involved, deliver critical information to higher education institutions in implementation of teaching and learning ((Muganga et al., 2024).

Quality assurance approaches in higher institutions of learning involve external and internal mechanisms and procedures. External procedures may include national or regional institutional reviews, as well as evaluation by peers. Internal mechanisms involve internal monitoring and evaluation which may include institution or staff self-evaluation, staff appraisal by the supervisor, peer evaluation and teaching and learning student assessments (Looney & Clemson, 2018). External quality assurance procedures performed by the external body (NCHE) and practices involved in monitoring what goes on in the higher institutions of learning (Internal quality assurance processes) are highly interrelated, and one cannot exist without the other; without self-evaluation by the institution, an external quality assessment cannot be conducted. The roles of internal and external quality assurance units should be balanced (Kwame (2014).

In accordance to study findings, quality in higher education is a multifaceted, multilevel and a simultaneously evolving notion that corresponds to the contextualized environments of an educational framework. One of the primary explanations why quality and quality assurance in higher education are more complex than in business is for the reason that there are so many participants in the discipline. There are numerous stakeholders in higher education and all the stakeholders, have their own ideas with each stakeholder conceptualizing quality in a different way. These include students, employers, parents, universities, disciplines, the labor market, society, government among others; these may thus take different, sometimes conflicting meanings depending on the understanding of

their various interests (Maryrose, 2024; Pavel, 2012; Schindler et al., 2015, as cited in Dicker 2019; Pavel, 2012 p.124).

Worth noting, in many instances universities are widely considered as vital instruments for the accomplishment of all national and continental developmental desires, in relation to economic, political and intellectual aspirations. In terms of the 'core business', this means the production of people equipped with the intellectual capacities needed to pursue national and regional advancement (Ajayi, et al., 1996, as cited in Obwogi, 2011; Oktarina et al., 2023). In the same words of Cloete et al. (2013, as cited in Neema-Abooki, 2016), the underlying assumption is that the university is the only institution in society that can provide an adequate foundation for the complexities of the emerging knowledge economy.

Higher institutions of learning are defined as having the ability to train personnel for the socio-economic and industrial revolution of nations (Nsiah-Gyabaah, 2011). The purpose of education is to impart adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes to the students; this is a response to many challenges confronting society today (Ranjani 2013; Fisher & Santana, 2020). The wealth of nations is increasingly becoming dependent on possession of knowledge by tertiary educated citizens and their preparation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges according to the Strategic Plan for higher education 2003-2015.

As society is investing more and more resources into higher education, it is also demanding greater levels of effectiveness and accountability from the institutions (Barbara and Martha, 2020; Lucander & Christersson, 2020). Interest in quality of higher education has increased because of the need for greater accountability to accompany the significant increase in the size of the student population and the

students' greater expectations, the entire citizenry and indeed the global society (Becket and Brookes, 2005, as cited in Peter Neema 2016; Yahiaoui et al., 2022).

This study therefore explored the perspectives of university administrators and students in their final year of study on quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. Although several studies have examined quality assurance practices in higher education, most have concentrated on institutional processes for instance accreditation, curriculum design with limited attention to how a number of stakeholders perceive these practices; therefore, studies carried out on quality assurance practices and how private universities complied with NCHE external assessment in management of teaching and learning procedures were scanty (Eryenyu, et al., 2024).

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

The background was categorized following four perspectives. These included historical, theoretical, conceptual and contextual.

### **1.2.1 Historical perspective**

Attention to quality is not the newest approach; Stensaker (2005, as cited in Alabi et al., 2018) and Muweesi et al. (2024) indicate that it was always part of the academic history (IUCEA, 2010; UNESCO, 2013; Newton, 2006, as cited in Matei et al., 2016; Eryenyu et al., 2024).

The pursuit of quality (QA) in higher education has evolved significantly over the past several decades, shaped by global, regional and national reforms aimed at

strengthening the effectiveness, relevance and delivery of teaching and learning. Historically, universities operated with a high level of academic autonomy, relying primarily on internal peer review and the reputation of scholars to maintain academic standards. However, growing concerns about accountability, massification of higher education and the need to align academic programs with societal and labor-market demands prompted universities to adopt formalized QA mechanisms to maintain academic standards, improve instructional effectiveness and enhance student learning outcomes in the late 20th century (Rwaboni, 2010; Kidega, 2023)

Internationally, the rapid expansion of universities from the 1980s onward generated widespread concern about maintaining academic standards, governments and stakeholders increasingly demanded evidence of educational quality, efficiency, and value for public investment. This led to the establishment of national QA agencies, standardized evaluation procedures, external accreditation systems and performance-based assessments of teaching and learning (Helsinki & Pruvot, 2011; Tabaku, 2018)

The Bologna process of 1999 and bodies like the OECD and UNESCO emphasized structured curriculum design and review, competence-based learning, staff qualification benchmarks, transparent assessment procedures and rigorous internal monitoring systems (Liviú et al., 2016; Sotiria & Russell, 2023). These further accelerated these changes in Europe, promoting transparency, harmonization of academic standards and comparability of qualifications across countries. These developments influenced higher education systems in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda, encouraging institutions to adopt structured QA

mechanisms within their higher education institutions (Tuning, 2011; Kohoutek & Antonoulez, 2025).

In Africa, the rise of QA systems gained momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s as higher education institutions expanded rapidly to meet the increased demand. Governments and regional bodies such as the African Union (AU), the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), regional frameworks such as the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and continental initiatives under the African Union advocated for harmonized quality standards across the continent. Many countries established national councils or accreditation bodies to oversee institutional performance and ensure consistent implementation of teaching and learning standards (Shabani et al., 2014; Shabani & Okebukola, 2014; Otieno, 2024).

In Uganda, QA practices evolved alongside the liberalization of higher education in the 1990s, which brought significant growth in private universities. This expansion raised concerns about the quality, relevance and consistency of academic programs. There was great need to integrate QA practices such as curriculum design and review processes, staff recruitment and professional development, internal monitoring and evaluation, assessment procedures and learning resources to meet the required standards for academic excellence. This aimed at improving the implementation of teaching and learning, learner-centered pedagogies and supporting continuous improvement. These concerns prompted formal quality assurance structures to begin to take shape with the establishment of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) (Mugabi, 2012; Muganga et al., 2024).

The NCHE was therefore established by an act of parliament - The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA), (2001) (as amended in 2006) section 4, under

the laws of Uganda; to regulate and guide the establishment and management of institutions of higher learning; it mandated universities to develop internal QA systems aligned with national standards (Rwaboni, 2010; Kidega, 2023; Baiko et al., 2024).

The emergence of private universities in Western Uganda throughout the 2000s and 2010s was partly driven by the need to decentralize higher education opportunities and support regional socio-economic development. Historically, these institutions have faced challenges of resource constraints, limited capacity for continuous internal monitoring and evaluation and adequate staffing among others. These challenges directly influence the quality of instruction, teaching methods and the overall learning experiences; leading to the need to strengthen their QA frameworks in response to NCHE requirements. Many institutions introduced directorates or offices of quality assurance to coordinate compliance and oversee the implementation of teaching and learning standards (Atwebembeire et al., 2018; Alemiga & Kibukamusoke, 2019; Ankunda & Mureebe, 2023).

Despite these efforts, concerns persist regarding the degree to which QA practices are effectively implemented in many private universities and how these processes influence teaching and learning. For instance resource limitations, inconsistencies in staff recruitment and professional development, constrained infrastructure, limited utilization of student feedback and insufficient adherence to established standards continue to affect the learner engagement (Bagonza et al., 2019). Understanding the historical progression of QA practices and teaching-learning practices within private universities in western Uganda is essential for examining current practices, identifying persistent gaps that continue to affect these

universities and proposing strategies for enhancing educational quality in contemporary higher education (Rwaboni, 2010; Bunoti, 2012; Baiko et al., 2024).

### **1.2.2 Theoretical perspective**

This study anchored on the Systems Theory Approach that was proposed in the 1920's by the biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy Drack & Pouvreau, later advanced in the 1940's and furthered by Ross Ashby (Ashby, 1956) and later by Katz and Kahn (1966) looked at an organization as a social system. The concept depicts the repeating cycles of input, throughput, output, and feedback between an organization and its external environment (Bertalanffy 1951, pp. 303-361; Mugizi, 2021; Yahiaoui et al., 2022).

Patterns and relationships of a system emerge from interactions of components where by Systems receive information from the environment, process it within, and then release the outcomes to the environment. In order to ascertain whether the output was effective, the system seeks feedback from the environment; it suggests the need to give attention to the system as a whole (Wandera et al., 2023; Baiko et al., 2024).

Cheng and Tam (1997) noted that if a HEI is considered to be a system, the focus of quality assurance practices should be on the evaluation of the inputs, their transformation and the products. The main inputs in universities are human resources (administrators, the faculty and students), academic programs and physical resources (finances and infrastructure). The implementation of the curriculum, teaching, learning, adherence to policies and standards, assessment

and internal monitoring and evaluation among others are the processes employed to transform the inputs into products.

The institutional environment influences the application of quality assurance practices in universities (Kansay, 2012, as cited in Baiko et al., 2023). Universities have both an internal environment made up of administrators, the faculty and students as well as an external environment that includes the government, regulators, employers and parents among others.

### **1.2.3 Conceptual perspective**

The concept of quality assurance practices is perceived differently by different stakeholders and cannot be defined in a single meaning (Oh, 2017; Tavares et al., 2017; Michael, 1998, as cited by Wandera et al., 2023). Different disciplines of study address the same subject such as engineering, management, manufacturing industry, and health Markus et al. (2018); government, lecturers, students, parents, etc within the higher education setting (Nyangau, 2014). The government, students and their families, organizations, and others who provide funding are becoming more demanding for value for their money and seek for better and enhanced teaching results (Fabrice and Soleine, 2008, as cited in Obwogi, 2011).

Quality assurance practices therefore are a series of events, affairs, processes, services that are rendered to ensure that there is proper control, organization, and coordination of institutional activities to meet the expected quality. These activities include reviewing quality criteria, assessing control measure outcomes, and analyzing student' engagement and achievement to ensure that proper quality standards and procedures are appropriately applied in the institution. The driving

force for quality assurance practice in institutions is to make certain that planned policies, programmes, and activities adhere to best procedures, guidelines and standards.

Mooney (2013) emphasizes that since ancient human civilization, society has always strived for quality services. In higher education, what is meant by 'quality' is unclear (Brocker haff, eta al., 2015, as cited in Dicker, 2019). Quality is a multifaceted idea having a multitude of connotations; Harvey and Williams (2010, page 7 as cited in lfeoma, 2013) and Wandera etal. (2023) concluded that quality is a multifaceted concept with political implications that must be assessed in light of circumstances and intent.

Academic quality is defined in terms of the process of teaching and learning that produces a complete person that is holistically empowered in terms of intellectual, moral, physical, social and emotional development (lfeoma, 2013; Baiko etal., 2023). Other scholars have defined academic quality in comparison to academic standards related to outcomes for learning, which depict different degrees of adequate capabilities, knowledge, attitudes inclusive expected to be achieved by students after going through a certain program. The implementation of both internal and external quality assurance practices is pertinent for the achievement of academic standards (Mochtar, J., et al., 2019; Oktarina etal., 2023).

Quality Assurance is referred to as a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfills expectations and measures up to threshold minimum requirements (Baiko etal., 2023). CHEA as cited in (Butdisuwan, 2015) defines quality assurance as a planned and systematic review process of an institution or program to determine that acceptable standards of

education, scholarship and infrastructure are being maintained and enhanced (p. 151).

According to article 11 of the World Declaration on higher education published by the United Nations, quality assurance practices is a multidimensional notion, which should encompass all educational activities such as teaching and academic programs, teaching and learning procedures, recruiting and retaining the appropriate workforce, research and innovation, facilities, equipment, buildings and services to the community (ESIB, 2001; Baiko et al., 2024).

However, as quality assurance practices majorly aim at ensuring quality, according to research quality is not uniform in all universities as universities might differ in their missions, visions and philosophies (Musa, 2017; Martin et al., 2020). A quality institution is that which is accountable and satisfies the demands of different stakeholders (IBAT, 2011; Amal et al., 2020). According to the different studies done in quality assurance, the notion of quality assurance has been mentioned as the 'heart' of quality service delivery in higher institutions of learning (EUA, 2008; Jongbloed, 2008; CHES, 2011). In consonance, Cheng (2013) views education quality as the character of an input, process and output of the education system that satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their implicit and explicit expectations.

The quality of university education is defined as an improvement of all aspects of teaching and learning and ensuring excellence so that recognizable and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all university learners (Kagoda & Ezati, 2013, as cited in Bagonza, et al., 2018). The major aim of quality assurance procedures in higher education is to support and improve the systems of higher education

institutions which consequently promote educational accomplishments (Bobby, 2014). Therefore, it's unavoidable that the role of quality assurance is to realize higher education institutions' desired outcomes (Figurek et al., 2021).

Higher education has four key stakeholder groups: providers of education, such as funding organizations, consumers of the product (e.g., learners), receivers of products who are graduates (e.g., workplaces), and those working within the system of higher learning (Schindler et al., 2015, as cited in Dicker, 2019; Amal et al., 2020). Therefore, Quality is likely to be perceived differently from each view point and is hence relative.

Related to the previous scholars, Harvey and Green (1993:11, as cited in Williams, 2016) and Martin et al. (2020) provide five discrete interpretations of quality: as exception or excellence, as attaining perfection or consistence, as fitness for purpose, as transformation and as value for money. In various studies, "Excellence" is the classic definition of quality; it is the prevalent one at many old elite higher education institutions, as continuous growth in educational standards. Second definition is "Value for money"- this concept entails that a quality institution is defined as one that satisfies the public's expectations for transparency and accountability.

Other scholars define quality as "fitness for purpose" - This leads the conversation to the issue, "What is the intent of higher education?"; the purpose being described as what the institution is aiming at. Fourth definition "Transformational"- this looks at quality teaching as the teaching that transforms students' perceptions and how they are empowered and prepared to apply learned expertise, skills and abilities to

actual-life challenges and societal changes, it emphasizes the processes of learning and empowerment of the student.

Other scholars have defined quality as a measure of perfection, customer satisfaction, meeting generally accepted standards or conforming to these standards as defined by an institution (Elassy, 2015; NCHE, 2014; Nyangau, 2014; Harvey & Green, 1993:11; Fourie, 2000; Charantimath, 2011 as cited in Martin et al., 2020). CHEA as cited in (Butdisuwan, 2015); QA is "a deliberate and thorough evaluation procedure for a program or institution in order to ensure that appropriate requirements for learning, research, and facilities have been preserved and improved." (p.151).

In this research QA in higher education, will be looked at as a systematic process of assessing and verifying inputs, outputs and outcomes against standardized benchmarks of quality so as to maintain and enhance quality, ensure greater accountability and facilitate harmonization of standards across academic programmes, institutions and systems (UNESCO, June 2013). Furthermore, Van Brank (2014) believes that a QA plan should typically cover two key areas: how to manage problems (quality-related events) and how to enhance practice before an issue happens (which is continuous quality advancement).

Cheng (2013) views education quality as the character of an input, process and output of the education system that satisfy both internal and external stakeholders by meeting their explicit and implicit expectation. Different scholars have defined it differently basing on the differences in stakeholders' interests and expectations, and the different indicators and strategies used to achieve it (Campbell & Royzsnjai, 2002; Muguad & Krone 2012; Akareem & Hossain 2016).

The Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) practices refer to the institution's, systems, processes, standards and procedures to ensure that its mission is met in an efficient, effective, and significant approach as well as meeting the requirements that apply to higher education in general, or to the discipline, program or faculty in particular (Dill, 2010; Joshua, 2018). Malunda et al. (2021) posit that internal quality assurance offers mechanisms through which an institution can assure that it has conditions and procedures in place that support quality teaching and learning. These practices include student welfare and support services, staff recruitment, retention, promotion procedures, and professional development, monitoring and assessment of teaching and learning and support services, etc (Alabiet *al.*, 2018). These actions are likely to result into continuous quality enhancement initiatives and enhancement of a high-quality culture in institutions (Kahsay, 2012).

Adegbesan (2011) defines quality of education as the various components of face-to-face teaching like the infrastructure and basic amenities, social and geographical in nature, the environment, professional expertise of the providing instruction, administrative tasks, and personnel in the finance department, suitability, relevance and applicability of the curriculum, teaching-learning resources, teaching and learning procedures community support to the institution, performance evaluation of the teacher, students, and system that are looked at as a whole.

The Uganda National Council for Higher Education Quality Assurance Framework [NCHE]-2014 defines quality practice at university level as the procedure of providing adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes based on the recommended instructional practices, in a favorable learning environment to equip learners with knowledge and skills essential for effectiveness, productivity and sustainability in

the workplace. Nabaho, et al. (2016) ascertains that it is pertinent to unpack ‘good teaching’, quality assurance aims at improving teaching; teaching is ‘fit for purpose’ if it promotes learning.

Universities in Uganda have noticed an increase in student populations and programs despite inadequate funding. The student body has diverged and increased significantly, both geographically and socially. Massification has been undertaken by many nations including Uganda with a notion that if you educate a person, you have developed a nation (Kidega et al., 2023; Niyonzima, 2019, Swanzy, 2016; p.9, Marvil, 2013, p.8 as cited in Eryenyu et al., 2024). Such a predicament of massification, according to Ruland (2013), can be seen as an opportunity and as a tremendous challenge, leading to quality and implementation of teaching and learning of university education to increasingly become a subject of concern.

Today, there is a growing heterogeneity of students accessing higher education with varying socio-economic background, academic ability and readiness, professional expectations, motivation, and involvement (OECD, 2012). This is expected to accommodate the growing diversity of individual students’ motivations, expectations and career plans (Ifeoma, 2013). Students expect to be well guided to have a well-defined professional path during the learning process (Davies 1999; Baiko et al., 2023).

Investing in higher education is vital to national growth all over the world. Today, nations rely on knowledge, technological advances, and advanced abilities produced by higher education institutions; because society expects to benefit from the contribution of higher institutions of learning to national development, it has to invest in education (Adamu and Addamu, 2012; Kidega et al., 2023). In order for

these expectations to be realized, higher education institutions are obligated to develop and supervise their programs in compliance with regulatory criteria to guarantee that quality is offered in content delivery methods. Hénard and Mitterle (2010) and Baiko et al. (2023) argue that it is the responsibility of higher institutions of learning to take charge of their own academic standards and put mechanisms in place for ensuring excellent practices in the implementation of teaching and learning (Okwakol, 2008; Fisher & Santana, 2020).

According to the World Bank report, there is need for higher institutions of learning to ensure that their students are equipped with abilities that are required to compete, innovate, and adapt to complex social, environmental, and economic challenges because these skills are built during the implementation of teaching and learning (World Bank, 2013). Students need to be given exposure to develop knowledge, skills, expertise and abilities in their field of specialization (Abdullah et al., 2009; Fisher & Santana, 2020; Oktarina et al., 2023).

Afeti and Adubra (2012) characterize knowledge and skills as the main forces behind of most economies because education promotes knowledge, values, skills and attitudes. Students' performance throughout their course of study will impact what they choose to do, the way they live, as well as how they respond to events (Gulati and Pant, 2008; Lucander & Christersson, 2020). The goal of education is to instill character in the next generation, which is the solution to many of the contemporary problems (Ranjani 2013). This also nurtures the students and helps them to discover their unique potential, enabling them to compete with other students throughout the world (Odundu *et al.*, 2017).

Several studies have earmarked stakeholder satisfaction as the ultimate goal to achieve quality in higher education, students being the primary stakeholders, the vision and mission statements of higher institutions of learning focus on providing quality education to these students and creating an enabling environment for them to succeed; therefore, quality in higher education requires meeting stakeholder expectations (Razavi et al., 2012; Maryrose et al., 2024).

Students' expectations are hinged on the quality assurance practices that a given university must consider as priority while giving its educational services to these clients (Iradel, 2018). The researcher therefore, thought of undertaking this study to investigate whether quality assurance practices put in place by private universities, be it internally or externally are being observed to meet NCHE regulatory standards in implementation of teaching and learning.

Implementation of teaching and learning involves high academic standards that are necessary for a university to provide high-quality instruction and research results, which leads to acquiring high-quality results. Maintaining high academic standards can serve multiple purposes, including providing confidence that the quality of education meets the current and future competencies and needs of society in addition to meeting standards set by the national education standard governing body or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (Lucander & Christersson, 2020; Fisher & Santana, 2020).

#### **1.2.4 Contextual perspective**

Over the past two decades, with the emergence of several private universities established in Western Uganda, there has been a considerable increase in student numbers and programs to increase access to higher education and response to

regional development needs. This expansion has occurred amidst growing national and global expectations for accountability and quality assurance standards in teaching and learning. Such a predicament of massification, according to Ruland (2013) and Kidega et al. (2023), can be seen as an opportunity and as a tremendous challenge; the mentioned scholar considers it as an opportunity since this approach will allow higher education to play a larger role in formulation of education policies.

However, these universities are operating within a dynamic environment shaped by the Uganda National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) standards, insufficient number of faculty members to instruct the students, inadequate funding, diverse student populations and heightened competition for enrolment among others (Ankunda & Mureebe, 2023).

The National Council for Higher Education [NCHE] (2018) shows that the increase in admissions results in various concerns, the major one being a decline in quality. These variations, coupled with institutional capacity, governance structures and quality assurance cultures create contextual complexities that influence how quality assurance practices are interpreted, implemented and experienced in teaching and learning by stakeholders (Alemiga & Kibukamusoke, 2019; Baiko et al., 2023).

In the ambit of the foregoing “challenge”, a survey on strategies to increase PhD production in African universities by Lee (2013) registered “setting high expectations and clear guidelines for teaching and learning” as priorities by the institutions. This survey was done at the following universities: Cape Town, Pretoria, Rhodes, and the Western Cape (all in South Africa); Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo in Nigeria (all in West Africa); Nairobi University in Kenya; and Makerere University in Uganda (all in East Africa).

As provided by NCHE in Uganda (2014), the quality of a given university is measured in terms of the appropriateness of the physical facilities required by the university, academic programs, services offered by the library, managerial structure and skilled academic staff, medical and computer laboratories, technicians and specialists, as well as services and amenities accessible by individuals with special needs among other things. In many private universities adequacy of such requirements is lacking, this leaves one to doubt the quality of teaching and learning provided (Kasule and Neema-Abooki, 2009; Bagonza et al., 2019; Mugizi, 2021). It is important to note here that vagueness about the quality of teaching and learning is linked to uncertainty about student learning competencies.

Relatedly, research points out that Quality Assurance Mechanisms have not sufficiently been implemented by universities in Uganda; the NCHE (2010) points out that Uganda's universities are associated with problems of poor-quality teaching staff, poor curriculum, and inadequate learning facilities. The space-to-learner ratio of libraries, lecture rooms, and laboratories in many universities is below the benchmarks of QA set by the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF). For instance, Acanga (2013, as cited in Baiko et al., 2023) reported a drop in library space across universities from 0.28m<sup>2</sup> to 0.13m<sup>2</sup> below the set standards of NCHE.

Long, et al. (2000, as cited in Baiko et al., 2023) suggested that formal QA mechanisms are critical and necessary to raise the standards of learning in HEIs. In the Ugandan context where knowledge and competencies are less valued by many HE learners, it is quite hard to expect the design and successful implementation of QAMs resulting in gaps in practical knowledge, critical thinking, professional-maturity competencies essential for meaningful participation in

national development. These concerns point to underlying gaps in the implementation of teaching and learning within universities where ineffective pedagogical practices and inadequate learner engagement undermine the development of key student attributes (Agaba, 2014; Fisher & Gonzalez, 2020).

Regarding quality in the higher education sector most especially for universities, not until early 1990s Uganda's education system, which was based on the British school system, was among the best in Africa. Thereafter, both the physical infrastructures and the academic procedures experienced serious declines in quality (Atwebembeire et al., 2018; Muganga et al., 2024).

The higher education subsector in Uganda, just like in many other African countries is currently facing various challenges for instance, inadequate facilities and equipment, underfunding, serious governance problems, inadequate academic staff at all levels, a high shortage of senior staff, low remuneration packages for academic staff and low research output (Hyuha, 2017; Baiko et al., 2024). All of the above challenges compromise the quality assurance framework established by the National Council for Higher Education in Uganda to guide universities regarding the enforcement of internal quality assurance guidelines and policies in implementation of teaching and learning.

Most private universities in Uganda are known for inadequate teaching and learning materials, insufficient funding, overcrowded lecture halls, deteriorating academic standards, sometimes inexperienced and under qualified instructors, a few members of senior academic staff, high student-staff ratio, insufficient infrastructure, equipment, meager or non-existent research output, and shortfalls in administration systems and other aspects of governance procedures. In fact, all the universities

currently face a serious lack of senior staff, particularly at the professorial levels and lack of access to global knowledge (Ntim, 2016; Hyuha, 2017; Matovu, 2018; Mugizi, 2021; Oktarina et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has consistently emphasized the need of providing every university lecturer/professor with opportunities to progress academically. Suffice to state that the NCHE was established for regulating and guiding the establishment and management of institutions of higher learning, regulating the quality of higher education, equating of qualifications, and advising government on higher education issues (Kasozi, 2006; Baiko et al., 2023). The NCHE requires each institution to inform annually of the mechanisms it has put in place for not only staff development but also quality assurance requirements being implemented at any given university (NCHE, 2014).

On the other hand, universities have historically been concerned with enhancing their quality systems and mechanisms, including those for teaching and learning. To this effect, Adegbasen (2011) calls for deliberate, evidence-based strategies and processes of satisfying quality norms and criteria from the point of view of processes, environment and product. According to him, "quality control" is one of the techniques employed to achieve quality assurance (QA). Meanwhile QA is perceived not only as a combination of planned and systematic activities implemented in an education system so as to fulfill quality requirements for education in line with acceptable standards (Sanga, 2012; Kihwelo, 2013; Kihwelo, 2013; Matovu, 2018).

Due to lack of quality control procedures in Uganda's private institutions, there has been a low level of ethical credibility as well as low level of professionalism among some academic staff in universities. Juliet Atwebembeire et al. (2015) notes that low

level of ethical credibility in universities has caused scandals of behavior from some teaching staff. This has caused discontent among the stakeholders. Absenteeism from duty, delay or failure to provide feedback to students on their course work, biased assessment and sexual misconduct, the use of harsh language, arriving late for lectures, and offering students marks in return for sex or money are all examples of inappropriate behavior.

Such above mentioned instances are frequently identified as rampant in most institutions; despite the fact that several lecturers in various universities in the nation, and maybe elsewhere in the world, are less remunerated. This host of conduct affects implementation of teaching and learning. Implied hitherto is that employees should have unquestionable reputation; more so university lecturers who are expected to exhibit a reputable image to the students they teach (Kasule and Neema Abooki, 2009; Lucander & Christersson, 2020; Baiko et al, 2024).

In 2013, the NCHE invalidated 66 PhD degrees given by one of Uganda's private universities, demonstrating the poor quality of learners and graduates from these institutions. The reasons for cancellation (disqualification) of these degrees ranged from requiring minor corrections and serious conceptual, philosophical, theoretical, methodological and new knowledge deficiencies with obvious instances of plagiarism that rendered them irredeemable (Lule, 2013). There were also issues in the admission procedures combined with low-quality assessment processes, appointment of certain non-qualified research supervisors and external examiners. There were seven research supervisors without PhDs while others from non-accredited universities were not authentic which all fell below standards of NCHE (Wanambwa, 2013).

Worth mentioning, Uganda officially rolled out its new lower secondary curriculum, shifting to a competency-based (learner-centered) model, in February 2020 to equip learners with practical skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that enable them to thrive in real-life situations, developing capabilities they can apply in a variety of contexts, to help learners connect what they learn in school to real world problems and environments, to ensure authentic assessment is administered to determine mastery of job-related competencies among others (Barasa et al., 2025).

This relates to implementation of education programs geared towards the teaching and learning tailored to life-related situations (Klein-Collins, 2013; Wesselink, 2010, as cited in Atibuni et al., 2024). Currently, some universities have embarked on retraining their faculty staff in competency-based teaching methodologies to support these students transitioning into higher education (Ndeezi et al., 2024).

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

Institutions of higher learning in Uganda are trying their ultimate best to adequately support the key functions of teaching and learning, create new knowledge and innovation by ascertaining that the staff hired is of the required competence and their welfare procedures are rightly adhered to, availing efficient infrastructure or equipment, sufficient teaching and learning facilities, equipment and support services to students, adhering to study program accreditation standards in order to create a secure, conducive and resource-rich teaching and learning environment (Martin, 2016; Matei & Iwinska, 2016; Alemiga & Kibukamusoke, 2019; Baiko et al., 2024)

These universities focus on the above mentioned procedures in order to conform to standards and audits established by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) on the quality of teaching and learning through monitoring, maintenance and improvement of practices (CHE & AfriQAN, 2012; IUCEA, 2010). This is a key issue for ensuring quality of instruction and pedagogical strategies, student' learning outcomes, engagement and their transformation (NCHE 2011; Sivakumar & Sarvalingam 2010; Damoc, 2017).

However, despite these developments, the actual translation of these practices into improved teaching and learning remains questionable. Studies have suggested that the teaching in these private institutions of learning is compromised by limited institutional capacity, inadequate internal monitoring systems, insufficient staff training and weak linkages between quality assurance policies and pedagogical practices (Ssentamu, 2014; Tibenderana, 2013; Agaba, 2014; Alabi et al., 2018; Fisher & Santana, 2020).

Other scholars highlighted that these quality assurance and enhancement systems are either lacking or are not well facilitated; Matovu (2018) and Oktarina et al. (2023) have expressed the view that some universities lack the capacity or commitment to fully operationalize them (Harvey & Newton, 2004, as cited in ViktoriaKis, 2005 p.26; Clemons & Marsha, 2024). Concerns persist indicating that the teaching in these Universities concentrates more on theory without exposing students to contextual learning experiences (Tibenderana, 2013; Bagarukayo et al., 2016; OECD report, 2014). This concurs with the findings of Kigongo (1998), Nsereko (1997), Lucander & Christersson (2020) & Maryrose (2024).

The overall influence of quality assurance practices on the quality of teaching and learning remains a yet to be resolved issue of discussion, particularly in the Uganda context. Therefore, this study explored how quality assurance practices are operationalised in the implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

#### **I.4 Purpose of the Study**

According to the literature, quality assurance is an essential aspect and takes priority in higher education worldwide and it is, therefore pertinent that institutions develop mechanisms internally to monitor their performance and to measure whether they are adhering to external standards to ensure that instruction and pedagogical strategies are of quality, and to be better prepared to meet the challenges involved in the development of a knowledge-based economy (Materu, 2007:19; Oktarina et al., 2023)

The purpose of the study was to explore the ways in which quality assurance practices are applied to support the implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda.

#### **I.5 Objectives of the Study**

1. To explore the contribution of study program accreditation to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda.
2. To explore the effect of the quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda.

3. To investigate the contribution of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda.

4. To explore the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda.

### **I.6 Research Questions**

1. What is the contribution of study program accreditation to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda?

2. What is the effect of the quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda?

3. What is the contribution of internal monitoring/evaluation procedures to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in western Uganda?

4. What is the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda?

### **1.7 Study Scope**

This study was conducted in two selected private universities in Western Uganda.

### **1.7.1 Geographical scope**

This study was conducted in two selected private universities in Western Uganda. Western Uganda region is one of the four regions in Uganda. As of Uganda's 2014 census, the region's population was 8,874,862. Currently, western Uganda is composed of 26 districts including, Bundibugyo, Buliisa, Buhweju, Bushenyi, Hoima, Ibanda, Insingiro, Kabarole, Kabale, Kamwengye, Kasese, Kanungu, Kibaale, Kiruhura, Kiryandongo, Kisoro, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Masindi, Mbarara, Ntoroko, Mitooma, Rubirizi, Ntungamo, Rukungiri and Shema.

### **1.7.2 Content scope**

The study focused on quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. The content was specifically directed to the contribution of study program accreditation to implementation of teaching and learning, the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning, contribution of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures to implementation of teaching and learning and the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

### **1.7.3 Time scope**

The study was conducted from 2021 to 2025 (a period of four years) in order for the researcher to get enough time to engage in in-depth data collection with regard to contribution of quality assurance practices to implementation of teaching and learning.

## 1.8 Justification

As expressed in the development of relevant policies, standards and systems at national, regional and institutional levels in developing countries, quality assurance is increasingly becoming an important aspect of higher education (Okebukola, 2012; Kansime & Singh, 2023). This is seen playing a crucial role in implementation of teaching and learning and is associated with research that has examined the way in which these approaches shape students' learning experiences, engagement, academic achievement and overall development (Scott, 2015; Baiko et al., 2023).

Universities have always been concerned with systems of quality improvement as regards, among others, teaching and learning; to this effect, Adegbasen (2011), Eryenyu et al. (2024) and Fisher & Santana (2020) calls for deliberate, evidence-based strategies and processes of satisfying quality norms and criteria in implementation of teaching and learning which is in alignment with UNESCO's Global Education 2030 Agenda. It is worth pointing out that this has become an important subject of attention due to the increased need for knowledge, expertise and skills in today's globalized and knowledge-based economy.

However, despite the efforts of universities trying to meet National Council for Higher Education standards, guidelines and procedures, a number of studies have reported concern that growth in university education provision in Uganda has not been fulfilling their major goal of promoting positive, inclusive and transformative learning experiences; (World Development Report, 2016, as cited in Bagonza, 2018). Implementation of teaching and learning in higher education in relation to quality assurance procedures and standards continues to be a subject of debate (Alabiet al., 2018; NCHE, 2016; Martinez-Gomez et al., 2020, as cited in Baiko et al., 2023).

It is against this background, the researcher became interested in carrying out this study on quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study intend to enlighten quality assurance officials in higher education institutions about the different strategies they would employ to ensure adequate evaluation of various procedures and processes in all institutional units in implementation of teaching and learning. It provides insights into the effectiveness, consistency and relevance of teaching practices.

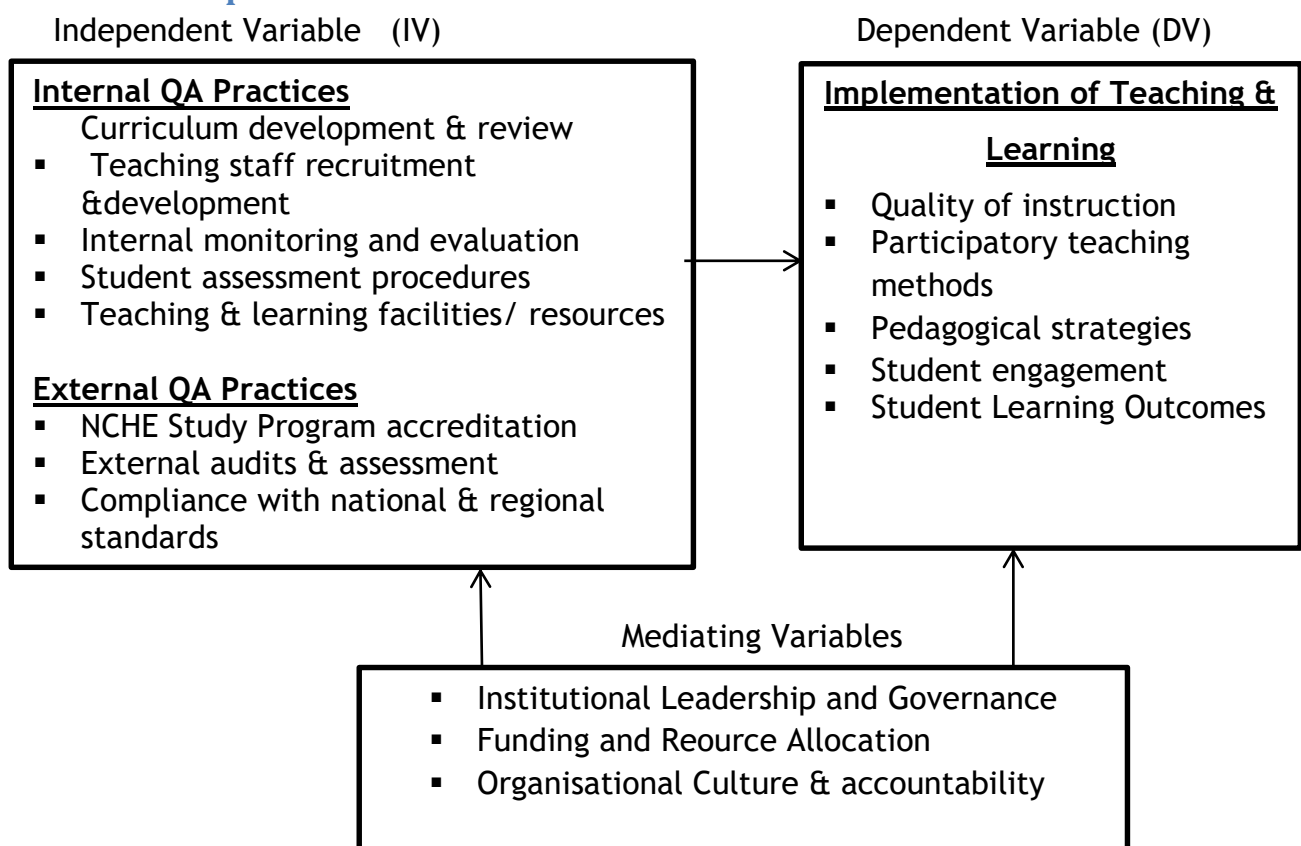
Hopefully, study findings will capture the attention of private higher education funders, managers, decision makers, and be useful to those assigned with developing and implementing quality assurance procedures and standards and strengthen institutional frameworks that support teaching quality, curriculum delivery and student learning outcomes. These study findings intend to inform administrators to plan for learning environments that are supportive, inclusive and resourceful.

For teaching staff, the study highlights areas where adherence to quality standards can enhance pedagogical effectiveness and promote continuous improvement. These highlights also intend to inform strategies for developmental programs to equip lecturers with skills of quality instruction and pedagogical engagement to enrich

students to experience meaningful learning experiences that build both academic and practical skills and develop their competences.

The findings are intended to support the way policymakers at the National Council for Higher Education make decisions about quality assurance procedures and implementation of teaching and learning. Policymakers could apply the study's findings for clarifying their decisions and conduct assessments and reviews of guidelines, standards, and processes for quality assurance operations at Uganda's private universities.

### 1.10 Conceptual Framework



Quality assurance practices are mechanisms, systems and processes put in place to monitor, enhance and ensure academic standards and quality in teaching and learning. Internal quality assurance practices help an institution of higher learning to prepare for National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) external assessment.

Internal quality assurance practices include curriculum design and review, teaching and learning resources, student assessment methodologies, internal monitoring and evaluation procedures and continuous improvement and quality of teaching staff which includes possessing required qualification and academic staff professional development programs, staff welfare procedures among others.

External quality assurance practices entails; accreditation of academic programs NCHE external audits including areas on quality of outputs (graduates), research, community outreach, evaluating and reviewing programs, assessing facilities on ground, compliance with national and regional standards among others.

Implementation of teaching and learning include; quality of instruction, teaching methods and pedagogical strategies, learner engagement and student learning outcomes. Institutional leadership and governance, funding and resource allocation, ICT, equipment and physical infrastructure and organizational culture are internal conditions and capabilities that may influence the relationship between quality assurance practices and teaching and learning.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This literature review explores the role of quality assurance practices in the implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. Over the past decade, as private Universities continue to expand in the region, concerns around academic standards, institutional accountability and quality of educational delivery have come to the fore front of scholarly and policy discussions. As a result, quality assurance has emerged as a critical area of inquiry. By reviewing relevant literature, this section establishes a deeper qualitative inquiry into how quality assurance practices shape the implementation of teaching and learning in this specific setting.

#### **2.1 Contribution of Study Program Accreditation to Implementation of Teaching and Learning**

This section describes study program accreditation as one of the National Council for Higher Education's primary functions. It has been recognized as one of the quality assurance measures (Adepoju, 2007, as cited in Ifeoma, 2013). Following the 2006 amendment to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, the NCHE began accrediting programs of study in the country's higher education institutions. The amended version of section 119A of Act 9 reads as follows: "For avoidance of doubt, no person shall operate a University, other Degree Awarding Institution or a Tertiary Institution without prior accreditation of its academic and professional programs by the National Council for Higher Education". Universities are expected to adhere to NCHE standards by teaching courses that have been accredited and hence 'fit for

purpose', direct these academic programs to achieve desired outcomes Micheal (2022), demonstrate effective student learning outcomes (Lubinescu et al., 2001; Atwebembeire et al., 2016; Martin et al., 2020).

The term accreditation can be defined as actions that provide assurance to the public and prospective students that a university meets accrediting agency stated requirements and that it will continue to meet them (Morris & Nelson, 2007). It involves a diagnostic evaluation of outcomes based on a detailed examination of curricular, structure and effectiveness of a program as well as the quality and activities of it's faculty (Ayine, 2024). Accreditation is the process of determining if an institution or program fulfills a minimum level and qualifies for a certain status. Obtaining accreditation may have implications for the HEI itself (e.g, permission to operate) and/or its students (Woodhouse, 1999; Basake, 2024).

Accreditation of university study programs is a self- and peer-assessment procedure that aims to promote academic quality and public accountability. Peers evaluate the quality of an institution's academic or professional programs and aid faculty and staff in making improvements to achieve desired outcomes. NCHE follows an intensive accreditation procedure that commences with the institution's inspection and ends with NCHE approval. This is of great importance because it leads to an academic or professional program accreditation hence giving assurance of quality in implementation of teaching and learning (Francis & Benon 2013).

Accreditation is a widely employed method of quality assurance around the world. In the United States accreditation of both programmes and institutions is the main quality assurance method (Eaton, 2004; Stensaker, 2011). Approximately half of the European quality assurance agencies employ programme accreditation on a regular

basis including universities and other tertiary institutions. This kind of approach is frequently applied in German-speaking nations, associated countries, by the Dutch, as well as Nordic and southern agencies, African countries inclusive where Uganda is no exclusion 22% of European agencies, including those in Germany, Austria, and certain allied countries, regularly accredit institutions. Accreditation procedures can also focus on QAAs; for instance, one of the tasks of the German Akkreditierungsrat is to accredit other agencies (ENQA, 2003). US accrediting organizations also undergo a periodic external review based on specific standards; this process is known as 'recognition' (Eaton, 2004).

In Europe, the main source of funding of quality assurance in higher education is the government, but also the HEIs are a source of funding in 1/3 of the cases (ENQA, 2003; Kohoutek, 2025). In Denmark evaluation system is owned by the government, while the Dutch system has both a government owned and a university owned level (Thune, 1996). QAAs that are not financed by the government are almost always funded by the inspected higher education institutions. Agencies of this type exist in Belgium, France, Latvia, Romania and the VSNU in Netherlands (ENQA, 2003; Prchal, 2021).

In Uganda, every institution of higher learning is required to have a quality assurance unit that is responsible for providing quality check and control by subjecting a program to a comprehensive review from the academics department and the quality assurance unit in the institution until it is approved by NCHE to ensure that what is intended to be taught is of outstanding standard and fit for consumption by the public. The program is submitted to NCHE usually through the office of academic affairs and NCHE uses experts to do a thorough assessment before the program is

evaluated for the purpose of accreditation; NCHE draws experts from sections of society for instance, academia, professional bodies and industry specialists both nationally and internationally (Francis & Benon 2013; Baiko, 2023).

Today, with regard to accreditation of study programs, accreditation bodies demand institutions to demonstrate proof of student learning outcomes through establishing and implementing a continuous improvement strategy while engaging in quality assurance procedures through internal and external reviews. These bodies expect a well-defined procedure of minimum standards for admitted students in relevant subjects, a brief overview of the course, objectives for the course, expected student learning outcomes, duration of the course, year when it is taught, methods of delivery, and assessment techniques; the entire course content with credit units and contact hours; the names and credentials of academic personnel; the resources available to aid in teaching; library, IT, and so on; the infrastructure available: lecture rooms, library space, office space for staff, and any other items deemed necessary (Rwaboni, 2010; Atwebembeire et al., 2018; Muganga et al., 2024).

Strengthening this discourse therefore requires examining accreditation criteria not merely as compliance checklists but as mechanisms that directly inform curriculum relevancy, staff capacity, monitoring practices and resource adequacy; factors that collectively determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning in private universities.

The assessors expect learning outcomes to be well defined, articulated, assessed, verified and used as a guide for future improvement (Tayeb Brahimi et al., 2016; Waako & Biira, 2021; Basake et al., 2024). All this information enables NCHE to establish whether or not the university will offer a quality curriculum. As a result,

without evaluation, complete accreditation is impossible, and it is unlawful to provide any program of study to which the public may enroll. Although assessors rely on this, it's vital too to recognize that clearly articulated learning outcomes influence quality of instruction, pedagogical practices and learner engagement. These are central in shaping the overall effectiveness of academic programs in private universities.

Among the aims of quality assurance is to give students the relevant knowledge and skills from their course of study In higher institutions of learning, the relevance of academic programs is a very significant feature since there must be societal reason for every program on the curriculum, be it economic, social, cultural, political, cultural, or environmental (Tagoe, 2008, as cited in Okae, 2016; Fisher & Santana, 2020).

Scholars increasingly argue that study programs must be continually developed, reviewed and improved to reflect the evolving needs of students and to ensure relevance to societal demands (Okae, 2016; Waako & Biira, 2021). However, with the rapid expansion of student enrolment, concerns have emerged regarding the relevance and responsiveness of many study programs; existing literature suggests that higher education institutions are often criticized for not empowering their students with critical thinking abilities and practical competences during implementation of teaching and learning (Matovu, 2018; Baiko et al., 2023).

Such shortcomings are linked to issues like staff recruitment and development practices, inconsistencies in internal monitoring and evaluation, limitations in student assessment procedures, and inadequacies in teaching and learning resources. These constraints hinder the effective implementation of teaching and

learning thereby influencing key outcomes such as pedagogical strategies employed, learner engagement and the overall student learning experience.

Quality study programs are a central management function in all institutions of higher learning the world over (Mayanja, 2020). Studies have also indicated that program accreditation focuses on professional programs, assessing faculty qualifications, funding, learning facilities, and teaching, among other features (Mutereko, 2018). The study programme accreditation process prescribes what should be done in equipping students for anticipated content (Wheelan & Elgart, 2015; Lewis, 2016; Romanowski, 2021; Lewis, 2016; Harold, 2016; Colburn et al., 2016). University programs which meet quality standards should be able to meet the standards set by NCHE, which include approaches, criteria, and should be able to cover adequate skills, knowledge and attitudes required by the students during the teaching and learning process (Harold, 2016; Colburn et al., 2016; Waako, 2021).

Higher Education Institutions world wide are increasingly preoccupied with their international ranking, institutional reputation and overall competitiveness (Cattaneo et al., 2016; Midraj & Harold, 2016). In response, many universities pursue accreditation for both their institutions and study programs (Hursh & Wall (2011) driven by the belief that accreditation validates program quality and strengthens local legitimacy in expanding higher education market (Eldridge & Dada, 2016; Lubinescu et al., 2001; Lucander & Christersson, 2020).

Study program accreditation serves a dual purpose: it provides accountability to regulatory bodies and stakeholders while also functioning as a mechanism for continuous improvement and quality. Therefore, understanding accreditation as both a compliance requirement and a developmental tool helps illuminate how

quality assurance practices shape the implementation of teaching and learning in private universities in Western Uganda.

There has been a steady increase in student enrolment in institutions of higher learning and this expansion demands that universities remain responsive and adaptable to changes in content delivery and teaching methodologies in order to enhance student learning and put strategies in place to offer adequate support to students with learning needs (NCHE, 2014; Kidega et al., 2023; Kisambira and Babirye, 2024). As student numbers rise, institutions must continuously strengthen their curriculum design and review processes to ensure relevance, update teaching and learning resources to support diverse learners and enhance staff recruitment and development to improve instructional quality.

The above aligns with scholars who argue that Institutions need to not only rely on NCHE study program accreditation standards to confirm quality based on adherence to pre-defined standards set by these accrediting bodies to demonstrate quality but this should also be evidenced through teaching and learning (Harvey, 2005; Amaral & Rosa, 2010; Ewell, 2010).

Relevance of educational content to societal needs has been widely emphasised; scholars argue that when study program design and review prioritise contemporary societal demands and equip students with practical competencies, their academic performance and engagement significantly improve (Wong, 2012; Quality Matters, 2014; Tam, 2014). With regard to teaching and learning implementation, this implies that universities must continually update their study programs to remain responsive and meaningful to the learners. Also, effective implementation depends on competent teaching staff and strong staff recruitment and development systems.

As Scott (2008) and Basake et al. (2024) observe, student learning improves where faculty members are supported to innovate and deepen relevant disciplinary knowledge. For private universities in Western Uganda, these are not just institutional obligations but essential quality assurance mechanisms needed to strengthen learner engagement and improve student learning outcomes.

With the world increasingly becoming a global village, the globalization and Internationalization of higher education continue to shape expectations regarding academic quality and student learning. These global trends offer a broader perspective on how institutions can enhance students' academic performance. According to IUCEA (2010), in order for institutions to capitalize on such prospects, their quality standards and systems must be internationally recognized and approved. This alignment requires more than policy adoption, it demands a deliberate strengthening of internal quality assurance components such as internal monitoring and evaluation, student assessment procedures among others. As Oktarina et al. (2023) argue, internal quality assurance mechanisms must be continuously updated to reflect both national priorities and global trends.

A study of the association of Dutch universities of applied science showed it is crucial to reassure the public that academic programs in higher institutions of learning are more efficient and meet acceptable local and international standards and this is possible when systematic quality assurance practices are embedded in open value systems and clear communication structures allowing for quality learning (Kleijnen et al., 2012; Parchal et al., 2021). However, higher education institutions have been insufficiently equipped and have duplicated courses to cater for the enormous number of students; there are many students in lecture rooms and they seem not to

have an adequate environment for having quality education, this has led to deterioration in the quality of higher education (Matovu, 2018; Mugizi, 2021).

As a road map for effective quality assurance practices, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) emphasize a balanced approach to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The ESG framework underscores that accountability is not only about demonstrating compliance with minimum quality thresholds but also about showing how institutions ensure effective study program design and review and robust student assessment procedures among others. Consistent with this perspective, Harvey (2001, as cited in Matei et al., (2016) and Kidega et al. (2023) argue that higher education institutions must serve both their learners and the public by aligning quality assurance practices with institutional mission, vision and strategic goals embedded in its academic programs.

In other words, private Universities in Western Uganda should move beyond procedural compliance and instead adopt Quality Assurance practices that directly influence the day-to-day implementation of teaching and learning.

Relatedly, Waruru (2013) and Rose et al. (2024) emphasize that universities must increasingly collaborate with the business sector to develop mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance academic relevance and societal impact. Such linkages create opportunities for collaborative research and practical learning experiences. These external engagements support staff development through exposure to emerging industry practices and enrich student assessment procedures through authentic practice-based assessments. Integrating industry perspectives into quality assurance systems is critical for private Universities in Western Uganda, where the

need to demonstrate the quality of instruction and promote meaningful learner engagement remains urgent.

In relation to the above in Uganda, there is a transition with regard to curriculum development and accreditation procedures at university level. During the training on competence-based curriculum for teacher educators held on 19th February 2025 at Makerere University, Dr. Mathias Mulumba stressed that the latest products (the senior Four candidates who received the UCE results in February 2025) of the New Competency-based curriculum are scheduled to join the advanced level of education (Senior Five and Senior Six) and are expected to enroll at Universities in 2027 or 2028.

He therefore stressed the need for academic staff at universities to be equipped with skills and knowledge that are in tandem with the new curriculum and adhering to NCHE call to develop, implement and review curricula that embrace learner outcome-based, active learning methodologies, student' research, critical thinking among others to empower the learner interpret real-life experiences and solve societal problems during teaching and learning procedures (Namisango, 2025).

Therefore, this should not be viewed as an optional activity but a strategic quality assurance mechanism that directly relates to the relevance of enhancement of teaching and learning processes.

## 2.2 Effect of Quality of Teaching Staff on Implementation of Teaching and Learning

According to the Statutory Instrument No. 50 Of 2010 - The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) introduced in 2001 as amended in 2006 regulation under the staffing/standards provisions Section 119A states that, "a university or tertiary institution shall not employ a lecturer, instructor, or other person recruited for the purpose of teaching (instruction) whose qualifications do not conform to the NCHE standards". It authoritatively commands that all universities in Uganda shall employ staff that meets the standards set by the NCHE; this is a mandate for all universities (Alemiga & Kibukamusoke 2019; Baiko et al., 2024). The level of expertise of academic staff at any institution may have a significant influence on the delivery of any type of education, hence effective implementation of teaching and learning.

International scholarship consistently positions the quality of staff among the strongest determinants of effective implementation of teaching and learning. Engida et al. (2024) emphasize that staff quality is multi-dimensional, encompassing formal qualifications, pedagogical competence and observable classroom performance. These dimensions interact to shape how instructors plan lessons, deliver curriculum and assess student learning. However, Vree et al. (2024) notes that qualifications alone are insufficient; continuous pedagogical development is essential for improving classroom practices in evolving higher-education environments.

International systematic reviews further highlight the central role of professional development programs (PDP/CPD) in enhancing teaching effectiveness; countries like the United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore, Finland, Canada, the United States and South Africa have institutionalized PDPs that require lecturers to engage in

continuous pedagogical training, reflective practice and teaching certification. Van etal. (2020) mentions that such programs equip lecturers with student-centred approaches, assessment competences, reflective practice and curriculum-alignment skills which are critical for high-quality instruction. Yet these reviews also reveal wide variation in how teaching quality is measured globally, with some systems emphasizing performance evaluations and student feedback, while others prioritise credentials or peer observation.

In East Africa, concerns about the adequacy of academic staff quality remain prominent. Several studies link learning challenges and student underperformance to inconsistent recruitment standards, limited instructional support and insufficient incentives for teaching excellence (World Bank, 2013; Uwezo, 2024). Universities often rely on part-time lecturers, which affect staff availability, commitment and consistency in course delivery. These regional patterns highlight a structural tension between expanding university enrolments and maintaining high instructional quality in resource-constrained contexts.

Within Uganda, empirical findings from private universities show a generally positive relationship between staff quality and instructional effectiveness but underscore persistent institutional barriers. Atwebembeire etal. (2018) observes that although many lecturers possess adequate qualifications, their impact on teaching is weakened by heavy workloads, limited CPD opportunities and inconsistent performance appraisal systems. Okurut etal. (2025) similarly identifies gaps in performance management , including unclear evaluation criteria, weak feedback mechanisms and lack of incentives for pedagogical improvement; all of which diminish the translation of staff competence into effective teaching practices.

The quality of teaching staff is a central pillar in the effective implementation of teaching and learning, particularly because it directly influences the quality of instruction, teaching methods, student engagement and ultimately student learning outcomes. Scholars such as Darling-Hamied (2000), Schmidt & Hunter (1983) and Waxman et al. (2003) emphasize that teacher quality extends beyond academic qualifications to include competence in lesson preparation, pedagogical knowledge, confidence, ethical conduct and the ability to manage classroom processes effectively. Harvey (2007) and Ndagire (2023) further argue that a lecturer's moral values and world view shape how they interact with learners.

Scholars such as Neema (2016), Kansime (2023) and Baiko et al. (2024) emphasize that academic staff must position themselves as reservoirs of knowledge and skills capable of nurturing effective teaching and learning. However, existing evidence shows that many lecturers enter the university system without adequate pedagogical preparation, which significantly affects their ability to understand how students learn. While lecturers may be familiar with how they themselves learned best, they often lack the analytical skills to evaluate learners' needs or reflect on whether their instructional approaches truly facilitate learning. This gap is intensified when members of academic staff are recruited primarily on the basis of academic qualifications rather than pedagogical competence, a practice that leaves many instructors without formal training in teaching methodologies.

Ugandan universities are increasingly called upon to align their teaching and learning practices with the demands of the local environment, particularly where relevance is a key indicator of institutional quality. This imperative requires teaching staff to effectively deliver both theoretical and practical competencies within their

disciplines and to remain updated on evolving teaching, learning and research demands, especially as open and flexible learning modalities continue to reshape curriculum design globally; however, challenges persist (Kasule and Neema, 2009; Kansiime, 2023). Ruland (2013) and Kidega et al (2023) note that underfunding across African Universities has resulted in inadequate infrastructure and some of their best talent working overseas; undermining institutional capacity. In Uganda, these challenges are compounded by massification, which exerts pressure on universities to uphold academic quality and strengthen staff competence.

In relation to this study, such pressures underscore the importance of robust curriculum design and review processes, continuous staff recruitment and development, effective internal monitoring and evaluation and well-structured student assessment procedures. Without deliberate investment in these quality assurance dimensions, the capacity of universities to apply sound pedagogical strategies and foster learner engagement will remain limited.

In addition to the above, lecturers play a central role in shaping students' perspectives and professional orientations. For this reason, teaching staff members are expected to possess an advanced and up-to-date knowledge base to prevent the risk of misinforming students and to ensure that the content delivered reflects current theoretical and practical developments in their respective fields. Sokoli & Koren (2017) and Kansiime (2023) argue that when lecturers do not hold qualifications commensurate with the levels at which they teach; coupled with inadequate opportunities for continuous professional development, they are likely to struggle in applying pedagogical theories and best practices. This highlights the

critical importance of effective staff recruitment and development policies as a core quality assurance mechanism.

Despite decade's worth of research on learning, it is difficult to transfer this knowledge into practical applications for teaching. There are no clear solutions to the questions 'How do we learn?' And, "How can we, as teachers, promote learning?" This is partly because education deals with specific purposes and contexts that differ from each other and with students as people who are diverse in all respects, and ever changing (Kleijnen *et al.*, 2012; Kidega *et al.*, 2023).

Students do not learn in the same way, nor do they engage with all types of content with equal ease. Differences in discipline, complexity of subject matter and students' prior experiences significantly shape how learning occurs. Markus *et al.* (2018) emphasizes that learners enter the classroom with diverse backgrounds, expectations and abilities; our understanding about the relationship between teaching and learning remains incomplete. In relation to this study, when universities invest in training teaching staff to diagnose learner needs and adopt inclusive teaching approaches, they strengthen learner engagement and ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

Equally important, recruitment, retention and promotion procedures form a core component of quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions. As Okwakol (2008) and Baiko *et al.* (2024) argue, ensuring quality academic staff begins with establishing minimum qualification standards for appointment to academic positions. Institutions establish guidelines and criteria to guarantee that only applicants who meet recruiting and promotion requirements are hired or promoted. In any case, only competent candidates are recruited. This is consistent with the

view that the quality of teaching directly shapes the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

These institutions are required to comply with the requirements of National Council for higher education since the quality of staff is a major requirement in all higher institutions of learning; for instance, Okae (2016) notes only applicants who hold a minimum of a relevant Master's Degree and on PhD track, towards completion with adequate research training can be employed as lecturers. When institutions recruit academically competent staff, they increase the likelihood of adopting effective pedagogical practices and supporting meaningful student learning. However, consistency with these standards is paramount.

With the expansion of university education in Uganda during the second half of the twentieth century, additional students have enrolled leading to increased expectations from stakeholders for value and efficiency in teaching. Questions of teaching quality, staff competence and institutional quality culture have earned attention. Babonza (2018), Mary et al (2024) and Baiko et al (2024) contend that although quality assurance frameworks with regard to the quality of university lecturers have expanded, the concept of quality culture in universities remains contested. Hence quality culture interacts with staff competences to influence the implementation of teaching and learning. This has been supported by earlier studies; for instance, Senteza Kajubi (1998, as cited in Bunoti, 2012), and Kansiime (2023) asserts that there is no education system that can be better than the quality of its teachers.

These perspectives illustrate that improved access to higher education alone does not guarantee meaningful learning. Without competent lecturers who embrace a strong quality culture, attempts to enhance teaching and learning may be minimal.

Research shows that the student population in higher education is becoming more diverse with institutions enrolling students from a wide range of educational backgrounds and new students demand new teaching methods. For instance, there are students with vocational training and mature entrants who did not enter directly from secondary school (Huber, 2015; Zhao & Gallant, 2012). This adds a new dimension to the learning needs of the 'new learners' and to the mode of teaching and calls for a focus of academic staff to innovate their teaching as a response to the changing target audiences and changes in the environment (Anderson, 2008; Kidega et al., 2023).

In the context of private universities in Uganda, this trend highlights the critical role of teaching staff quality; particularly their pedagogical competence, adaptability and professional development in ensuring effective implementation of teaching and learning.

Teaching staff quality is paramount in exerting substantial influence on students' academic and personal development after being trained and qualified in their specific disciplines. In addition to providing knowledge, they serve as mentors and guardians who shape students' values, attitudes and approaches to learning. High quality teaching staff plays an important role in enhancing student learning by providing effective instruction, guidance and academic support. Scholars have emphasized that a higher education institution is only as excellent as the competence and commitment of its teaching staff. As Baiko et al. (2024) notes,

lecturers function as reservoirs of disciplinary knowledge and are central to producing research outputs and contribution to institutional growth, societal needs, and national development.

While existing studies acknowledge the centrality of teaching quality, there is limited empirical evidence on how these staff attributes directly shape the daily implementation of teaching and learning in private universities in Uganda.

Scholars emphasise that continuous staff development is a key determinant of teacher competence. UNESCO (2007), Ninette et al. (2015) and Kansiime (2023) argue that teachers' competences can be improved through regular training and workshops because quality teaching demands academic staff to possess not only professional skills, but also the commitment and motivation to deliver appropriate content to their assigned programs. Similarly, Ranjani (2013) and Fisher & Santana (2020) highlight the need for teachers to acquire skills that enable them to support students in self-assessment and in formulating realistic improvement plans which is an indicator of effective teaching. However, Ifeoma (2013) argues that it remains unclear where suitable lecturers can be recruited to instruct these students.

However, while these studies highlight the relevance of training and institutional support, they do not fully explore whether the available staff development initiatives in Ugandan higher education adequately address the competence gaps experienced in day-to-day teaching.

In the ambit of the foregoing challenge, a survey on strategies to increase PhD production in African universities by Lee (2013) registered "setting high expectations and clear guidelines for competences and quality teaching" as priorities by the institutions. This survey was done at the following universities: Cape Town, Pretoria,

Rhodes and the Western Cape (all in South Africa); Ibadan and Obafemi Awolowo in Nigeria (all in West Africa); Nairobi University in Kenya; and Makerere University in Uganda ( all in East Africa).

Several scholars argue that although universities invest heavily in physical facilities, academic programs, library services and administrative structures, far less emphasis is placed on professional competence of teaching staff (Kasule and Neema, 2009; Hiire et al., 2020; Kidega et al., 2023). This imbalance raises concerns about the actual quality of teaching and learning since competent academic staff are central to effective knowledge transmission. This contributes to persistent ambiguity surrounding learning outcomes, particularly in contexts where open learning and informal learning pathways increasingly interact with formal academic credentials. This entails that improving teaching quality requires more than infrastructure; it demands deliberate attention to lecturers' pedagogical, professional and instructional competencies, which are key in this study.

However, despite the documented importance of staff competences, few studies in the Ugandan context have examined how lecturers' professional skills directly influence teaching and learning outcomes.

Additionally, the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) has consistently emphasized the need of providing every university lecturer with the chance to progress intellectually as the most sustainable pathway toward improving teaching quality. Suffice to state that the NCHE was established for regulating and guiding the establishment and management of institutions of higher learning, regulating the quality of higher education, equating of qualifications, and advising government on higher education issues (Kasozi, 2006; Baiko et al., 2023).

Adegbasen (2011) emphasizes the need for deliberate, evidence-based strategies that ensure adherence to quality norms across educational processes and environments. From this perspective, quality assurance becomes a core institutional mechanism for maintaining and enhancing teaching and learning standards. Sanga (2012) and Kihwelo (2013) explain this procedure as a structured combination of planned and systematic activities implemented to meet agreed-upon educational standards. Complementing this view, Martin et al (2020) highlights the role of feedback loops and systematic measurement as essential components of quality assurance, enabling continuous monitoring and error prevention.

However, in practice, quality assurance is only effective if it translates into improved pedagogical practices and not merely procedural compliance.

The effectiveness of quality assurance initiatives in higher education has increasingly been linked to the competence and mindset of institutional personnel, especially their orientation towards quality improvement. Study findings indicate that the implementation and continual improvement of quality initiatives are often constrained by the absence of qualified staff with a strong mindset. However, Alabi et al. (2018) and Baiko et al. (2023) argue that if highly qualified and experienced personnel are employed in both academic and administrative roles, they are better positioned to spearhead quality initiatives, thereby strengthening quality assurance mechanisms that directly influence the implementation of teaching and learning.

Similar views are shared globally, where policy makers have identified teacher quality as a critical determinant of student learning outcomes. Obwogi (2011), who cited Akiba and LeTendre (2009), observes that many educational systems prioritise teacher competence as a means of improving instruction. In line with this, Clemons

& Marsha (2024) note that contemporary educational reforms aim at providing students with access to high-quality teaching, attract talented individuals into the profession and retain experienced instructors through effective incentives and support systems.

As rightly pointed out by Ukeje, 1996 as cited in Ifeoma (2013), and Kansime (2023), without adequate number of inspiring, well-informed teachers, fully prepared to meet their responsibilities, we cannot have good education and without good education, we cannot hope for long to meet successfully, the challenges of a changing world. Therefore, it is believed that the most important factor influencing student accomplishment improvement and boosting a country's economic competitiveness in contemporary global society is the caliber of its teachers. This suggests that institutions that invest in competent personnel are more likely to achieve sustained quality improvements, a connection that this study seeks to further explore.

Studies suggest that universities are expected to maintain excellence in teaching and research as part of their contribution to national development (Neema 2016). Yet, the persistent understaffing reported in higher education institutions continues to hinder this mandate. As Ochwa-Echel (2016); Juliet Atwebembeire et al (2018) and Baiko et al (2024) highlight, the available full-time academic staff spend most of the time moonlighting in several other institutions, leading to minimal preparation and surface-level teaching. Such tendencies reflect deeper structural and managerial shortcomings, particularly in staffing policies and workload standards. These gaps are likely to have far-reaching implications for teaching

quality and staff commitment. Therefore, understanding how staffing adequacy and academic engagement shape the quality of teaching and learning becomes essential.

Research shows that in order to improve teaching and learning, teaching personnel must be motivated to teach with excellence and given incentives. Teaching innovation is frequently not acknowledged in Ugandan higher education institutions; among other things, Alabi et al. (2018) and Ndagire (2023) suggest that teaching excellence be re-examined at the institutional level in order to promote academic staff. It's noteworthy to note that research publications constitute a major requirement for academic promotion to professorial ranks in Uganda. Despite being necessary, teaching is frequently minimized in favor of the amount of years spent teaching and the outcomes of students' lecturer evaluations.

Such conditions may create disparities in staff motivation, reduce engagement with pedagogical improvement, and ultimately weaken the quality assurance mechanisms guiding teaching and learning.

The situation at hand depicts the challenge of low levels of research for the academic staff because of overwhelming teaching responsibilities; yet, research is vital in keeping instruction current and applicable. Teaching loads are very high and because of this, students' coursework may be more theoretical and uninformed by current research, this, not only compromises the relevance of course content but may also hinder effective implementation of teaching and learning (Okwakol, 2008; Hiire et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding how the quality of teaching staff contributes to the implementation of teaching and learning is essential.

### **2.3 Contribution of Internal Monitoring & Evaluation Procedures to Implementation of Teaching and Learning**

The term monitoring and evaluation, abbreviated as M&E, is composed of two words: monitoring and evaluation. In higher education, monitoring is the ongoing, planned gathering of information throughout the execution of responsibilities at the faculty level, whereas evaluation is the systematic and occasional gathering of data in the process of making assessments about the faculty; evaluation reveals how successfully the project met its objectives and how much change in outcomes may be directly connected to project assessment. Evaluation assesses the information collected through monitoring in an objective manner in order to demonstrate whether activities and outcomes are relevant, effective, efficient, sustainable and whether desired impacts are being achieved (Njenga & Kabiru, 2009; Chirau, Tirivanhu, Waller, & Robertson, 2018 as cited in Wandera et al., 2023).

Monitoring and evaluation processes entail closely connected procedures; one needs to use data from monitoring in order to conduct an effective evaluation. Both of these practices focus on assessing the progress of faculty activities and reviewing performance (Njenga and Kabiru, 2009; Goldman, Chirau, Sossou, & Molaiwa, 2022 as cited in Wandera, et al., 2023). This approach ensures successful project and programme governance, an accurate portrayal of value for money and results from facilitated initiatives, and ongoing learning, which leads to continual improvement and accountability.

International literature shows that internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures such as programme reviews, internal audits, and student evaluation of teaching, peer review and continuous quality assurance assessments are essential

for strengthening the implementation of teaching and learning. UNESCO (2017) notes that higher education institutions improve instructional quality when internal M&E is systematic, participatory and linked to curriculum review. Similarly, OECD (2013) highlights that internal evaluation mechanisms enhance teaching by ensuring that lecturers' instructional practices align with institutional learning outcomes and accreditation standards among others.

Government agencies frequently have a tremendous influence in ensuring the caliber of higher institutions of learning. For example, in the United States, one of the two organizations that perform the recognition of accrediting bodies is the United States Department of Education, a government entity (Eaton, 2004). Similar regulations and guidelines apply in Japan, where the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Sciences, and Technology must approve independent evaluation organizations (Kimura et al., 2004).

Within the East African region, studies show that internal quality assurance (IQA) is a key driver of effective teaching and learning. The Inter University Council for East Africa IUCEA (2020), emphasises that tools such as self-assessment reports, internal program reviews, monitoring course delivery and continuous lecturer appraisal support universities in maintaining academic standards. Findings from Tanzania and Kenya also indicate that effective internal M&E contributes to improved lesson delivery, better course coordination and enhanced assessment practices although gaps in staff capacity and irregular follow-up sometimes undermine the process (Marco, 2023; Kinyua, 2012).

In Uganda, the NCHE developed the National Quality Assurance Framework (NQAF) for Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions in Uganda in 2006 to unite the council

together with HEIs in order to achieve and enhance QA in the universities in Uganda (NCHE, 2008). The NQAF has a regulatory part at the national level and the institutional component level at each university. The latter makes HEIs responsible for QA. Section 3.0 of the NQAF that requires each higher education institution to establish a quality assurance unit or directorate to develop quality control procedures such as regular review of programs, learning practices, teaching practices and assessment. The mechanisms outlined by section 3.0 to assure quality at the universities are; quality of teaching and learning, quality of teaching staff, adequacy of educational infrastructure, research and publications and financial management at the university among others (Baiko et al., 2023).

The rationale behind performance models and indicators in higher education is to ensure the education provided to students equips them for employment and provides the nation with a highly skilled workforce that supports economic growth (Chalmers, 2009; Chalmers, 2007; Baiko et al., 2023; Eryenyu et al., 2024). According to Oktarina et al. (2023), Internal Quality Assurance assists educational institutions in preparing for the External Quality Assurance procedure; therefore, Internal Quality Assurance must be able to develop programs that are in line with obtaining high quality.

Universities in Uganda cooperate with the NCHE to develop and implement their own internal quality assurance (IQA) practices which include structured monitoring and evaluation procedures designed to uphold academic standards. These IQA practices consist of intentional activities such as programme review, internal audits, course monitoring and lecturer evaluation mechanisms that ensure institutions maintain the quality of education they provide (Martin, 2018; Andleeb & Jusoh, 2020; Pham et al., 2022 as cited in Eryenyu et al., 2024).

Recent years have seen increased emphasis on enhancing quality standards in higher institutions of learning through IQA practices; reflecting increased recognition that continuous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are essential to improving academic delivery and enhancing student learning experiences. Eryenyu et al (2024) observes that effective IQA practices support and enhance teaching and learning processes by providing feedback for academic improvement. These insights demonstrate that internal M&E procedures form a critical structural input influencing how teaching and learning are implemented within universities.

Despite the diversity in nature, vision, mission, funding and size, all universities are expected to implement robust internal quality assurance practices to guarantee the adequacy of teaching and learning (Markwell, 2003; Belawati & Zuhairi, 2007; Estermann & Pruvot, 2011; Kisige et al., 2021). Monitoring and evaluation is a central component of these systems, since it entails deliberate internal quality assurance practices; through which institutions review their own processes for the purpose of improvement (Hou et al. (2018; Loukkola & Zhang, 2010). Knight (2001) and Oktarinah (2023) further emphasize that internal quality improvement requires internal focus, noting that it forms a core element of institutional quality mechanisms. In line with this, Shan & Jarzabkowski (2013) underscores the need for universities to develop and operationalize institutional quality assurance policies to guide consistent implementation.

The above shows that effective internal quality assurance, through monitoring and evaluation; quality review processes and clear institutional policies directly influence the implementation of teaching and learning. Therefore, this study argues that internal quality assurance should not be perceived merely as a compliance

requirement but as a strategic tool for strengthening teaching and learning in private universities in Western Uganda. When institutions embed monitoring and evaluation practices into daily academic operations, they enhance teaching effectiveness and ultimately promote better student learning experiences.

Several scholars Biruk (2014), Malunda (2016), and Owolabi & Makinde (2012), emphasize the importance of continuous internal monitoring and evaluation, noting that it is essential for ensuring that an institution's strategic direction is consistently implemented and that overall quality is enhanced. This forms a core component of internal quality assurance, which directly influences the implementation of teaching and learning. Biruk (2014) in particular highlights that monitoring employee performance is vital for determining the extent to which staff contribute to the achievement of institutional goals.

When Universities monitor academic staff performance, track progress on teaching responsibilities and assess instructional quality, they are better able to identify gaps, provide targeted support and ensure that teaching practices meet institutional standards. This study contends that in the context of private Universities in Western Uganda, effective monitoring and evaluation is indispensable for strengthening the implementation of teaching and learning. Without clear monitoring systems, universities may struggle to uphold academic standards.

Higher education institutions apply various internal monitoring and evaluation practices as part of their quality assurance systems. For instance, enforcing minimum entry requirements is a critical mechanism for promoting the standardization of higher education practices (Forde et al., 2016 as cited in Mrema et al., 2023). These institutions undertake several steps during the admissions

process to ensure that students admitted into different academic programs meet the minimum academic standards set by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), thereby safeguarding the quality of learners who enter the system (Nshemereirwe, 2011; Okae, 2016; Lucander & Christersson, 2020; Aciro et al., 2023).

These admission-related monitoring and evaluation processes form a key component of internal quality assurance and significantly influence the implementation of teaching and learning. Lecturers are better positioned to deliver instruction at the expected level without having to compensate for foundational gaps. In the context of private universities in Western Uganda, strict adherence to NCHE entry requirements is essential for maintaining academic standards and ensuring that the teaching and learning process is effective.

Relatedly, student evaluation of teaching effectiveness, staff self-evaluation, peer evaluation and the supervisor evaluating the staff are examples of internal monitoring and evaluation (Ngware & Ndirangu, 2005; Niyivuga, 2019; Mbirizi et al., 2024).

Academic staff self-evaluation (which may also be referred to as self-assessment, self-review, self-study or self-reflection) plays a central role in strengthening the quality of teaching staff. Harvey (2004) defines it as a systematic process of critically reviewing one's own performance and educational provision. In line with this, Materu (2007) and Eryenyu et al (2024) argues that self-evaluation whether it is self-review, self-study, or self-examination enhances professional responsibility by enabling academic staff to identify both strengths and limitations, thereby fostering continuous professional development. However, Juliet Atwebembeire et al (2016)

and Baiko et al (2024) observe that despite its potential, there remains a low level of monitoring and follow-up on staff performance in many universities, making the actual contribution of academic staff to quality teaching unclear.

This suggests that without deliberate mechanisms to encourage and track self-examination, universities may struggle to achieve meaningful improvements in teaching quality.

Peer observation of teaching is another internal monitoring and evaluation that directly contributes to quality teaching. According to Nabaho et al (2016) and Wandera et al (2023), peer observation involves academic staff within the same department or discipline observing one another's teaching and providing constructive feedback on the quality of instructional procedures and their effectiveness in promoting student learning. This process is intended to build a supportive professional culture that encourages continuous improvement. While its primary aim is to strengthen teaching quality, the extent to which peer observation is systematically implemented and used to inform improvements remains unclear in many private universities.

According to Kadhila (2012), Materu (2007), Mhlanga (2008), Mulu (2012), Utuka (2012), and Zerihun (2012, as cited in Nabaho, et al., 2016), the common practice of internal quality assurance assessment of teaching in higher education institutions in Africa is student evaluation of teaching effectiveness. This involves learners evaluating lecturers and the teaching process using surveys administered by the quality assurance office and feedback from these procedures of learners evaluating the teaching-learning process is intended to improve the quality of teaching.

Several scholars Zenawi (2012), Chuan and Heng (2014) Nabaho (2017), and Wandera et al. (2023) advise that monitoring of lecturers' performance should be done using students' evaluations because they are in the best position to provide feedback on the quality of delivery of instruction. The Inter-University Council for East Africa IUCEA (2010) strongly advises that each university should adopt students' evaluations as a regular activity to learn what students think about the programs being offered, the staff, the learning environment and methods of delivery. Shah and Nair (2012) suggested that evaluations, when perceived by faculty as improvement-oriented, can generate positive outcomes in the teaching-learning process and even reinforce the relationship of academic staff with the higher institutions of learning.

However, studies by Cardoso et al (2013), Kansay (2012, as cited in Baiko et al., 2023) highlighted some attitudes of academic staff toward quality assurance practices of internal monitoring and evaluation such as generating reports that are viewed as mainly related to monitoring and control rather than with enhancement and improvement. Other scholars Benton & Cashin (2012), Bahati & Karungi (2020), and Katende (2024) have identified areas of improvement with the use of students' evaluations of academic staff.

Student participation in evaluating academic procedures is essential and directly supports the implementation of quality teaching and learning. The IUCEA (2010) encourages Higher education institutions to involve students in assessing academic programs, teaching methods, lecturer-student interactions and innovations in content delivery methods etc; noting that such feedback provides valuable insight into the quality of teaching processes. Elassy (2013) and Lucander & Christersson (2020) add that student evaluation processes are strengthened by their lived

experiences and also contribute to the development of important skills such as leadership, communication and analytical reasoning. Clemons & Marsha (2024) highlight that these activities stimulate continuous improvement and promote quality enhancement (Stukalina, 2014; Clemons & Marsha, 2024).

Despite these benefits, many universities still underutilize student feedback mechanisms or treat them as mere formalities rather than tools for pedagogical improvement.

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) pointed out that some institutions may face challenges in finding qualified students to participate in evaluation activities and processes for instance students who do not participate in institutional committees or faculty boards may lack the necessary competencies and experiences to participate in these evaluations (Alaniska et al., 2006; Kohoutek et al., 2025).

With regard to lecturer assessment by supervisor, dialogues and reviews are also key components of internal monitoring and evaluation. Studies such as Western and Smith (2015), Gibbs and Irons (2011) and Kansime & Singh (2023) highlight that well-designed supervisor assessments help ensure accountability, promote the sharing of best practices and guide lecturers towards improved teaching performance. For these processes to be developmental, clear performance indicators must be jointly agreed upon between supervisors and lecturers.

However, Karemiri (2013) reveals that in many Ugandan universities, supervisor-led reviews are implemented in an adversarial manner where the supervisor becomes a 'judge' and the lecturer the 'accused', a dynamic that undermines professional

growth. Such an approach contradicts the purpose of supervisor assessment as a supportive tool for improving teaching quality.

Relatedly, scholars have mentioned that academic staff often perceive these assessments as a hindrance to their academic work; for example, in their 2016 study of the implementation of IQA practices in Portuguese universities, Tavares, Sin, Videira, and Amaral (2016, as cited in Eryenyu et al., 2024) found that IQA practices have only led to awareness about quality issues in teaching and learning but no substantive practical improvements were registered. Therefore, Kagaari (2010) advocated for a blame free forum and a collaborative approach in case any deviations from planned activities are identified during the academic staff assessment procedures.

In higher institutions of learning, internal monitoring and evaluation practices provide strategic guidance to staff and managers regarding expected performance outcomes and strategies to enhance improvement. These practices ensure that lecturers receive accurate and timely feedback that can directly enhance the quality of teaching, especially in the areas of content delivery methods and assessment practices. Mbirizi et al. (2024) note that when feedback systems are weak, lecturers tend to repeat the same instructional mistakes, which undermines instructional improvement.

Additionally, effective monitoring processes strengthen faculty preparedness, as staff are able to identify their weaknesses and build confidence. According to Niyivuga (2019) and Eryenyu et al. (2024), constructive feedback also contributes to improved student engagement and achievement, since better-prepared lecturers create more supportive learning environments.

Studies show that quality assurance procedures are often perceived by academic staff as mechanisms of with evaluation and judgment rather than tools for improving teaching and learning (Reisberg, 2010; Nabaho et al., 2022; Oktarina et al., 2023). When quality assurance is viewed as an intrusion or an extension of managerial control, staff may become anxious or resistant, which undermines their willingness to engage with quality improvement initiatives (Lucas 2014; Anderson 2006, 2008 as cited in Markus et al., 2018). This resistance is partly linked to limited faculty preparedness, as many academic staff members remain unaware or only partially aware of what is contained in copies of the quality assurance draft policy documents and manuals; or, lack the skills to apply them effectively during curriculum planning, content delivery and assessment; this makes it an issue of controversial debate and causes resistance (Okae, 2016; Matei et al., 2016 citing Randall, 2008).

This gap in preparedness is critical because faculty members who are unfamiliar with quality assurance expectations may implement inconsistent content delivery methods and assessment practices, ultimately affecting student engagement and achievement. This reinforces the need to explore how QA frameworks and understanding of faculty readiness and perceptions shape the quality of teaching and learning in private universities in Western Uganda.

Although quality assurance M&E frameworks exist in many universities, their effectiveness largely depends on how well they are communicated and understood by academic staff. Kisige et al (2021) found out that in several institutions, quality assurance policies were available but poorly communicated to academic staff, resulting in weak implementation at the departmental level. When quality assurance procedures are perceived as tedious, costly, or intimidating, academic staff tend to

cling to tradition in their established routines, thereby resisting change (IUCEA, 2010). Newton (2001) and Lucander & Christersson (2020) similarly note that the way QA monitoring and evaluation systems are interpreted by actors—in this example, lecturers, directly influences their effectiveness. These challenges ultimately affect student' engagement and achievement.

Teaching excellence awards have emerged as one of the strategies derived from monitoring and evaluation M&E processes in universities. These awards are designed to recognize and celebrate high-performing lecturers, promote a culture of teaching excellence, disseminate effective pedagogical practices and create role models who can motivate other academic staff to improve teaching (Nabaho et al. 2016 as cited in Wandera et al., 2023). In principle, such awards provide positive reinforcement that encourages lecturers to refine their approaches to content delivery and strengthen their assessment practices in order to meet recognized standards of excellence. However, the extent to which these awards influence teaching and learning depends on how lecturers interpret and respond to them.

Infrastructure has been widely recognized as being paramount in internal monitoring and evaluation practices for quality assurance in higher education. According to IUCEA (2010), Alabi et al (2018), Bagonza et al (2019) and Bahati & Karungi (2020) institutions are expected to establish clear guidelines and standard operating procedures to ensure that essential learning facilities such as libraries and laboratories are not only available, but also regularly inspected for adequacy and suitability. Similarly, Mugizi (2021) and Katende (2024) underscore that the infrastructure base, which comprises of physical buildings, information technology

systems, and essential utilities, forms the cornerstone for promoting effective teaching and learning.

In relation to this study, robust infrastructure directly influences content delivery methods, assessment practices and student engagement and achievement. For example, up-to-date ICT infrastructure enables diversified content delivery methods, while well-maintained laboratories support authentic assessment practices and enhance students' practical engagement. However, existing literature pays limited attention to how infrastructure influences day-to-day teaching practices.

Higher education institutions are expected to ensure that learning resources and support systems are adequate, accessible and responsive to students' needs. Okae (2016) emphasizes that when institutions regularly assess and enhance the efficiency and availability of these services, they strengthen content delivery methods, since lecturers are better able to utilize relevant teaching materials and technologies. Brint & Clofter (2016) and Mbirizi et al (2024) further propose that the quality of higher education can be evaluated by examining how much students learn and how innovative instructional practices influence student engagement and achievement. This suggests that the manner in which content is delivered; whether through modern pedagogies, digital tools or interactive approaches directly shapes the students' learning experiences.

Consistent with the above view, Nepal and Maharjan (2015, as cited in Mugizi, 2021) found that inadequate teaching materials and limited access to varied teaching and learning media significantly reduce learning outcomes, demonstrating the critical link between institutional support and effectiveness of assessment practices and

faculty preparedness. Similarly, Katende (2024) argues that high-quality instruction is indispensable for empowering student achievement, reinforcing the idea that well-designed instructional practices remain central to quality teaching and learning.

The above studies coactively indicate that universities must not only invest in pedagogical resources but also continuously monitor how these resources are utilised in actual teaching. Doing so ensures that content delivery methods become more learner-centred, assessment practices more evidence-based and faculty better prepared to engage students meaningfully, thereby improving the overall achievement.

Section 126 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act requires universities to report annually to the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) on the state of lecture rooms, administrative and staff offices, reading spaces, student recreation facilities, access to up-to-date learning materials and student exchange opportunities. Institutions must also publish annual lists of teaching materials, equipment and research output each academic year and submit a copy to the National Council. (NCHE, 2008; Mugizi, 2021).

The above requirements highlight the centrality of the learning environment to effective pedagogy. Adequate physical and academic resources enable universities to adopt diverse and interactive content delivery methods, while access to current materials facilitates the development of credible assessment practices. The provision of staff offices and research facilities further strengthens faculty preparedness by ensuring that lecturers have the space and academic support needed to design and deliver high-quality instruction. Also, facilities such as sports

grounds, assembly spaces and updated learning resources enhance student engagement and contribute to improved achievement.

Section 126 underscores that the implementation of teaching and learning is not merely a classroom activity but a function deeply shaped by compliance of internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) with quality assurance standards.

The challenge with establishing a monitoring and evaluation system in Ugandan HEIs results from the fact that education services are often intangible and difficult to measure since the outcome is reflected in the transformation of individuals in their knowledge, their characteristics, and their behaviour (Hamzah, Purwati, & Kadir, (2018), and Tsinidou, Gerogiannis & Fitsilis (2010, as cited in Wandera et al., 2023); the other factor that complicates the process of implementing a monitoring and evaluation mechanism in Ugandan universities is issues of autonomy in universities make the whole process complicated (Tsinidou et al., 2010, as cited in Wandera et al., 2023).

The above mentioned challenges have direct implications for core teaching and learning processes. Therefore, despite the existence of quality assurance frameworks, there remains a significant gap in linking M&E outcomes with improvements in teaching practices; highlighting the need to explore the contribution of procedures applied in internal M&E to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

## **2.4 Effect of NCHE External Assessment on Management of Standards in Implementation of Teaching and Learning**

The increasing demand to internationalize Higher Education (HE) has led to the establishment and enforcement of global HE quality standards; in response, national Quality Assurance (QA) agencies have continued to develop, revise and supervise quality mechanisms intended to guide their respective higher education institutions towards internationally comparable practice Imaniriho (2020; Sika & Othoo 2022, as cited in Mrema et al. 2023). These developments often benchmark regional, continental and global frameworks, ensuring that institutions adapt to emerging trends in quality enhancement. Furthermore, national systems grant universities autonomy to develop, revise and supervise internal quality assurance standards provided they remain aligned with minimum national HE quality standards (Sanga, 2012).

This autonomy directly influences critical dimensions of teaching and learning, especially content delivery methods, assessment practices, and student engagement and achievement. Universities that strategically integrate global and regional quality expectations into their internal mechanisms are more likely to achieve a coherent and effective learning environment where students are actively engaged and supported.

Internationally, external quality assurance agencies have been shown to influence the design and delivery of university curricula. Harvey and Green (1993) argue that external quality standards compel universities to improve teaching methodologies to meet fitness-for-purpose requirements. Similarly, Martin (2018) notes that UNESCO guided external reviews promote learner-centred pedagogies and innovation in content delivery.

In East Africa, IUCEA benchmarks require universities to demonstrate effective teaching practices, including blended learning and competence-based delivery IUCEA (2019). This suggests that NCHE's external assessment is likely to shape the content delivery methods employed by lecturers in Ugandan universities. This external assessment enhances consistency and pushes institutions that would otherwise lag to adopt more modern delivery approaches.

Nonetheless, Khamis & Scully (2020) critique external quality assurance (EQA) frameworks used across East African Universities. They argue that while many of these frameworks require internal quality assurance (IQA) systems in HEIs, the external audit or accreditation standards often consist of long checklists of criteria; many of which poorly reflect actual teaching and learning quality. They observe that the criteria for academic standards in external QA often emphasize structural aspects rather than evidence-based measures of teaching quality; compliance with EQA does not guarantee that teaching and learning improve.

In the context of quality in higher institutions of learning, NCHE external assessment is also referred to as 'audit'; this is a process of examining what goes on in these institutions to ensure compliance with quality assurance procedures, integrity, standards and outcomes (NCHE, 2014). To help accomplish this goal, NCHE chooses members from its database and assigns them to visit the designated institutions. The teams' makeup varies based on their specialization required and the kind of institution to be inspected. It is vital to ensure that the peer evaluators have no competing interests with the HEI visited and are not members of staff.

According to Woodhouse (1999), as stated in Viktoria Kis, in source list submitted to Uganda Christian University on 2021-05-122005, p. 5, a quality audit examines the

degree to which the organization is accomplishing its own explicit or implicit goals. It is done at the level of the institution and concentrates on the procedures used by universities to ensure and enhance the caliber of End Match institutions.

NCHE external assessment requires institutions to undertake systematic self-assessment procedures to determine whether they are meeting their strategic academic goals. Through this process, universities evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning systems, including the quality of content delivery methods and assessment practices (Thune, 1998, as cited in Matei et al., 2016, p.58; NCHE Uganda Higher Education Review Journal, 2024).

The resulting action plans often target key areas such as improving teaching processes, strengthening program structures and enhancing research and innovation capacity (IUCEA, 2010; Chasokela & Manokore, 2025). In the context of teaching and learning, these QA-driven reviews provide an opportunity for institutions to refine instructional methods and ensure that assessment practices are aligned with external standards.

Furthermore, the quality assurance procedures examined in external assessments have implications for faculty preparedness, as lecturers are expected to comply with revised standards, instructional expectations and assessment guidelines. However, studies show that academics may respond differently; some comply while others resist such procedures depending on their perceptions of quality assurance demands (Cardoso, Rosa & Santos, 2013; Wandera et al., 2023). This variation in response influences how effectively new QA requirements translate into improved student engagement during the learning process and ultimately impacts student achievement.

Therefore, the success of NCHE external assessment lies not only in the formulation of action plans but in creating a supportive environment where faculty members are empowered and motivated to implement quality-enhancing practices consistently. This plays a crucial role in improving content delivery methods and assessment practices, since institutions must align their instructional procedures and evaluation strategies with nationally approved standards.

Self-assessment procedures help universities reflect on their own practices, but it is the NCHE external assessment framework that often drives real change by enforcing compliance, highlighting critical weaknesses, and providing benchmarks for continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

While internal self-assessment remains an important quality assurance tool, studies indicate that its effectiveness in many Ugandan universities is limited largely due to inadequate faculty preparedness, particularly the shortage of academic staff with the expertise needed to conduct meaningful evaluations (Okae, 2016; Matei et al., 2016). Institutional reviews are often conducted primarily to fulfill NCHE compliance requirements. Atwebembeire et al (2016) also observes where internal self-assessment exercises are undertaken; financial constraints often prevent universities from implementing most of the recommended improvements.

External assessments for quality assurance and rankings of universities have existed for decades. The external quality evaluation cycle used across many EU nations typically includes four major steps: institutional self-assessment, peer site visits, peer review, report preparation and follow-up actions (Greere and Riley, 2014). Similarly, the NCHE external assessment employs a range of techniques such as individual and groups interviews, focus group discussions, on-site observations and

document verification ((NCHE, 2014; Mrema, 2023; NCHE Uganda Higher Education Review Journal, 2024). These techniques allow external assessors to examine procedures put in place for a conducive learning environment and how prepared faculty members are to implement approved teaching and learning standards.

In Uganda, The Quality Assurance Framework and the Licensing Process for HEIs (NCHE, 2014) state: The responsibility of the NCHE is to validate institutional information on effectiveness of internal quality arrangements; the NCHE will use peer and expert reviews to conduct external audits in a regular cycle of audits or whenever these become necessary. (p. 12).

Several studies show that the external quality certification procedures tend to promote more centralized decision-making structures in higher education institutions, often as a strategy to strengthen administrative and support systems for teaching and learning, and to develop systematic processes for handling data on instructional quality and student achievement (Stensaker et al., 2011; Sabah et al., 2023). In the Ugandan context, such restructuring can be seen in the requirement for institutions to demonstrate clear governance arrangements, reliable information systems and improved coordination across academic and administrative units during NCHE audits.

This centralization when guided by quality standards creates opportunities for institutions to tighten monitoring of teaching processes, strengthen resource allocation for learning support and ensure that instructional practices are evidence-based. Therefore, external quality assurance appears to play a pivotal role in shaping how institutions manage standards and organize themselves to deliver effective teaching and learning.

NCHE external quality assurance practices focus on the rules, policies, and procedures that ensure the quality of higher education programs and institutional operations (Matei *et al.*, 2016; NCHE, 2024). Through institutional self-study, peer reviews panels and reporting mechanisms, external experts appointed by NCHE evaluate the extent to which a university or its programs conform to established quality criteria. This process is intended to affirm that institutional goals particularly those related to academic standards are being met effectively (Okae, 2016; Mrema, 2023). In relation to teaching and learning, these external assessments inherently shape key internal practices such as content delivery methods, assessment practices, faculty preparedness and mechanisms for student engagement and achievement. For instance, the requirement for evidence-based assessments and qualified teaching staff compels institutions to comply with set standards.

However, external quality assurance has been criticized for its limited capacity to address the actual quality of student learning and lived learner experience and there is a risk that institutions may focus more on procedural compliance than on genuine quality improvement (Martin, 2006 as cited in Matei *et al.*, 2016; Alabi *et al.*, 2018; Duarte & Vardasca, 2023). While external quality assurance creates an important framework for accountability, its effectiveness ultimately depends on how institutions internalize these standards and integrate them into day-to-day teaching and learning processes rather than treating them as checklist requirements.

A number of concerns have been raised regarding the involvement of different stakeholders in quality assurance procedures in higher institutions of learning. Research shows that as institutions strive to build a sustainable quality culture, broad stakeholder participation becomes essential in order to develop a shared

understanding of what quality entails, to ensure that different needs and perspectives are incorporated (Shindler *et al.*, 2015; Bobby, 2014; Cullen *et al.*, 2003 as cited in Matei *et al.*, 2016 p.36; Kisige, 2021). However, while stakeholder engagement is widely emphasized, the unresolved question remains the degree to which different stakeholders should influence the process (Thune, 1998 as cited in Viktoria, 2005; Mrema, 2023; Maryrose *et al.*, 2024).

Research reveals differences in how various stakeholders perceive “quality”, this can create challenges between different actors of systems for quality assurance attempting to design frameworks that integrate diverse stakeholders' expectations (Matei, *et al.*, 2016; Liviu *et al.*, 2016; Martin *et al.*, 2020; Kisige *et al.*, 2021). These have been identified when stakeholders hold divergent understandings of quality requirements for instance when institutions are required to demonstrate conformity with standards relating to governance, teaching processes, student support, resources and academic program relevance.

In relation to NCHE external quality assurance practices, stakeholder involvement is particularly significant because the NCHE assessment model requires input from multiple actors ie administrators, teaching staff and students among others.

According to Mourkani and Shohoodi (2013), one of the most challenging issues facing higher education institutions in developing nations is the reliance on quality assurance models that are largely borrowed from local and international universities, with minimal consideration of contextual realities. Similarly, IUCEA (2010), Okae (2016) and Kansiime and Singh (2023) observe that such externally adopted QA frameworks often fail to align with the institutional, cultural and resource contexts of developing countries, thereby limiting their effectiveness.

This misalignment results in inadequate implementation of quality assurance practices, particularly in relation to teaching and learning. However, while existing studies acknowledge the contextual limitations of imported QA models, they provide limited empirical insight into how external quality assurance practices influence continuous improvement in teaching quality at the institutional level. In response to this gap, the present study examines how external quality assurance practices are implemented within the Ugandan higher education context and how they contribute to the continuous enhancement of teaching quality. This approach recognizes the need for context-sensitive QA strategies that move beyond compliance and instead promote meaningful improvement in teaching and learning processes (IUCEA, 2010; Wandera et al., 2023; Oktarina et al., 2023).

Studies indicate that external quality assurance assessment systems often generate significant strain on academic staff due to increased compliance demands and administrative workload (Askling, 1997; Harvey, 2002; Stephenson, 2004 as cited in ViktoriaKis, 2005 p.30; Hiire et al., 2020). In particular, these systems are associated with extensive paperwork, frequent meetings and heightened bureaucratic expectations, which consume substantial time that would otherwise be devoted to core academic activities such as teaching and student support (Rasmussen, 1997; Baldwin, 1997; Wandera et al., 2023). As a result, both academic and non-academic personnel experience constraints that may negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning processes (Genza 2008; Nabaho & Turyasingura, 2022).

However, despite the above documented challenges, limited empirical evidence exists on how NCHE's external quality assurance practices specifically affect teaching and learning within the Ugandan context.

Literature on higher education quality assurance demonstrates that teaching and learning processes, including content delivery methods and assessment practices are central to external quality assurance evaluations conducted by national regulatory bodies such as the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). Studies indicate that rapid enrolment expansion without proportional growth in institutional resources compromises instructional effectiveness, thereby constraining institution's ability to meet externally defined standards for effective teaching and learning (Ranjani, 2013; Bollaert, 2014; Nepal & Maharjan, 2015 as cited in Mugizi, 2021).

In relation to NCHE requirements on curriculum design and review, scholars observe that overstretched teaching staff often lacks the capacity to meaningfully engage in curriculum review processes, resulting in programmes that prioritise compliance over pedagogical relevance (Teferra, 2007; Saint, 2004). This challenge is further compounded by limitations in staff recruitment and professional development, which directly affect institutional performance during external audits Baiko et al., (2024).

Moreover, weaknesses in student evaluation and feedback mechanisms undermine the formative assessment principles emphasized in external quality assurance frameworks. When student engagement is low and feedback systems are underdeveloped, institutions struggle to demonstrate evidence of continuous improvement which is a critical indicator in NCHE external assessments (Fisher & Santana, 2020). This suggests that compliance with NCHE external quality assurance indicators is not solely a structural or procedural matter, but is fundamentally

dependent on the effectiveness of day-to-day teaching and learning practices within institutions.

Researchers have demonstrated that measuring quality in higher education is a complex and contested process, as it is difficult to establish what quality entails, how it can be identified, and how it can be meaningfully assessed (Harvey and Gree, 1993; Matei et al., 2016; Lucander & Christersson, 2020). It is difficult to quantify improvements in quality and simpler to focus on organisational change; most of educational transformation is invisible, gradual, and sluggish. This concern is reinforced by Viktoria Kis (2005), Khalida et al. (2024), and Oktarina et al. (2023), who note that educational transformation is typically invisible, gradual and sluggish, making improvements in teaching and learning difficult to be captured through conventional quality indicators. This suggests a potential misalignment between external quality assurance requirements that focus primarily on institutional compliance mechanisms and the core teaching and learning processes that directly influence student achievement.

Scholars indicate that the effectiveness of quality assurance mechanisms largely depends on how they are interpreted and enacted by academic staff. Odundo *et al.* (2017), Fisher & Santana (2020), Salmah et al. (2023), and Kansiime (2023), observe that academic staff often take quality assurance measures for granted due to the absence of a clearly articulated and harmonised policy guiding quality assurance practices across higher educational institutions. This lack of policy coherence weakens institutional commitment to quality processes and limits their influence on teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes. When quality assurance is

perceived as routine or administrative rather than pedagogical, it's potential to improve teaching and learning processes is significantly diminished.

Relatedly, this challenge is compounded by persistent constraints in academic programme implementation, including outdated curricula, inadequate instructional materials, difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff and insufficient physical and laboratory facilities resulting from financial limitations (Okwakol, 2008; Acanga, 2013 as cited in Baiko et al., 2023; Wandera et al., 2023). Such conditions undermine effective content delivery, assessment practices and student' engagement during teaching and learning processes.

Research demonstrates that the impact of technology on society and industry is irreversible and continuously evolving, with an anticipated acceleration in scientific and technological advancements in the coming decades (Ghandi, 2014; Kansiime & Singh, 2023; Mbirizi et al., 2024; Clemons & Marsha, 2024). Despite these advancements, higher education institutions are still grappling with challenges associated with integrating modern technologies into teaching and learning processes. This reality underscores the need for sustained personal and institutional capacity development, particularly in terms of skills development, infrastructure and pedagogical (Luckona, as cited in Ranjani, 2013; Oktarina et al., 2023; Baiko et al., 2024).

In relation to this study, effective teaching and learning processes, content delivery methods and assessment practices emerge as critical determinants of how well institutions respond to technological change. Where these processes are inadequately aligned with contemporary technological demands, student engagement and achievement are likely to be compromised. The reviewed literature

establish a clear relationship between program accreditation, quality of teaching staff, internal monitoring and evaluation and NCHE external assessment on management of standards as core in influencing the implementation of teaching and learning, while also revealing contextual gaps that this study seeks to address.

Consequently, the effectiveness of NCHE external assessment in influencing the actual implementation of teaching and learning processes within universities remains a critical policy and practice concern. Understanding how external assessment frameworks shape pedagogical practices and internal quality assurance mechanisms is essential for strengthening the role of NCHE beyond regulatory compliance towards fostering meaningful and continuous improvement in teaching and learning outcomes (Lucander & Christersson, 2020; Fisher & Santana, 2020).

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section describes in detail how the study was carried out and what technique was employed. It defines the strategy, approaches, and methodologies utilized to collect and analyze the data.

#### 3.2 Research Approach and Design

A transformative research approach was used in this study. It included advancing an action agenda for reform and change to improve processes and procedures involved in quality assurance practices of higher institutions of learning during implementation of teaching and learning.

A narrative research design was utilized to carry out the research to explore quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. Narrative is a term assigned to any text or discourse, or it might be text used within the context of a mode of inquiry in qualitative research (Chase, 2005), with a specific focus on the stories individuals tell. Narrative is considered as a unique kind of qualitative design in which “narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or a series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (Czarniawska, 2004). The procedures for implementing this research consisted of analysis of narratives through studying individuals, gathering data through collecting their stories, reporting individual experiences, and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences to create descriptions of themes and sub-themes (Polkinghorne, 1995).

### 3.3 Study Population

The study targeted 2 private universities from Western Uganda to represent private higher institutions of learning from the region. The sample was chosen from the private chartered Universities. These universities included University category - A that had recently been granted a Charter at the time of the study; and University category - B that had been chartered for the last 10 years.

This study's selection of chartered universities was predicted on the premise that they meet all the prerequisites for accreditation by NCHE in order to provide high-quality education. These selected private Universities had been in operation for some good time and were among the eight chartered universities in western Uganda; four being public universities. They had bigger enrollment compared to other private institutions of higher learning in the region; one is a faith-based university and the second one a private for-profit university. These institutions were therefore purposively selected.

These universities' quality assurance practices were analyzed and documented with regard to implementation of teaching and learning. The target population from these selected universities included University Teaching Administrative staff, Non-Teaching Management staff, Quality Assurance officers and students in the final year of study who were selected using the purposive sampling selection criteria. Therefore, the researcher purposively selected the sites that best helped to explore quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning (Miles and Huberman 1994).

The researcher obtained approval of individuals in authority (gatekeepers) to gain access to sites and to study participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2014).

Table 3.1 below summarizes the study population from selected institutions of higher learning, disaggregated by institutional category and respondent group. The population includes university management staff, teaching administrative staff, quality assurance officers and final-year students; forming the basis from which the study sample was drawn.

**Table 3.1 Study population from selected institutions of higher learning**

No.	Institution	Category of the study population	Number
1.	Category -A	University Non-Teaching Management Staff	14
		University Teaching Administrative Staff	10
		Quality Assurance Officers	6
		University Final Year Students	250
		<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>
2.	Category -B	University Non-Teaching Management Staff	12
		University Teaching Administrative Staff	18
		Quality Assurance Officers	3
		University Final Year Students	354
		<b>Total</b>	<b>387</b>
	<b>Total Population</b>		<b>667</b>

Source: University website 2021

**Table 3.2: Category of the targeted population from selected institutions of higher learning**

Table 3.2 below summarises the category of the targeted population from selected private universities. The population was drawn from two private universities categorized as Category A and Category B institutions. The table categorises respondents by staff role, including teaching administrative staff, non-teaching management staff, quality assurance officers and final-year students. In total, the study population comprised 42 respondents from two private universities.

**Table 3.2 Category of the targeted population**

No.	Institution	Category of the target population	Number
1.	University - Category A	University Teaching Administrative Staff	03
		University-Non-Teaching Management Staff	04
		Quality Assurance Officers	01
		Students (finalists)	14
		Total	22
2.	University - Category B	University Teaching Administrative Staff	03
		University-Non-Teaching management Staff	04
		Quality Assurance Officers	01
		Students (finalists)	12
		Total	20
	Total Population		42

Source: University documentary 2023

### 3.4 Sample selection procedure and sample size

Respondents were purposively selected due to the roles they had and the information that was anticipated.

Period spent in the occupation was also considered in the selection. The longer the period was, the more reliable the data provided by a respondent was taken to be.

In line with qualitative research principles, the sample size was guided by data saturation, whereby data collection continued until no new themes emerged.

**Table 3.3: Sample Selection Procedure**

Table 3.3 presents the sample selection procedures used in this study. The table summarises the categories of the target population, the corresponding sample sizes, the sampling techniques employed and the data collection methods used. The study adopted purposive sampling to select respondents who possessed relevant experience and institutional knowledge to provide rich and reliable data on the phenomenon under investigation. A total of 42 respondents were selected from four key categories within the university including university teaching administrative staff, non-teaching management staff, quality assurance officers and final-year students. Interviews were used as the primary data collection method.

**Table 3.3 Sample Selection Procedure**

	Category of the target population	Sample size	Sampling technique	Data collection method
1	University teaching administrative staff	06	Purposive sampling	Interviewing
2	University non-teaching management staff	08	Purposive sampling	Interviewing

3	Quality assurance officers	2	Purposive sampling	Interviewing
4	Students (finalists)	26	Purposive sampling	Interviewing
	Total	42		

### 3.5 Sampling Techniques

In this investigation, non-probability sampling was used. Non-probability sampling is frequently linked to qualitative research and narrative research designs. The researcher focused on small samples that intended to examine real life phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2014).

#### 3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was employed by the researcher to choose 26 students to explore whether there was adherence to quality assurance standards during the teaching-learning process, during the student' evaluation processes of the teaching learning environment, facilities and relevant support services etc. Participants who were in their final year of study were selected and these were major respondents.

Two (2) Quality Assurance Officers of the selected private universities were purposively selected because they were the implementers of quality assurance processes for their universities. Six (6) University teaching administrative staff that included Two (2) Faculty Deans and Four (4) Heads of Departments were also selected with the purpose that they had much knowledge on how quality assurance standards were being employed in the process of teaching and learning in their various faculties and departments; Eight (8) University Non-teaching Management

staff were purposively selected because they were full time involved in managing processes and procedures of the selected universities and were expected to have first hand information on university strategic plans, policies and procedures; these included 2 Assistant Academic Registrars, 2 Human Resource Officers, 2 University Librarians, and 2 Deans of Students.

The non-teaching management staff were purposively selected basing of the roles they played and their direct participation in quality control processes and procedures in the selected private universities, in order to avail crucial information that could not be acquired through alternative choices; this was borrowed from Maxwell (1996; Creswell, 2014). These respondents were by the nature of their work custodians of the information that was required in relation to the objectives of the study; they were expected to be rich in facts regarding the topic of the study.

The researcher also considered the period spent in the occupation during sample selection. The longer the period a respondent had spent on the job, the more reliable the data provided by a respondent was taken to be.

### **3.6 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Interview**

The researcher selected respondents from the sampled departments to conduct interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were employed as a technique designed to deeply engage each participant to provide information concerning the exploration of Quality Assurance practices in implementation of teaching and learning. An interview guide was prepared in advance and sequentially to make sense to the respondents; 26 final-year students, 8 University Non-teaching

Management staff, 6 University teaching administrative staff and 2 quality assurance officers. The goal was to obtain in-depth information about quality assurance practices that were employed at the universities during implementation of teaching and learning.

Telephone interviews were carried out during the lockdown period; each telephone interview lasted for 45 minutes. Also, more interviews were conducted through discussions using a structured interview guide. The instrument was pre-tested for validity before it was administered. Apart from the previously determined inquiries, there were questions that were not predetermined; they were posed, when required, in order to clarify newly emerging concerns. With the consent of each participant in the interview, each interview was recorded in writing.

### **3.6.2 Observation**

The study used a method of direct observation that served as an instrument for collecting data. During the study, the researcher employed participant observation to ascertain the availability of the students' welfare facilities, teaching-learning facilities, and facilities for students with special needs, among others. This was done with the guidance of the observation checklist. The researcher was closely engaged on ground during the study, in order to become familiar with the environment at the selected private universities so as to get the required information on support services and facilities. The researcher participated in assessing the availability of library facilities, lecture space, teaching aids in lecture rooms, status of science laboratories and standard operating procedures (SoPs), conditions of student hostels, cafeteria services, and availability of clubs/associations, co-curricular activities and convocation procedures.

This technique helped the researcher to fully comprehend the subject of study when observing these practices and support services offered in relation to quality standards.

### **3.6.3 Documentary Review Method**

The method of documentary review was applied due to the fact that the research really required literature review in both hard and soft copy documents. A thorough investigation and analysis of documents and literature on implementation of teaching and learning as well as policies, reports and standards on quality assurance practices and processes in universities in Western Uganda was undertaken. This included published, unpublished, public documents, conference papers and official reports on higher education in developing economies as well as journal articles.

Various documents reviewed included NCHC Statutory Instruments to review stipulated guidelines for student' applicants minimum requirements, required qualifications for different categories of academic staff, minimum requirements for teacher-student ratio, reporting procedures on teaching and learning, standards on student and staff welfare and strategic planning.

The Human Resource manual was reviewed for procedures on promotions and other rewards for teaching staff, guidelines on academic staff training and development and establishment of staff union.

The Quality Assurance Policy was reviewed for procedures on evaluating university facilities, resources and services; monitoring teaching and learning; MoUs signed for community service engagements; policy guidelines on curriculum evaluation and review, standards for learner-based approaches of delivery, outlined procedures for

designing new academic programs, guidelines for relevancy of the proposed programs to the priority concerns of the community and administration of academic programs.

Policies on student affairs that were reviewed included procedures on student' complaints/appeals; policy on student mentorship and student welfare procedures. Academic policies were also reviewed with regard to guidelines on student' admission procedures, attending lectures, student' assessment standards, guidelines and processes on course works, examinations, procedures on internship placement, reporting and follow-up.

Quality Assurance assessment tools that were reviewed included expected student and lecturer attendance standards and teaching and learning.

The web depository of the research works in the university library was visited with regard to lecturer's publications.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Methods and Techniques**

Qualitative data from interviews, documents and observation checklists was analyzed using sentences, paragraphs, narratives, content analysis and excerpts: these gave vivid evidence and analysis in connection with the intended objectives of this study.

While analyzing data, the researcher clarified her expectations and this depended on the research problem, objectives and research questions to guide her in this process. The researcher wrote down the ideas and used coding for specific research questions (Creswell, 2014).

Data was organized and prepared for analysis. This involved generating field notes, transcribing interviews, organizing excerpts and categorizing all of the visual material.

Data from documents was analyzed using content analysis to gather pertinent documentary proof that would validate and support research-based findings and pertinent passages were extracted that could be considered statements of fact to support proposed study aims and to supplement themes from interviews and observations.

The researcher sorted and arranged the data into different categories based on the source of the data. She engaged in winnowing data, a process of focusing on some of the data and disregarding other parts of it (MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). The researcher reviewed the sorted data and organized it into categories/ themes that cut across interviews, documents and observations as data sources (Creswell 2013).

### **3.7.1 Coding**

The researcher used code development and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis method was used to identify, investigate, and document concepts and trends (themes) so that they could be presented in an understandable manner. The researcher familiarized herself with the depth of the literature and searched for meanings, patterns and their significance prior to the coding procedure. Then run a quick word frequency query using Nvivo software package to see which words the participants were using most often. This involved selecting common comments and putting them into codes. The researcher developed codes from data and these codes emerged into main themes that were eventually formulated into sub- themes. The process of coding also involved organizing data into meaningful groups; this was

borrowed from (Boyatzis, 1998; Tuckett, 2005; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The researcher always returned to the original context of the coded material and revisited the queries that helped her arrive at the conclusions.

To find themes, the entire set of data was reviewed multiple times in relation to the research questions; any unnecessary information was subsequently eliminated from the raw data. The researcher grouped related topics together; formed these topics and were grouped according to main, unique, and leftover topics. The data material for each category was then assembled to answer the research questions. This was borrowed from (Tesch, 1990).

The researcher run a matrix coding query using Nvivo software package; this helped her to answer a wide range of questions about patterns in the data and gain access to the content that showed those patterns for example how many participants talked about a theme and how often this theme was reported across all the sources. Also, this helped when comparing the opinions of various demographic groups regarding the issue at hand.

For each individual theme, the researcher wrote a detailed analysis of data in connection with the other themes and the research questions. The researcher worked alternating between the several themes and the data base until she created a comprehensive collection of themes. She then looked back at the data to assess whether each theme could be supported by additional evidence and identified sub-themes and related examples from each theme.

The above process aided the researcher to manage, explore and find patterns in the data by identifying themes, sub-themes, patterns and relationships. Drilling down

into the material for deeper analysis increased the transparency and credibility of the research findings.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Gibbs argues that the foundation of any research study is validity, reliability, and trustworthiness. Qualitative validity means that the researcher checked for the trustworthiness criteria such as accuracy, authenticity, confirmability, transferability, dependability and credibility of the findings by employing certain procedures, while qualitative reliability indicates that the researcher's approach was consistent across different researchers and different projects (Gibbs, 2007; Helen & Joanna, 2015).

To ensure data reliability, the researcher sought consent from gatekeepers to be permitted to access research sites to formally interact with the participants. Further, informed consent was sought from participants to establish a transparent relationship with the participants; they were informed about the purpose of the study, their right about whether to take part in the study or not and their freedom to withdraw from participating in the study at any time they felt like.

Every instrument generated for the research was piloted to make sure the items addressed the objectives of the study and questions in the interview guide and observation checklist were put through a pilot study to make sure they were achievable, clear, accurate; easy to understand and free of bias. This was done in order to guarantee the best possible responses throughout the data collection stage. This contributed to the enhancement of the researcher's communication pattern. This was borrowed from (Creswell, 2014). The suggestions that were made by the

participants of the pilot experiment were incorporated when the study instruments were finalized.

To establish authenticity and credibility of information by respondents, the researcher demonstrated prolonged engagement with participants to capture their original views, used observation methods, participant review and had an in-depth understanding of their setting. This was borrowed from (Israel & Hay, 2006). She documented the procedures of the study with consistent steps (Yin, 2009). To ascertain this, there was a prolonged engagement procedure for establishing rapport and trust with informants in order to encourage rich, in-depth answers. This empowered the researcher to cross-examine the integrity of participants' responses. Prolonged engagement immersed the researcher into the participants' world; this helped in understanding the context of the study and minimizing distortion of information.

To maintain positionality and reflexivity, the researcher kept a reflexive journal on events during the study. This helped her to reflect and record feelings and thoughts in an attempt to bracket subjectivity and perceptions. The journal also helped the researcher to keep a follow-up on the challenges, assumptions and decisions. It kept the researcher aware that her values, background and previous experience can affect the research process; it helped in avoiding bias during the research process and ensuring neutrality. Also, reflective documents were kept for the researcher to reflect on, have personal reflection, comprehend; these aided in cross-checking the data and write the final report.

To ascertain confirmability that the data that was collected represented the opinions of the participants rather than the prejudices or opinions of the researcher, this was

exhibited in providing quotations from the respondents that personified the emerging themes. These respondents were assigned codes and this helped in keeping track of the data that the participants had given attention. This was borrowed from (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Coleman, 2022). Activities that enhanced this were triangulation and journaling.

To establish authenticity, the researcher used data triangulation; multiple methods of data collection were engaged in an effort to have a clear, thorough understanding of the phenomenon and to validate the data collected by employing multiple techniques. Methods of data collection included interviews, observation and documentary review. To ensure efficient data collection, this three-method technique was selected. Also notes and records in the reflexive journal throughout the research process, and the scientific literature were used to enhance data accuracy across multiple sources.

In using multiple sources of data to draw conclusions, themes were developed basing on converging multiple sources of data and perspectives of participants. This involved using different data sources of information by examining evidence from respondents of final-year students, teaching administrative staff, non-teaching management staff, quality assurance officers, observation and documentary data and using it to build a coherent justification for themes and sub-themes (Creswell, 2014; Hellen & Joanna, 2015).

To establish transferability, the researcher ensured a rich and 'thick description' of events by providing adequate information about the phenomenon at hand. Details such as location setting, respondents present, attitudes of the respondents involved, bonds established between participants and the researcher. Also, the researcher

wrote up the responses of multiple respondents in such a way as to describe the phenomenon as a 'thick response'. This was accomplished through journaling, maintenance of records and documenting quotes from respondents for each sub-theme. This was borrowed from (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Coleman, 2022).

Member checking enhanced credibility in that at the completion of data analysis, participants were engaged in a follow-up interview with the researcher in regard to the summary of emerging themes, sub-themes and major findings. Final-year students, teaching administrative staff and non-teaching management staff that were interviewed were requested to comment on the findings.

The researcher used peer debriefing; during report writing, the researcher shared the results of her study with peers; they reviewed and asked questions about the study. Peer review assisted the researcher in enhancing the quality of the study findings. The researcher developed the study's conclusion by incorporating additional peer perspectives. The researcher also attached notes to insights gathered during the interviews and were later reviewed by peers. This was borrowed from (Pitney & Parker, 2009).

Maintenance of an audit trail to ensure accuracy of interpretations was a key strategy in enhancing credibility and dependability of the research findings. This was a compilation of documents and notes the researcher used throughout the procedure of documenting her decisions and assumptions. The study materials used included interview transcripts, field-collected observational notes, records, and documents, personal notes, data analysis process notes, classification of categories (themes, sub-themes, definitions and relationships), connections to existing literature, and drafts of the final report. Also, it was examined how the data and research questions

related to one another. These were cross-checked and reviewed by a different person who produced similar findings. This also established dependability and confirmability of the study; this was borrowed from (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher created a chart to demonstrate how the findings compare with the views of other authors.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Upholding ethical research standards was accomplished by maintaining a high standard of confidentiality, privacy, and informed consent in handling information while taking every precaution to ensure the confidentiality of research participants. The researcher sought ethical clearance from the ethical committee of UCU and Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) of 2014.

Permission was obtained beforehand from the heads of the institutions selected to carry out the research at their respective departments. This aided the researcher to acquire informed consent from participants.

The researcher articulated verbally and in writing the goal, objectives, of the research and the techniques that would be applied so that they were clearly comprehended by the informants, also requirements for participation, providing a description of the intended use of the data were clearly explained to the

participants. Consent was granted to the researcher by all research participants. Informed consent forms were given to them, and they signed acknowledging the conditions of the study prior to providing data as stipulated in appendix III; this was borrowed by (Sarantakos, 2005).

The informant was informed of all data collection devices and activities during the interview process; as guided by (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). From the very beginning, the researcher sought consent from participants to record the interviews and conversations during the process.

The researcher safeguarded the informant identity by respecting the participants' autonomy and free will to participate in the research. Participants were informed by the researcher that their identities would be kept confidential and that their responses that would emerge from the conversations would be used only for the purpose of the study and treated with a high level of confidentiality; this was borrowed from (Creswell, 2014). Only the researcher had access to the identities of participants or individual data during data collection thus it was not possible to identify specific individuals in the data. To differentiate participant responses from those of other participants, code numbers were employed in this study whereas the identifying details, such as titles and addresses related to the participants was not directly connected to any of the data collected from them.

Greater transparency of methodology and research work integrity was preserved through construction of rapport and trust. The researcher ascertained that there would be no harm, discomfort or damage from the use of the data. This was borrowed from (Locke et al., 1982). Respondents were equally handled and were made aware of their rights to freely withdraw at any time if they so desired.

The researcher tried to respect the privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of respondents. These were appropriately protected in regard to the consent granted. Protection of the privacy of participants was conveyed to all individuals involved in the study.

While analyzing data, the researcher was sensitive about disclosing only positive results; contrary findings were reported too.

The researcher maintained Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Covid-19, through wearing face masks, washing of hands or using hand sanitizers, and avoiding encounters with each other during interviews. She adhered to the Uganda data collection Covid-19 risk management plan, following the standards of national and local government of Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH) advice ON Covid-19 safety conditions as stipulated in Appendix IV.

### **3.10 Limitations of the Study**

At first the respondents gave scanty information during telephone interviews during the lockdown period; this was overcome by the researcher constructing rapport and trust with respondents when she went to the field. Having informal conversations helped to unease the tension. The researcher needed to engage the respondents deeper to get authentic responses; prolonged engagement and follow-up resulted in spending a much longer time in the field than was anticipated.

There was not enough time to complete a thorough and in-depth investigation. Due to the limitations mentioned, future research was left open in the areas that the

reader thought had not been covered as the issue of quality assurance practices is relatively new and broad in the field of education.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the findings of the study. It comprised of the presentation and examination of field data that was gathered. The results were analyzed systematically, objective per objective under themes and sub themes.

#### 4.2 Demographic data of respondents

It was determined that it was essential to first indicate the demographic information of this study's participants. The benefit of demographic data is that it offers proof and evidence on the respondent groups. This kind of information is helpful in providing evidence for the data collected and increases the findings' dependability.

The demographic information of the participants is provided in table 4.1 below: it captures data regarding the characteristics of the respondents; the age, gender and their qualifications.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Respondents**

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Males	19	45
Females	23	55
Total	42	100
Age		
22 to 31	29	40

32 to 45	07	31
45 and above	06	29
Total	42	100
Qualification		
PhD	04	10
Masters level	10	24
Bachelor's degree	22	52
Diploma level	06	14
Total	42	100

#### **4.3 OBJECTIVE ONE: EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF ACCREDITATION OF STUDY PROGRAMS TO IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN UGANDA**

The researcher used in-depth interviews, documentary review and observation as a method intended to obtain an accurate representation of the viewpoint of the participant's perspective on the contribution of accreditation of study programs to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. An interview guide was developed in advance.

##### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Minimal adherence to Academic Program Accreditation Guidelines and Procedures**

The data presented in table 4.2 summarises participants' perceptions regarding institutional compliance with academic program accreditation standards. The table demonstrates how financial constraints and enrolment pressures contribute to minimal adherence to accreditation guidelines, as evidenced by the admission of

students with low entry grades, limited monitoring procedures overcrowded lecture rooms and inadequate credit transfer mechanisms.

**Table 4.2: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme 1 Objective One.**

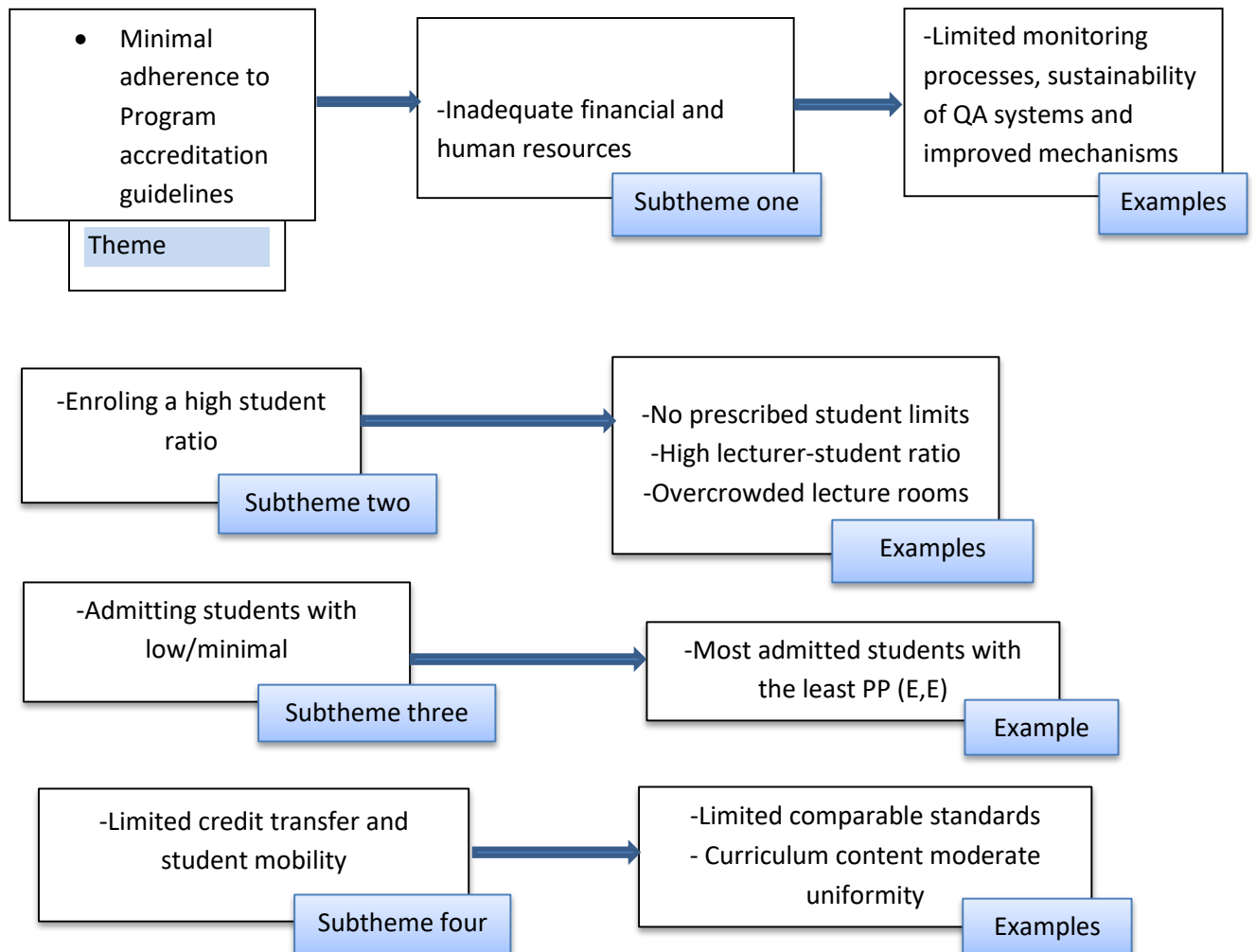


Table 4.3 summarises the emerging thematic categories arising from the study, highlighting institutional practices associated with minimal adherence to program accreditation guidelines. The table further indicates the specific categories of respondents who articulated these themes, thereby illustrating how challenges related to resources, enrolment practices, admission standards and student mobility

affect the implementation of teaching and learning across private universities in Western Uganda.

**Table 4.3: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Minimal adherence to Program Accreditation Guidelines</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Inadequate Financial and Human Resources	Non-teaching Management Staff
Enrolment of a large number of students to “survive”	Teaching administrative staff
Admitting students with low/minimal grades	Students and teaching administrative staff
Limited Credit Transfer and Student Mobility across Univerities	Students, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officers

#### **4.3.1.1 Responses**

##### **Inadequate Financial and Human Resources**

Findings from the study revealed that the majority of non-teaching management staff reported significant financial constraints that hindered effective implementation of quality assurance (QA) activities. Participants indicated that available funding was insufficient to fully meet quality assurance standards, particularly with regard to accreditation of academic programs. As a result, QA processes could not be operationalized to the desired level. While limited funding is a genuine constraint, this invites critical reflection on whether QA is strategically prioritized within institutional budgeting frameworks. This raises concerns about the sustainability of QA systems, as underfunding undermines staff capacity, monitoring

processes and continuous improvement mechanisms in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

Participants further explained that effective quality assurance requires substantial financial investment as well as an adequate number of trained personnel within the quality assurance directorate to monitor, evaluate and assess institutional procedures. However, due to limited resources, institutions were compelled to prioritise other departments when allocating meagre funds available. This situation constrained the capacity of the QA directorate to effectively carry out its mandate. This undermines the effectiveness of quality assurance systems with regard to meeting study program accreditation standards as overstretched staff are unlikely to sustain rigorous and regular quality checks; thereby compromising the consistent implementation of these standards.

### **Enrolment of a Large Number of Students**

Participants selected from private universities in Western Uganda including teaching administrative staff revealed that because these universities mostly rely on tuition fees to fund their operations, they tend to aggressively look for money by oftenly enrolling a large number of students in an attempt to "survive" without taking into consideration the prescribed student intake limits indicated in proposed study programs for accreditation and this has compromised the quality of education offered by these universities. One of the respondents revealed;

*"Many times there are too many students in a program for a single lecturer to handle, the numbers become overwhelming for a lecturer to attend to individual students. Yet there are curriculum standards and requirements for each course unit to fulfill for instance, assessment requirements involving giving students individual*

*course works, group assignments, presentations and tests before the final examinations. All this requires a lot of time plus preparing for daily teaching. This leads to some lecturers being overwhelmed and they end up not fully delivering to university expectations, including attending to students' individual needs. (RT-3F).*

This indicates that enrolment decisions are driven more by financial pressures than by study program accreditation standards which places significant strain on institutional resources, including teaching staff, infrastructure and learning facilities.

### **Admitting Students with Low/Minimal Grades**

Participants including students and the teaching administrative staff in selected private Universities in Western Uganda revealed that these universities have many times admitted students with low/minimal entry grades for different courses. These admissions would be carried out after government universities had completed their admissions. Students mentioned that they always found out that most of their friends admitted had very minimal grades and this would later affect their performance. This indicates that these universities prioritise enrolment numbers over academic preparedness; this practice appears to be driven by market competition and financial survival rather than adherence to established admission standards stipulated in study programs.

### **Limited Credit Transfer and Student Mobility across Universities**

Participants including students, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officers noted that students are not free to transfer units of credit accumulation across universities because most of the universities did not have comparable

standards. It was found out that in most cases, the curriculum content coverage and accreditation practices were not uniform across different universities because of autonomy. Responses revealed that this has led to some of the highly performing students having minimal chances to cross to universities of their choice. This suggests that without stronger national frameworks for curriculum harmonization and credit transfer, universities will continue to limit student mobility, thereby constraining academic competitiveness.

### 4.3.2 Theme 2: Minimal adherence to teaching-learning standards and procedures

Table 4.4 presents the sub-themes and illustrative examples related to Theme 2, which focuses on Minimal adherence to teaching-learning standards and procedures. The table summarises participants' accounts highlighting challenges such as inadequate learning resources and facilities, insufficient internet bandwidth compromised study program accreditation standards during the implementation of teaching and learning and duplication of study programs.

**Table 4.4: Participants' Perceptions on Theme 2 Objective One**

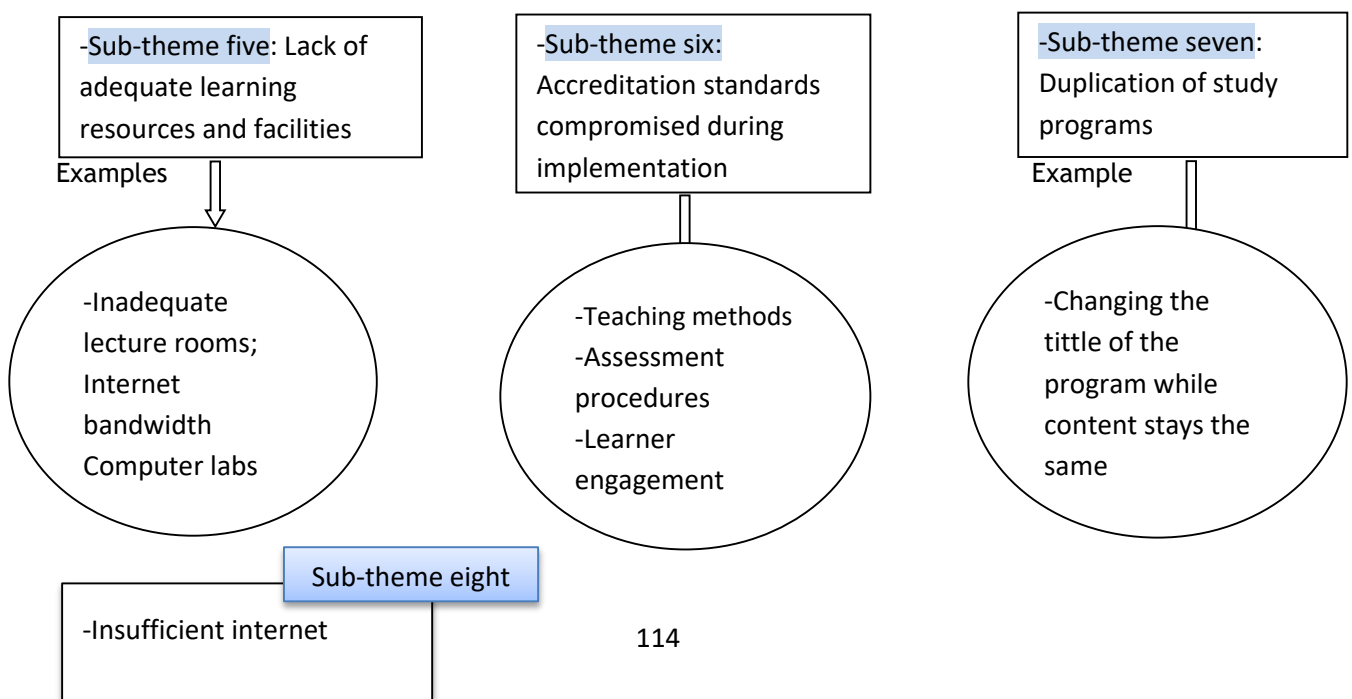


Table 4.5 summarizes the key emerging themes on minimal adherence to teaching and learning standards and procedures, highlighting specific challenges and the categories of respondents from whom these views were obtained.

**Table 4.5: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Minimal Adherence to Teaching-Learning Standards and Procedures</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Inadequate Physical infrastructure and facilities	Non-teaching management staff, teaching staff, teaching administrative staff and students
Insufficient Internet and Database Subscriptions	Teaching administrative staff, Quality assurance officers and students.
Accreditation standards compromised during implementation	Quality Assurance Officers
Duplication of names of academic programs across universities	Students, teaching staff
Teaching Non-Accredited Academic Programs	

#### **4.3.2.1 Responses**

##### **Inadequate Physical Infrastructure and Facilities**

Participants including members of non-teaching management staff highlighted that there was inadequate physical infrastructure and facilities in the universities under study. Facilities mentioned included facilities for a digital library, internet access in lecture rooms and around the campus, insufficient lecture rooms, computer and medical laboratories, certified specialists and technicians, safety requirements, games and recreational facilities, accessible facilities and services for people with

special needs among others. This was also evidenced by findings from observation. The researcher's visitation to the lecture rooms and the library revealed that they were inadequate, safety facilities and accessibility of services for students with special needs left a lot to be desired. Yet, this was an outstanding indicator for the procedure of accreditation of academic programs.

This limits students to fully engage in practical learning experiences, research or digital learning which are essential components of modern higher education. This may lead to a poor learning environment that affects student performance and overall academic outcomes in selected private Universities in Western Uganda.

In addition, more responses from the students, teaching staff and teaching administrative staff expressed that the lecture rooms at these universities were inadequate compared to the large enrolment of students and were always overcrowded. One of the respondents revealed;

*“During the time for lectures, some students miss seats because sometimes the seats are not enough for the big numbers; some stay standing throughout the lecture sessions. In addition to this, there is no internet connectivity in the lecture rooms; yet this is a requirement from NCHE to facilitate Open Distance and e-learning (ODEL) among other teaching methodologies. This scenario affects how students learn and depicts the wanting teaching-learning environment” (RT-5M).*

Overcrowding in lecture rooms limits effective pedagogy. It reduces opportunities for interaction, discussion and individual support from lecturers. This raises concerns about compliance with study program accreditation regulatory requirements and the effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms in selected private Universities in Western Uganda.

### **Accreditation procedures compromised during implementation**

Some participants that preferred anonymity reported that academic programs met NCHE program accreditation regulatory minimum standards with regard to the design, content, teaching methods, assessment procedures among others; and aligning these proposed academic programs to the needs of the community and the inclusiveness of emerging issues. However, they mentioned that these accreditation procedures were compromised during the implementation process. They further revealed that during this process, students were not given great exposure in their learning through methodologies aligned to situation-relevant experiences during implementation of teaching and learning; this resulted in moderate achievement of student learning outcomes (SLOs) depicted in the academic programs, they recounted. This was supported by responses from the quality assurance offices.

This implementation gap undermines the intended outcomes of accredited programs, as students are not given meaningful practical exposure that is essential for deep learning and skills development.

One of the quality assurance officers asserted that;

*“There is need to develop a mechanism for lecturers to always evaluate student learning experiences against the stated expected student learning outcomes in the curricular as stipulated by NCHE regulatory standards”*(RQ-2M).

However, participants including the teaching administrative staff revealed that faculties were planning for more exposure of the students beyond the lecture rooms to acquire relevant skills and field-based learning experiences.

### **Insufficient Internet and Database Subscriptions**

A common concern raised by some respondents from selected private Universities in Western Uganda including the teaching administrative staff, Quality Assurance officers and students respectively was that internet and database subscriptions were insufficient. Due to inadequate resources, the universities would only sometimes subscribe to journals and obtain a narrow range of bandwidth. Failure to employ adequate e-resource databases has led most of the teaching staff to continue instructing their students using traditional techniques by a 'chalk and talk' and lecture methods.

This finding highlights a significant resource-driven constraint that limits pedagogical innovation and the effective integration of technology in teaching and learning. This weakens the alignment between accredited program expectations particularly those emphasizing learner-centred and technology-enhanced methodologies and actual classroom practice. This gap suggests that even where curricular prescribe modern pedagogical approaches, institutional resource constraint hamper their implementation.

### **Duplication of names of academic programs across universities**

Accounts from participants including final- year students from selected private Universities in Western Uganda pointed out a concerning trend of universities duplicating study programs. From their interaction with students from other universities, they mentioned that they would find out that the programs' titles were being changed from one university to another, yet content would be found out to be almost the same; yet, other programs had been fragmented. There was lack of

innovativeness and creativity in this practice, they recounted. More to this, one of the respondents revealed that;

*“During lectures, many times we would be merged to study with other students of other different courses for various course units and we would only be given separate question papers during examinations”*(RS-4M).

In relation to the above response, discussions with some participants from the teaching staff revealed that some programs had been fragmented due to the commercialization of higher education in universities. For instance, at undergraduate level; psychology was divided into three categories: organizational psychology, community psychology, and guidance and counseling whereas the Bachelor of Commerce degree had been divided into; business studies, international business, accounting and finance, procurement and logistics, business administration, banking and entrepreneurship.

Such practices undermine the purpose of academic autonomy, which is intended to foster diversity and innovation.

### **Teaching Non-Accredited Academic Programs**

Some participants that preferred anonymity revealed that at times the universities under study would teach non-accredited academic programs. This was because they did not want to lose students who had applied to join these courses. They would instead enroll these students as they developed the programs and forwarded them to National Council for Higher education for accreditation. These contravened standards and procedures on accreditation of academic programs. Though this practice was reported to be on very rare occasions, still, it contravenes NCHE

standards and procedures and places students at risk, as the legitimacy and recognition of their qualifications may be uncertain.

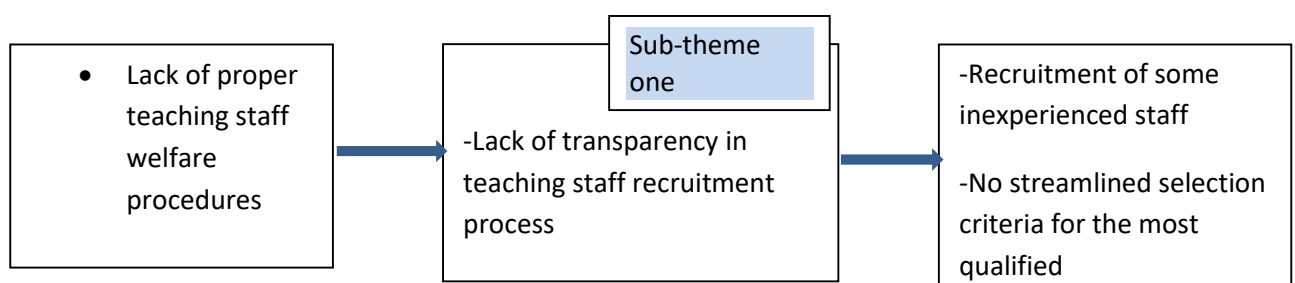
#### 4.3.2 OBJECTIVE TWO: EXPLORING HOW THE QUALITY OF TEACHING STAFF AFFECT IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN UGANDA

This section discusses findings on the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning in private universities. The researcher employed a technique of in-depth interviews, documentary review and observation method to provide a clear picture of the viewpoints of the participants about the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning. An interview guide was developed in advance.

##### 4.3.2.1 Theme One: Lack of proper teaching staff welfare procedures

Table 4.6 below presents participants' perceptions regarding theme one objective two, focusing on teaching staff welfare procedures in the study areas. The table summarises the key sub-themes that emerged from the data, including lack of transparency in recruitment, weaknesses in promotion and retention processes, procedures for recognizing excellent staff and lack of an operationalized professional academic staff association. The results highlight prevailing practices as well as gaps in staff welfare provision, which are critical in understanding how they influence teaching effectiveness.

**Table 4.6: Participants' Perceptions on Theme 1 Objective Two**



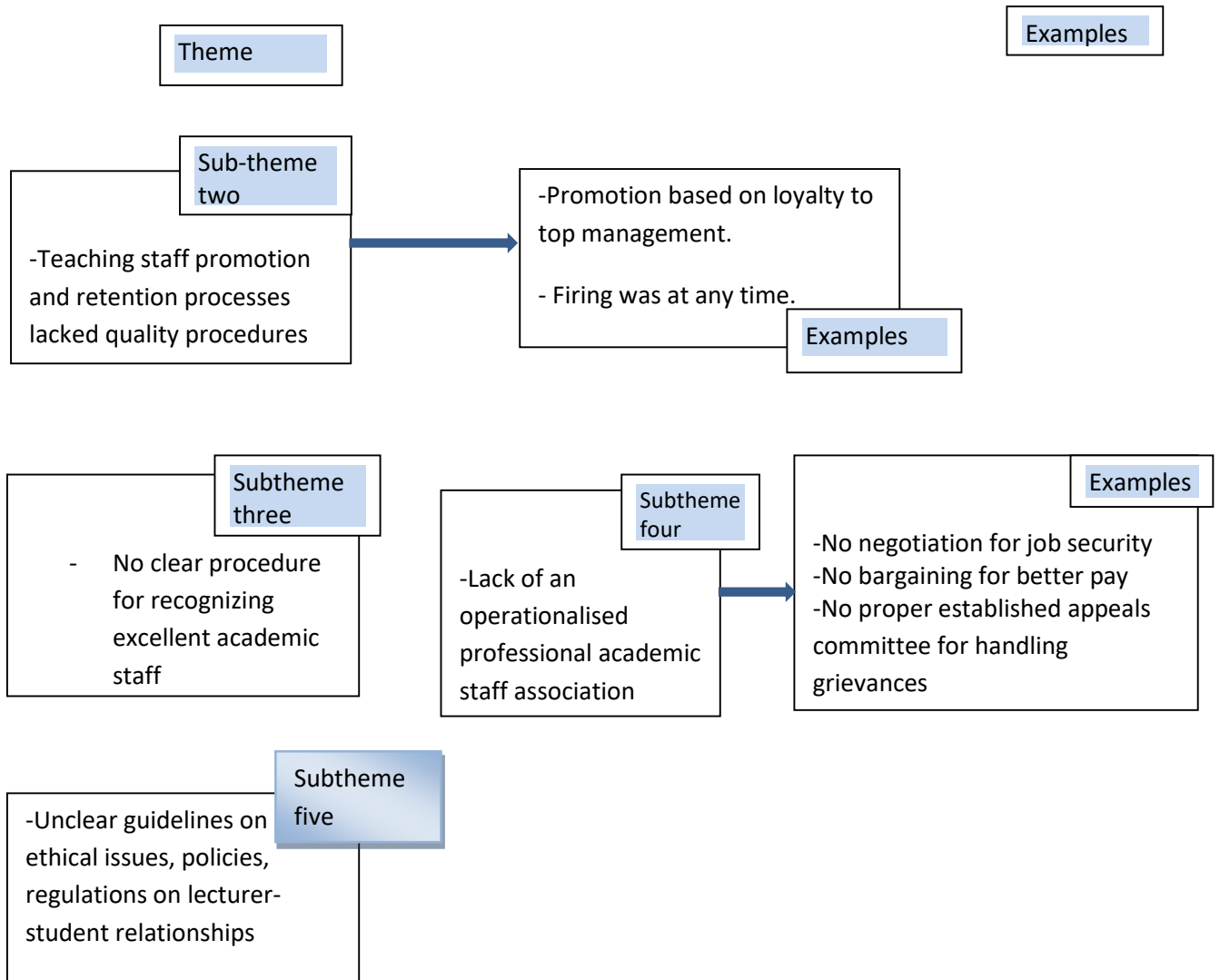


Table 4.7 summarizes the emerging themes on deficiencies in teaching staff welfare procedures, highlighting governance, recruitment, recognition and ethical concerns as identified by key institutional stakeholders.

**Table 4.7: Category of Emerging Themes**

Lack of proper Teaching Staff Welfare Procedures	Respondents
Lack of transparency in teaching Staff recruitment Process	
Inadequate Criteria for Selecting Qualified Academic Staff	Teaching Administrative Staff

Absence of structured systems for academic staff recognition and reward	Teaching Administrative Staff
Lack of an operationalised PASA to manage academic staff matters	Non-teaching Management Staff, Teaching Administrative staff and Quality Assurance Officer
Minimal Ethical Guidelines Governing Lecturer-Student Relationships	Non-teaching Management Staff and quality assurance officers

#### 4.3.2.1.1 Responses

##### **Lack of transparency in teaching Staff recruitment Process**

Participants from non-teaching management staff from selected private Universities in Western Uganda revealed that the staff recruitment process was in place with regard to advertising, short listing, selection and interviewing. However, according to the respondents that preferred anonymity, the recruitment process had attracted some inexperienced staff in related subjects depending on recommendations from the higher authorities; this is controversial with the NCHE standard for required qualifications to teach. This suggests that while recruitment procedures may be formally established, they are not always implemented in alignment with NCHE standards. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning may be compromised.

##### **Inadequate Criteria for Selecting Qualified Academic Staff**

Accounts from participants including some of the teaching administrative staff observed that there was inadequate criteria for selecting the most talented, highly educated academic personnel; these private universities in western Uganda sometimes lacked a standing or operational committee to investigate, vet and screen academic personnel, there were minimal job announcements to promote

competitiveness and high-quality selection. Poorly structured hiring processes can reduce academic staff commitment, as appointments may not be based on merit; overtime, this can negatively affect teaching quality and staff morale in private Universities in Western Uganda.

### **Inadequate Promotional Procedures**

Participants including some members of the non-teaching management staff and the teaching administrative staff highlighted that teaching promotion practices were not consistently guided by established merit-based standards such as academic qualifications, research output, and teaching experience. Instead, they were based on things like loyalty to the university administration. In most cases, no internal announcement of new roles or application for promotions was made to permit academic employees apply for these kinds of jobs, they recounted; in addition, some of these participants revealed that a defined and functional promotion policy was lacking at the university and faculty levels. One of the respondents mentioned;

*“The Faculty Deans or Departmental Heads have no powers to identify or recommend any academic staff for recruitment, even if he/she has all the required NCHE teaching standards. This still causes a gap in commitment to mastery and quality delivery of content by some teaching staff. Some times when a member of the top management brings in a new member of staff, he/she is looked at by their colleagues as a spy for the top management. Worse still, firing (termination) of academic staff is known to be at any time; this greatly affects commitment of the teaching staff to their work” (RT-2M).*

When promotions are perceived as unfair or non-transparent, committed and qualified staff may feel discouraged, leading to reduced performance and limited investment in teaching and research.

### **Unfair Dismissals**

Some respondents from selected private universities in Western Uganda, including Quality Assurance officers revealed that from their survey reports some academic staff indicated that most of their fellows were dismissed on the basis of unclear rumors, and some of them on discriminatory grounds. They stated that staff terminations occasionally occurred without warning and compensation guidelines were unclear. Such practices can create a climate of fear and insecurity among academic staff, negatively affecting morale, trust in management and commitment to teaching.

### **Absence of structured systems for academic staff recognition and reward**

Participants from the teaching administrative staff revealed that there was no clear procedure for recognizing and rewarding excellent academic staff, they further mentioned that these universities lacked a properly established and a well-known operational appeals committee for addressing grievances and conflicts that resulted from unfair promotions and other rewards amongst members of the teaching staff. Without transparent and well-defined reward mechanisms, staff excellence may go unacknowledged, reducing motivation, commitment and discouraging high performance; which may result in potential decline in teaching quality in private universities in Western Uganda.

### **Lack of an operationalised PASA to manage academic staff matters**

Participants including some members from non-teaching management staff stated that there was evidence of a Professional Academic Staff Association (PASA), though it wasn't satisfactorily implemented. This was supported by responses from one of the quality assurance officers. More responses from the teaching administrative staff revealed that there was lack of transparent procedures for the operational Professional Academic Staff Association (PASA) that might be useful to the staff while negotiating for benefits like job security, bargaining for better pay, handling grievances etc. One of the respondents from the teaching administrative staff from selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed;

*“The academic staff issues are articulated through the Academic Staff Association but when they raise issues to be attended to by top management, they are often perceived as criticisms; this demotivates the teaching staff and negatively affects their service delivery and need for professional development is depicted”(RT-6F).*

Such weaknesses reduce staff confidence in collective representation and deny academic staff an important platform for dialogue and advocacy. Without a functional and transparent association, power imbalances between management and staff are likely to persist, leading to unresolved grievances and low staff morale.

### **Minimal Ethical Guidelines Governing Lecturer-Student Relationships**

Responses from members of the non-teaching management staff and quality assurance officers revealed that guidelines on ethical issues, policies and regulations with regard to lecturer-student relationship were minimal. These were not communicated and emphasized on a daily basis. As a result, unethical practices may

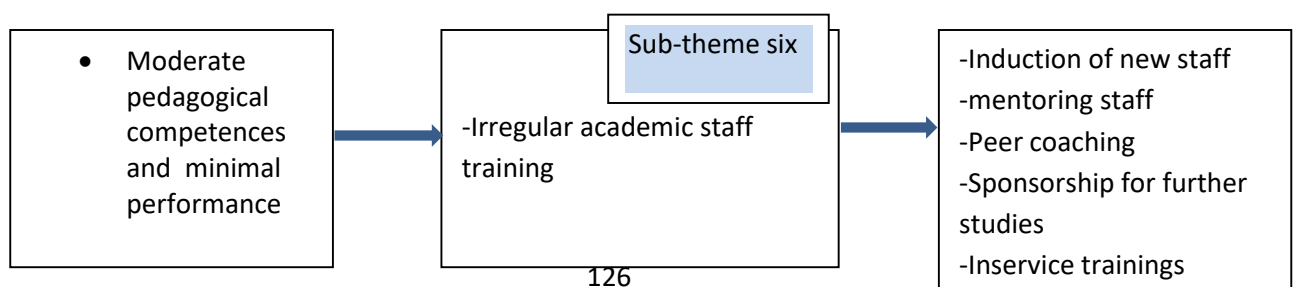
go unreported, or unaddressed, undermining trust, professionalism and the learning environment. One of the respondents revealed;

*“There is limited emphasis on the moral values and ethical issues that regard lecturer-student relationship. There is great need to consider how organizational structures such as regulations, policies, norms, cultures and structural routines have been established to guide the conduct of both lecturers and students in the universities and emphasize them during the teaching and learning process”*(RN-4F).

#### 4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Moderate Pedagogical competences and minimal Performance

Table 4.8 below presents participants’ perceptions on theme two, objective two, highlighting key issues related to pedagogical competences and staff performance. The table outlines the identified sub-themes namely; irregular academic staff training, minimal innovativeness in teaching, inadequate learning spaces, involvement in unbecoming behaviors, limited engagement of students in teaching and learning and research and publication skills with illustrative examples drawn from participants’ responses. Overall, the table provides a structured summary of the challenges affecting teaching and learning in the institutions.

**Table 4.8: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme 2 Objective Two**



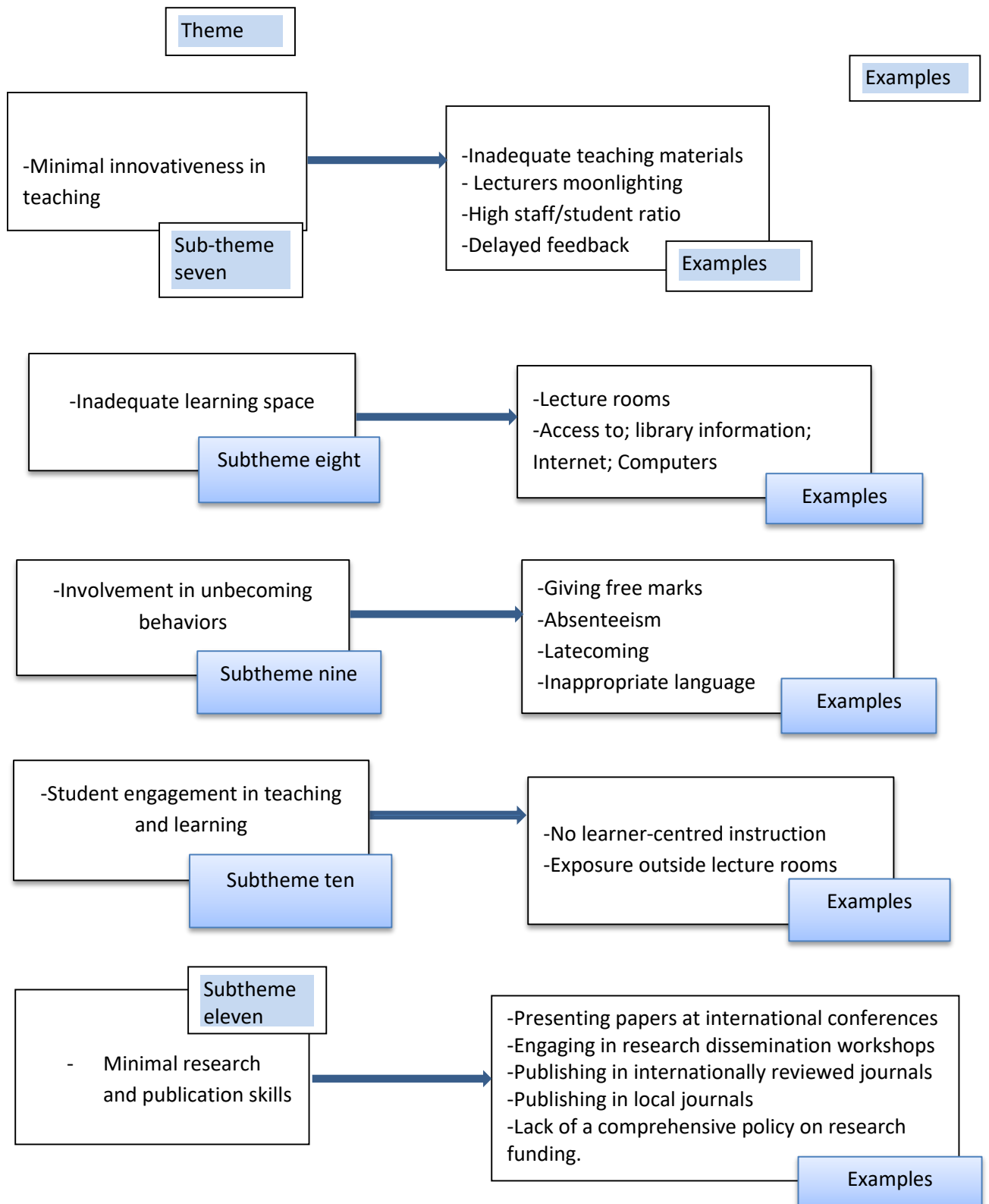


Table 4.9 presents the categories of emerging themes related to the moderate pedagogical competences and minimal performance, as reported by different categories of respondents within the universities.

**Table 4.9: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Moderate Pedagogical Competences and minimal Performance</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Irregular Academic Staff Training	Non-teaching Management Staff, Teaching Administrative Staff and Quality Assurance Officer
Minimal Innovativeness in Teaching and Irregularity	Teaching Administrative Staff
Inadequate Learning Space	Quality Assurance
Involvement in Unbecoming Behaviours	Students
Student' Engagement in Teaching and Learning	Teaching Administrative Staff
Minimal Academic Staff Research and Publication	Non-Teaching Management Staff, Teaching Administrative Staff and Quality Assurance Officer

#### **4.3.2.2.1 Responses**

##### **Irregular Academic Staff Training Programs**

Some participants from the non-teaching Management staff in selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed that even though the academic staff development policy (ASD) was in place, it was not employed effectively. They reported that at times staff training programs would not be effected as planned

because these institutions lacked enough funds for these programs and development activities. More responses expressed that they had not provided adequate funding for staff training throughout the previous two academic years; further they revealed that lecturers were not supported amidst meager resources to further their career because after being trained, there would likely be a financial loss to these universities as lecturers would seek for employment elsewhere.

Ineffective implementation of academic staff policies, heightened by financial limitations and retention anxieties, significantly constrains the development of competent academic staff and compromises their ability to adapt to evolving pedagogical, research, quality assurance demands and negatively affects the quality of teaching and learning.

In relation to the above, responses from the teaching administrative staff revealed that procedures for staff development that include orientation of new employees and well-planned staff mentoring programs, peer coaching and on-the-job trainings were not being properly conducted in their departments. This would cause a lag in teaching and learning effectiveness. One of the respondents noted:

*“Lack of professional development results in poor performance in academic practices, no professional development, and there is lack of research and publication skills, inadequate teaching and learning methodologies and lack of innovativeness” (RT-4M).*

Lack of these trainings reduce opportunities for reflective practice, knowledge sharing and continuous improvement among academic staff; compromises instructional quality and student engagement. However, participants from the teaching administrative staff expressed that they had started training staff to

improve their teaching skills to adopt a more dynamic and innovative teaching approach; as well as planning for internal seminars and workshops to facilitate lecturers to embrace student-centered teaching methodologies.

### **Minimal innovativeness in Teaching Practices and Lecturers' Irregularity**

Accounts from participants from the teaching administrative staff revealed that some members of staff were not innovative in their methods of content delivery; they mentioned a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning materials. This was confirmed by the researcher during her visitation to three of the lecture rooms when teaching and learning was taking place.

More findings revealed that the majority of the full-time academic staff members who were available worked part-time at multiple other universities. From the documentary review, student' lecture attendance assessment records under the offices of Quality Assurance Officers revealed that a number of lecturers did not keep time for lectures while others would be absent from duty without reason; most of them were found to be moonlighting elsewhere to make ends meet. Still, in these selected private universities in Western Uganda, staff/student ratio was wanting; one lecturer was teaching a large class of about 100 students on average.

The above mentioned practices constraint lecturers' ability to adopt learner-centred and contemporary teaching approaches. Without addressing staff welfare, enforcing performance management systems and investing in teaching resources and continuous professional development, institutions risk compromising instructional quality and not meeting established quality assurance standards.

## **Inadequate Learning Space, Facilities and Equipment**

Also from the observation check list, the researcher observed inadequate learning space compared to the number of students that was reported to be on ground with regard to each department in selected private Universities in Western Uganda. One quality assurance officer explained that;

*“Lack of equipment like projectors and sometimes even teaching space compels some lecturers to teach outside the scheduled timetables. This is a quality issue because it compromises students’ attendance standards and in most cases these lecturers do not teach up to the required contact hours. It also leads to disgruntlement since students look at it as being cheated” (RQ-1M).*

A visit to facilities of selected universities revealed that access to information for every student via the library, computer, internet, and space, as well as books in hard and soft copies was still wanting because there was quite an enormous number of students compared to the facilities on ground.

This scarcity of information resources compromises independent learning, research capacity and digital literacy which are essential for quality higher education and constrain effective teaching, student participation and meaningful interaction. When student numbers continue to rise without commensurate investment in learning facilities, institutions risk falling short of national quality standards.

## **Involvement in Unbecoming Behaviours**

Responses from interviews with final-year students from selected private universities in Western Uganda indicated that some of their university lecturers are quite oftenly involved in unbecoming behaviors like giving free marks to their fellow

students in exchange for sex or money, absenteeism from duty, sexual harassment, inappropriate language use, arriving late to teach, failure to provide students with feedback on their assignments, forging their lecture attendance records despite the fact that most of these would go un identified. These practices depicted academic dishonesty and had a negative impact on teaching and learning. This environment disadvantages diligent students, reduces their motivation and engagement, leading to poor learning outcomes. Addressing these issues requires strengthening ethical governance frameworks, enhancing reporting and protection mechanisms to safeguard the quality of education.

### **Student' Engagement in Teaching and Learning**

Responses from some members of the teaching administrative staff revealed that methods of learner-based approach, involving students more in the teaching and learning procedures and exposure outside the classroom were hardly employed and there was minimal effort to put in place special programs to support students who were struggling academically. This reflects lack of learner diversity, learner-centred instruction and academic intervention mechanisms.

However, more respondents explained that departments were trying to implement programs to enhance student' exposure in teaching and learning, such as creating student' awareness on career development and following up on feedback in placements where students get internship exposures.

### **Minimal Academic Staff Research and Publication**

Responses from some members of the non- teaching management staff indicated that there was a research policy in place to guide staff in research procedures yet

most of the staff lacked research and publication skills. More responses from the teaching administrative staff revealed that a few academic staff were involved in research and publication because the research budget could not support the lecturers to participate fully in research activities, such as presenting scholarly papers at international conferences. From these findings, it was observed that a few academic staff from selected private universities in Western Uganda were engaged in research dissemination workshops. Relatedly, results from the documentary review indicated that a low number of lecturers published in internationally reviewed journals and a few in local journals.

This indicates research output remains limited in scope and impact, undermining the institution's research culture and its ability to contribute meaningfully to knowledge production. This highlights the need for targeted investment in research funding to foster a vibrant and sustainable research culture.

Even though research production is limited, responses from members of the teaching administrative staff from one of the private universities in Western Uganda revealed that they had devised various techniques to support the lecturers in conducting research; establishing research teams where participants are motivated to make joint publications as was evidenced. Other responses expressed that universities are also providing lecturers with training on how to use several data analysis tools, including SPSS.

A visit to the University libraries did not reveal strong support in the areas of research since staff publications were scanty. However, a search on the web depository for research proceedings showed some progress compared to the previous

year and research procedures on the conduct and supervision on student' research was evident.

### **4.3.3 OBJECTIVE THREE: INVESTIGATE THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNAL MONITORING/EVALUATION PROCEDURES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN UGANDA**

This section discusses findings on the contribution of procedures implemented in internal monitoring and evaluation to implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

The researcher used documentary review and in-depth interviews as a technique developed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participant's viewpoint on the contribution of internal monitoring and evaluation procedures to the implementation of teaching and learning. An interview guide was developed in advance.

#### **4.3.3.1 Theme 1: Institutional Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms not streamlined**

Table 4.10 below presents the key theme, sub-themes, and illustrative examples relating to institutional internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms. The table highlights gaps in the streamlining of administrative, academic and facilities-related processes, with particular emphasis on recruitment practices, program administration, academic program evaluation and procedures for evaluating facilities and equipment, with further illustrated examples.

**Table 4.10: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme One Objective three**

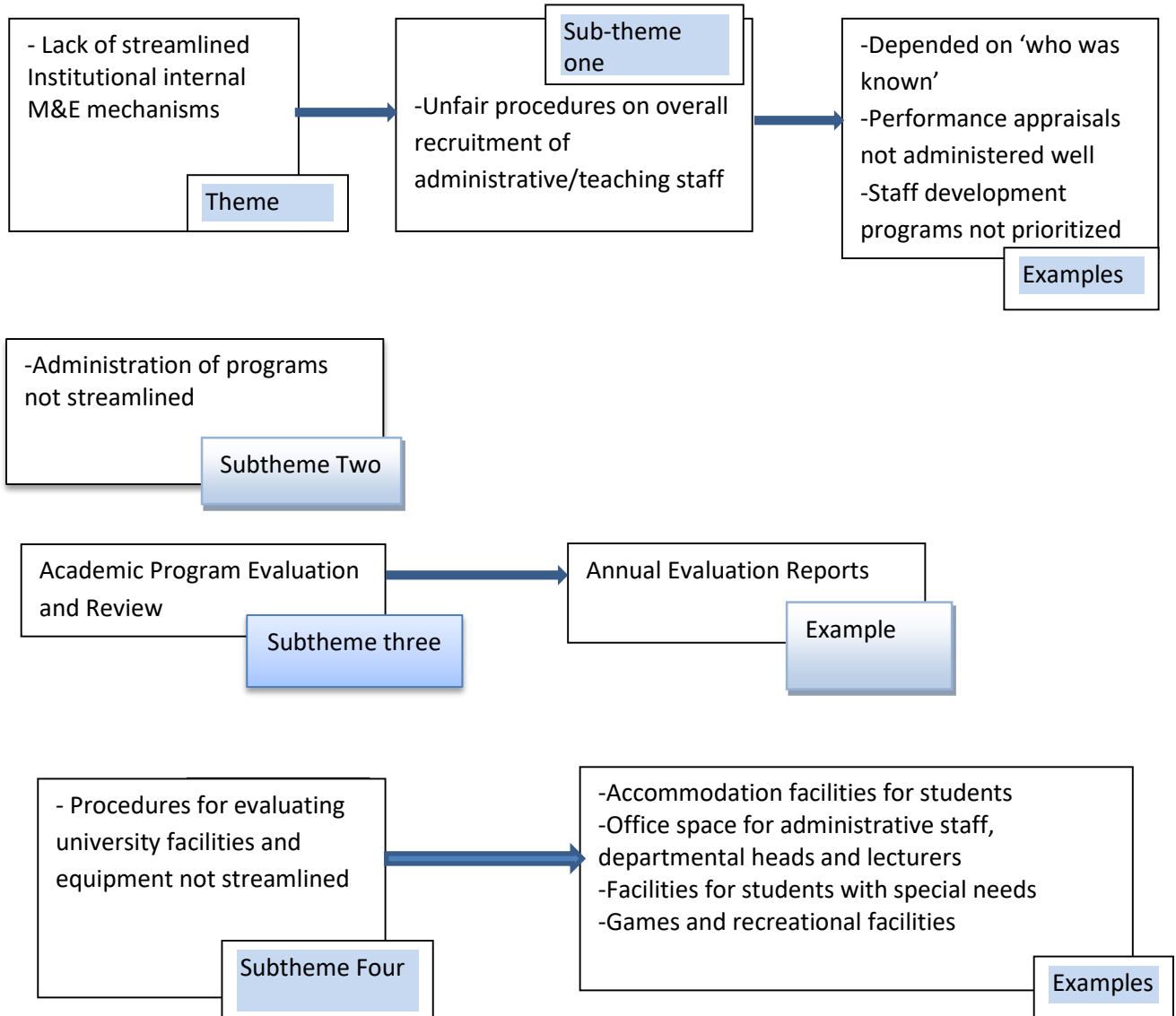


Table 4.11 presents the categories of emerging themes related to lack of streamlined institutional internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, as identified from respondents’ perspectives across different stakeholder groups.

**Table 4.11: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Lack of streamlined Institutional internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Overall Recruitment Procedures	Non-Teaching Management Staff
Administration of Study programs not streamlined	Quality Assurance Officers and Teaching Administrative Staff
Academic Programs Evaluation and Review	Quality Assurance Officers and Non-Teaching Management Staff
Procedures of Evaluating University Facilities and Equipment	Quality Assurance Officer

#### 4.3.3.1.1 Responses

##### **Overall Recruitment Procedures**

Responses from members of non-teaching management staff revealed that there was a procedure of selection, recruitment and placement of the university support, administrative and academic staff as an essential element of the internal monitoring and evaluation procedures. However, respondents who preferred anonymity revealed that procedures of selection, recruitment and placement were not fair and transparent in line with quality in selected private universities in Western Uganda.

A respondent had this to say:

*“The procedure on staff recruitment depends mostly on ‘technical know who’ rather than ‘technical knowhow. Worse still, performance appraisals are not appropriately administered and staff development programs for those who need to upgrade their skills are not taken as a priority. This demotivates the support,*

*administrative and academic staff in performance of their duties in reference to management expectations and compromises the quality services that are expected to be offered”(RN-5M).*

The reported lack of fairness and transparency indicates a gap between policy and practice, undermining the effectiveness of internal quality assurance mechanisms. This misalignment may compromise the recruitment of competent personnel and compliance with quality standards to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness.

### **Administration of Study Programs**

From the quality assurance assessment tools visited, the procedure for administration of study programs was stipulated. The requirement of study program coordinators was highlighted to ensure that programs were adequately administered; it was revealed. However, more findings revealed that the procedure of assessing study program delivery against set standards and other roles of program coordinators were not well streamlined; further responses revealed that program teams were expected to comprise of program coordinators and lecturers who were responsible for particular courses and were expected to have the full mandate of allocating these course units to competent lecturers with the relevant specialities to teach them with recommendations to heads of departments; however, at times top management would interfere.

Such practices earmarked in selected private universities in Western Uganda risk compromising the quality consistency and effectiveness of teaching and learning, constraining meaningful student engagement and learning outcomes.

## **Academic Programs Evaluation and Review**

With reference to the internal quality assurance systems, responses from quality assurance officers expressed that policy guidelines on academic program evaluation and reviews were in place. However, responses from members of non-teaching management staff observed that there was some little progress with academic program evaluation and reviews, a requirement by NCHE to annually evaluate whether the programs have achieved their goals or not. In addition, results revealed that one of the two universities had not been fully involved in making a five year comprehensive review to submit to National Council for Higher Education. The faculty members had not reviewed all the pending academic programs.

The absence of consistent academic program evaluation restricts timely identification of gaps in curriculum relevance, delivery and outcomes and constrains continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

## **Procedures of Evaluating University Facilities**

As a requirement for implementing internal quality assurance systems, responses of quality assurance officers from selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed that the QA tool for procedures of evaluating university facilities and equipment was in place. However, the set standards were not fully met, they recounted; for instance, these procedures demanded putting quality infrastructure, sufficient facilities and equipment in place, maintaining and improving them. They mentioned too that they needed to put in place procedures of evaluating these resources and services for instance, accommodation facilities for students, office space for administrative staff, departmental heads and lecturers, availability and

accessibility of facilities for students with special needs, games and recreational facilities, among others. One respondent revealed that;

*“Universities need to create a conducive learning environment with sufficient facilities to enable student’ holistic development which will empower learners to acquire desirable and transferable skills. Learners should be equipped with skills and empowered to develop the capability to compete in the labor market, perform well on the job and effectively work amidst multiple engagements” (RQ-1M).*

This shortfall may limit the adequacy, functionality and accessibility of teaching and leaning facilities, thereby constraining effective instructional delivery and student’ engagement. Consequently, the partial attainment of facilities and equipment standards undermines the overall quality of the teaching and learning environment.

#### **4.3.3.2 Theme 2: Minimal Teaching and Learning Internal Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms**

Table 4.12 below presents participants’ perceptions regarding theme two under objective three, focusing on internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. The table outlines key sub-themes and illustrative examples that highlight limitations in these procedures, minimal involvement of teaching staff and students in QA processes, weaknesses in student assessment procedures and inadequacies in students’ complaint and appeal systems. The table encompasses related examples of what is practiced.

**Table 4.12: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme 2 Objective Three**

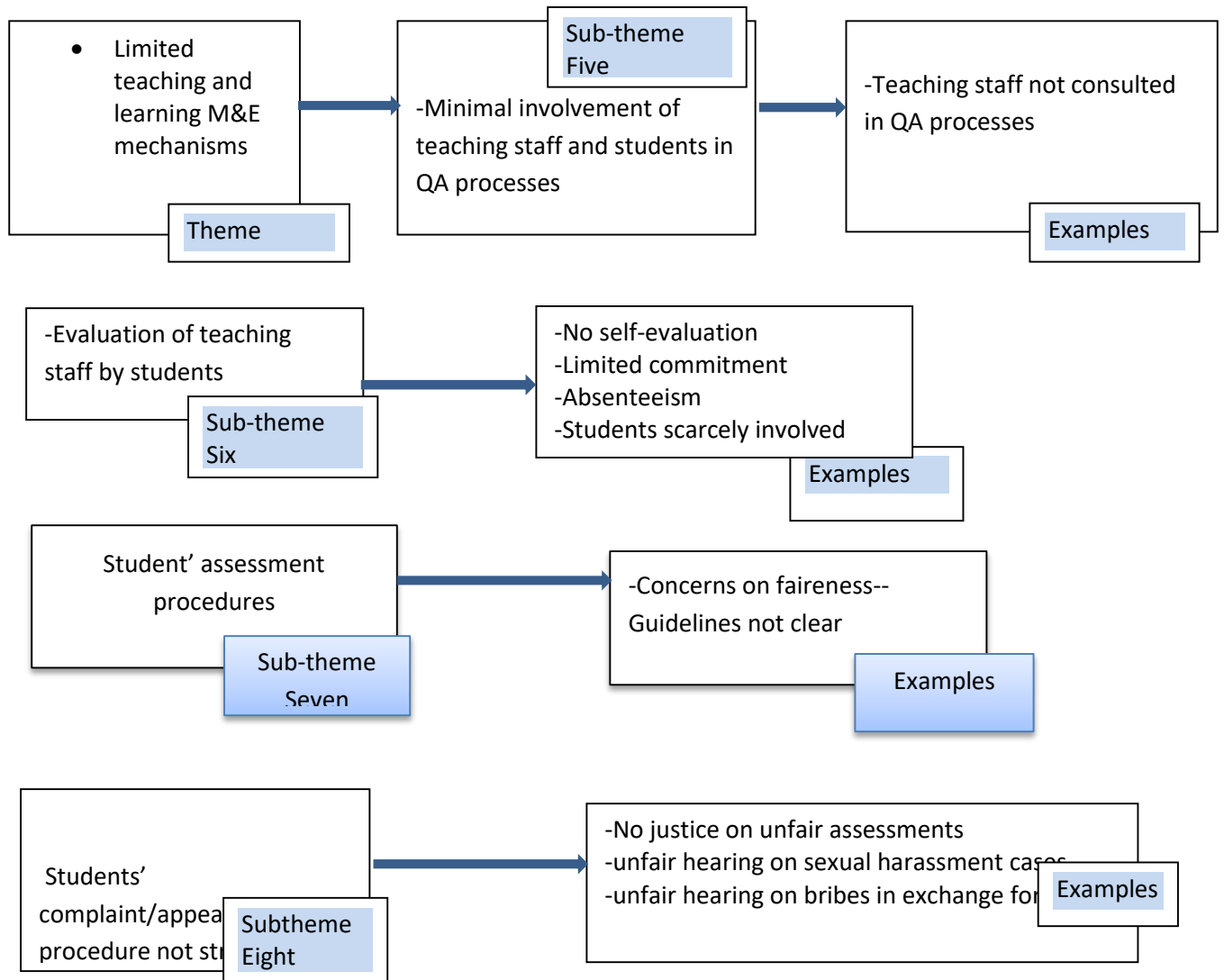


Table 4.13 summarizes the emerging themes on limited teaching and learning internal control mechanisms, highlighting consultations with the academic staff, their evaluation procedures, students’ assessment, and appeals procedures as identified by the different respondents.

**Table 4.13: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Limited Teaching and Learning internal Control Mechanisms</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Consultations with Academic Staff on Quality Assurance Procedures	Teaching Administrative Staff
Evaluation of Teaching Staff	Students and Quality Assurance Officers
Student' Assessment Procedures	Non-Teaching Management Staff, Teaching Administrative Staff, Quality Assurance Officers and Students
Students' Appeals Procedure	Non-Teaching Management Staff, Quality Assurance Officers and Teaching Administrative Staff

#### **4.3.3.2.1 Responses**

##### **Consultations with Academic Staff in Quality Assurance Procedures**

From engagements with the teaching administrative staff, respondents that preferred anonymity revealed that just a few members of teaching staff were consulted with regard to quality assurance performance measurement guidelines, developing and revision of quality assurance guidelines, manuals and assessment tools. This would affect their performance and attitude towards quality assurance monitoring procedures, they recounted.

One of the respondents recounted:

*“Most of our academic staff members have always said they have never seen copies of the draft quality assurance policy documents or manuals and they do not know their contents; some are partially aware or not aware at all, sometimes they view*

*quality assurance as something ‘done to them’ rather than being part of their daily activities”(RT-1F).*

This exclusion of the majority of teaching staff from key QA processes can undermine ownership, understanding and commitment to quality assurance standards in private universities in Western Uganda.

Further still, responses from of the members of the administrative teaching staff revealed that the members of the academic staff usually lodged in their concerns that they rarely participated in the procedures of implementing quality assurance performance guidelines that involved their areas of expertise. This implied that the academic staff would be assigned roles without being granted the opportunity to align them with their own personal goals and strengths in line with quality assurance standards. This concurred with responses from the quality assurance officers about reports from the faculty. One of the respondents had this to say:

*“My department usually gets issues of concern from lecturers that there are still gaps with regard to assigning them different roles. Also they submit that there is no uniformity in setting up measures for monitoring their performance against expected standards. Worst of all, for a number of times, they are not fully satisfied with the feedback that is usually given to them” (RT-7M).*

This procedure may negatively influence staff attitudes and willingness to comply with monitoring procedures and may risk compromising teaching performance and continuous improvement in private universities in Western Uganda.

However, the quality assurance officer responded that this procedure of setting clear standards for performance measurement indicators and monitoring of the academic staff was being reviewed in consultation with faculty heads.

### **Evaluation of Teaching Staff**

With regard to evaluating the teaching staff, while final-year students in selected private universities in Western Uganda acknowledged that lecturers were knowledgeable, maintained generally positive relationships with students and made efforts to teach despite limited resources and large class sizes, the reported patterns of absenteeism, sluggishness, limited time commitment and inadequate responsiveness to students' concerns point to deeper challenges. One of the students responded;

*“Some lecturers do not prepare notes; instead they download articles and use them during lectures. They assign textbook chapters for us to make copies and revise, with scanty explanation; which is costly to us. We also have limited opportunity when we want to meet these lecturers for consultation; we meet them only during lecture time and therefore cannot get the mentorship, guidance and counseling or other forms of support that we need”*(RS-18M).

These behaviors may reflect heavy workloads, insufficient institutional support, weak supervision or limited staff motivation and welfare mechanisms. Regardless of the underlying causes, such practices negatively affect the consistency and effectiveness of teaching and learning and reduce student support and engagement.

More concerns from other students revealed that they would be involved once in a while upon completion of a module or course unit. They would fill evaluation forms

in relation to teaching and learning procedures and departmental operations; yet areas that were earmarked as needing improvement would stay the same and later no feedback would be given to them, they recounted. The absence of viable improvements in identified problem areas suggest weak utilization of student feedback in decision-making processes. Lack of feedback to students on actions taken undermines transparency and accountability, leading to student' disengagement towards quality assurance processes.

Relatedly, further responses from quality assurance officers indicated that members of staff were not involved in self-evaluation and peer evaluation at a satisfactory level. This included evaluation procedures for both administrative and teaching staff and this would affect their performance. The absence of regular reflective and peer review practices undermines the development of professional competence, reduces opportunities for constructive feedback and limits the identification of performance gaps. Staff performance in teaching and learning and institutional effectiveness are likely to be negatively affected.

### **Student' Assessment Procedures**

Responses from members of the non-teaching management staff revealed that as a way of complying with internal quality assurance mechanisms, student assessment standards, guidelines, and procedures were in place. These were related to course works (continuous assessments) and final examinations. These guidelines included expected behavior of both students and lecturers during the assessment period and standards during the setting and marking of examinations. This was supported by members of the teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officers; it was also evidenced when the researcher consulted the student' code of conduct

handbook and academic policy. However, responses from some students expressed concerns that there were always gaps in the way they were being assessed. One of the students recounted;

*“The procedures for assessment are always not clear to most of my fellow students. Some lecturers are not availing to us the course outlines to guide us in the flow of preparing for assessments; just a few do it. Sometimes guidelines on continuous assessments such as submission of course works, case studies, other tests, oral presentations among others are not clear; conditions for retakes, special examinations, when a student is halted etc are not always clear to us. Sometimes there are discrepancies in the marks on the returned scripts with the final marks submitted by the lecturers for display and at times we spend a lot of time trying to look for the concerned lecturers to rectify the problem”*(RS-18M).

This suggests that the institution’s QA guidelines in selected private universities in Western Uganda may be formally established but not consistently implemented or monitored. As a result, assessment practices may vary across lecturers, leading to concerns about fairness, clarity and reliability. This implies that having QA policies alone is insufficient unless they are regularly reviewed to ensure effective assessment.

Again, some respondents from the teaching administrative staff recounted, they were not monitoring students’ attendance on a daily basis due to being overwhelmed by big numbers. Attendance tracking is essential for monitoring student’ engagement and identifying those who need support; but when lecturers are overwhelmed, attendance may not be consistently implemented. This may weaken the effectiveness of teaching and learning quality control.

In relation to the above, more responses from the teaching administrative staff expressed that there was great need for daily lecturers' academic workshops and seminars to be trained and retrained on how to set and handle examinations, procedures of setting and rechecking these examinations in order to have transparency of these standards up to the release of students' marks. This suggests that universities must invest in ongoing training, clear procedures and monitoring mechanisms to strengthen the reliability and credibility of examination processes.

### **Students' Appeals Procedure**

Responses from members of non- teaching management staff and quality assurance officers responded that there was a students' appeals procedure on ground. They mentioned that staff and students were always encouraged to resolve their differences that would arise between themselves while formally the university would involve a committee that was put in place to resolve these differences. This was supported by members of the teaching administrative staff. However, some students raised concerns that sometimes those who were unfairly assessed or faced other forms of unfairness would not get the justice they deserved; sometimes the lecturers would be favored especially when it came to complaints on unfair assessments due to sexual favors and other bribes for exchange of marks. This may discourage students from reporting misconduct and may undermine their confidence, which can negatively affect their relationship with lecturers. It may also allow unethical behavior to persist unchecked.

#### **4.3.4 OBJECTIVE FOUR: EXAMINE THE EFFECT OF NCHE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT ON MANAGEMENT OF STANDARDS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN UGANDA**

The researcher used documentary review and in-depth interviews as a strategy aimed at capturing an accurate representation of the participant's perspective on the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning. This was in reference to NCHE Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) 2001 as amended in 2006, Quality Assurance Framework and Statutory Instruments that stipulated standards, guidelines and procedures higher institutions of learning were expected to abide with for quality control. An interview guide was developed in advance.

##### **4.3.4.1 Theme One: Minimal Compliance to NCHE External Assessment Procedures at Institutional Level.**

Table 4.14 presents participants' perceptions regarding Theme One; Objective Four, highlighting key governance and management-related issues within the universities. The table is organized into five sub-themes that emerged from data, namely: top governance overriding other powers, limited stakeholder involvement in the budgeting process, challenges in strategic plan implementation, NCHE standards on university land and existence of memoranda of understanding (MOUs) for community engagement. For each sub-theme, illustrative examples are provided to demonstrate how these manifest in practice.

**Table 4.14: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme 1 Objective Four**

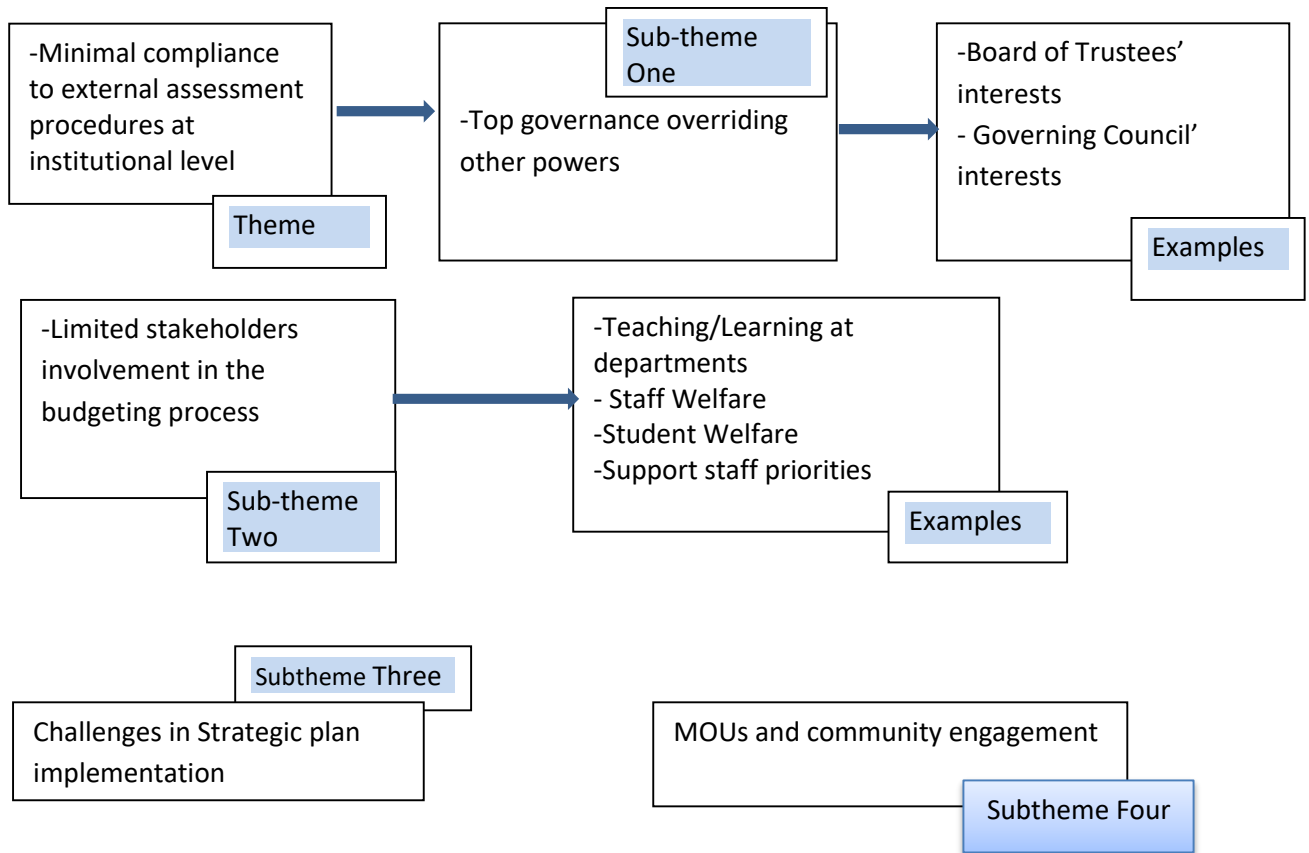


Table 4.15 presents a summary of emerging themes of universities’ minimal compliance to external assessment procedures, such as governing structures, involvement of stakeholders, implementation of the strategic plan and engagement in community activities as reported by different categories of respondents.

**Table 4.15: Category of Emerging Themes**

<b>Minimal Compliance to External Assessment Procedures at Institutional Level</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Governing Structures	Non-Teaching Management Staff and Quality Assurance Officers
Involvement of Stakeholders in Planning	Non-Teaching Management Staff and Quality Assurance Officers
Strategic Plan Implementation	Non-Teaching Management Staff
MoUs for Community Engagement	Non-Teaching Management Staff and Quality Assurance Officers

#### **4.3.4.1.1 Responses**

##### **Governing Structures**

Findings indicated that the selected private universities in Western Uganda had well-established structures on ground, for example the Boards of Trustees, University Council, Senate, faculties, departments, and Unions whose terms of reference and functions were clearly stipulated. This was from the responses of members of non-teaching management staff, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officers. However, the more significant concern emerges from the revelation that some governing bodies tended to override the powers of others, primarily because they were the ‘owners’ of the universities.

This practice suggests a hierarchical dominance that compromises the intended system of checks and balances and decision-making processes may become biased

towards ownership interests rather than academic priorities which could negatively affect transparency, accountability and adherence to national quality standards.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders in Planning**

With reference to institutional financial management and planning, findings indicated that the budgeting process did not involve all stake holders of the institutions as required by the NCHE standard. This was revealed by some members of the non-teaching management staff and supported by quality assurance officers. A respondent that preferred anonymity revealed that:

*“Not having all stake holders of the institution involved in the budgeting process negatively affects it’s operations because some important areas of the university activities are not addressed; for example, teaching and learning priorities at departmental level, student welfare, staff welfare, support staff priorities etc. and this has an impact on the delivery of quality of higher education”*(RN-3F).

This exclusion may result in budgets that do not reflect institutional priorities and actual needs of teaching and learning. This can also undermine effective implementation of academic programs in private universities in Western Uganda.

### **Strategic Plan Implementation**

Responses from members of the non-teaching management staff revealed that the strategic plan was in place, and from the documentary review it was found out that it had a clear set of priority activities and the road map indicated a plan of accomplishing priority activities in a given period. Also, the documentary review indicated the university mission was integrated in the academic and non-academic programs and activities of the university. However, more responses raised a concern

that some activities were not fully implemented to some extent because of lack of funds and there were rare reviews to assess whether the universities were still on track, they asserted. This undermines systematic monitoring and evaluation, reducing the institution's ability to assess progress, respond to emerging challenges and realign priorities. Insufficient review mechanisms constrain their effectiveness in guiding institutional development and sustainability.

### **MoUs for Community Engagement Initiatives**

Responses from the non-teaching management staff revealed that there were initiatives and projects that focus on societal needs and goals, and the broader society. There were MoUs signed for student community engagement in selected private universities in Western Uganda. There was evidence of minimal community engagement activities though. This was supported by the quality assurance officers. Because of lack of funds, these universities paid attention to community engagement and service at least once per academic year. It was found out that there was lack of a stipulated procedure where research conducted for community development would be accessible to students and the community itself.

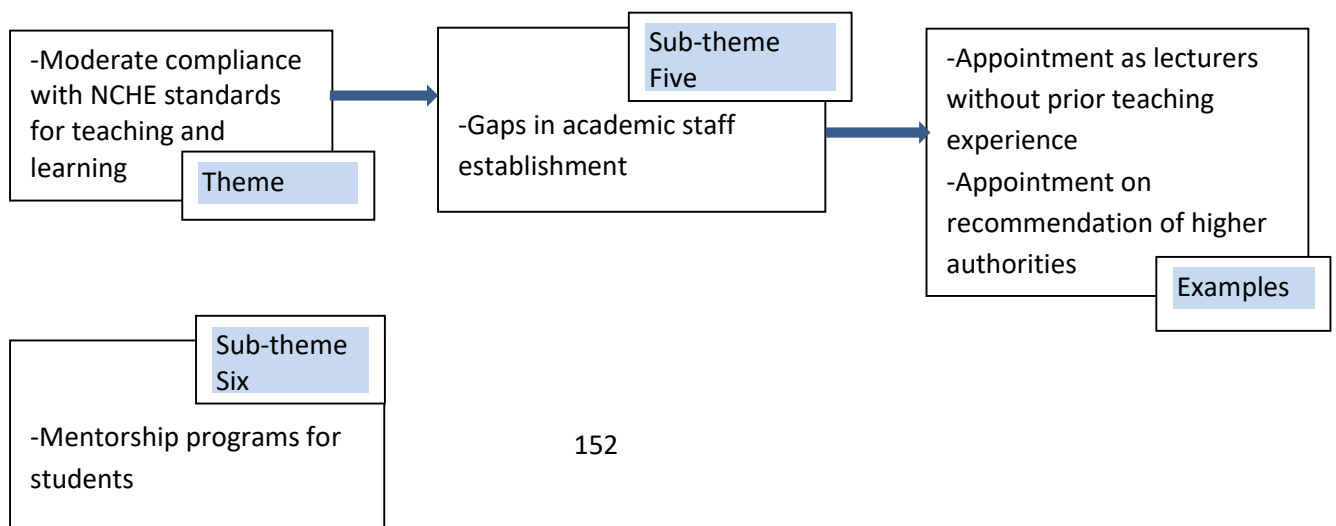
This limits the institutions' ability to assess whether these engagements remain relevant to emerging socioeconomic challenges; this gap undermines the universities' potential role as dynamic agents of socioeconomic advancement and innovation within their communities. The limited integration of community engagement and research into teaching undermines holistic learning experiences, reduces opportunities for experiential learning, knowledge transfer and societal impact.

Relatedly, more responses from members of non-teaching management staff revealed that students needed to be given great exposure beyond the lecture rooms to relate their learning with field-based experiences so that they become relevant to the conceptual teaching methodologies; this required lecturers to be more innovative in their teaching methods too, they recounted. This would support management of standards related to NCHE expectations on community service and outreach.

#### 4.3.4.2 Theme Two: Moderate compliance with NCHE standards for teaching and learning

Table 4.16 below addresses theme two of objective four. It presents a thematic analysis of the identified gaps in compliance with the National Council for higher education (NCHE) standards for teaching and learning. It outlines the main theme and associated sub-themes; the table illustrates gaps in academic staff establishment, mentorship programs for students, transparency in staff union and measurements for learning spaces and facilities. Examples are provided under each sub-theme to demonstrate how these gaps manifest.

**Table 4.16: Participants’ Perceptions on Theme 2 Objective Four**



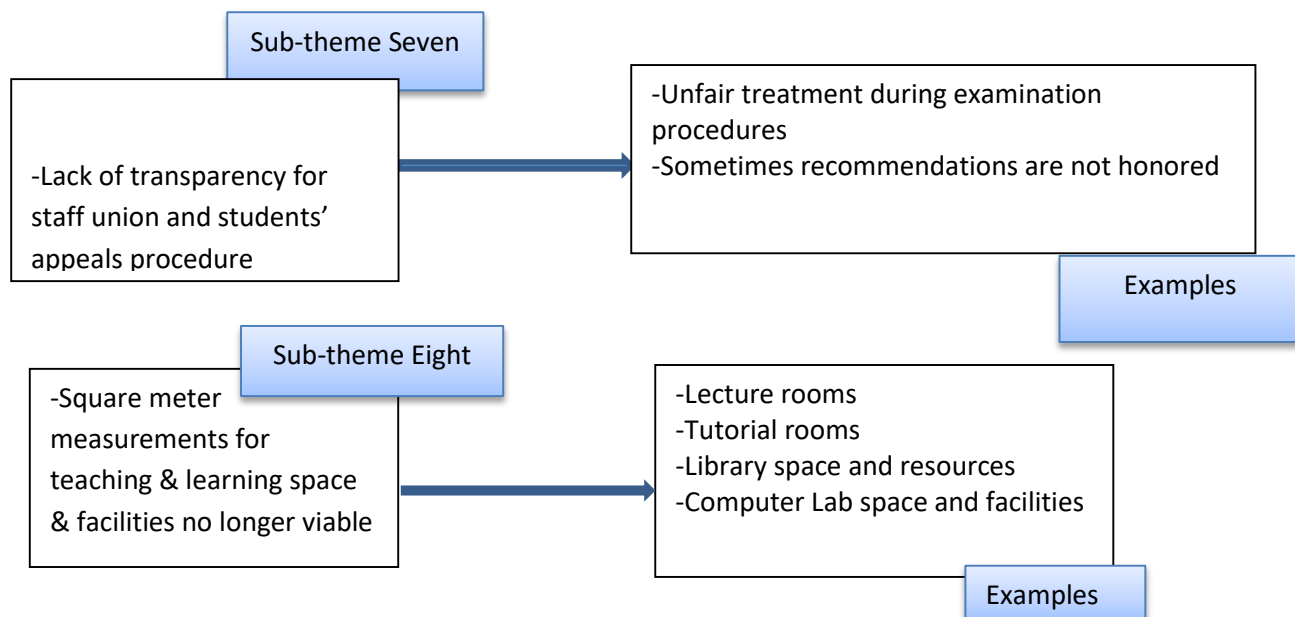


Table 4.17 summarizes the key emerging themes on moderate compliance with NCHE standards for teaching and learning, highlighting specific challenges on establishment of academic staff, mentorship programs for students, the staff union and square meter measurements of teaching facilities and the categories of respondents from whom these views were obtained.

**Table 4.17: Category of Emerging Themes**

Moderate compliance with NCHE standards for teaching and learning	Respondents
Gaps in Academic Staff Establishment	
Mentorship Programs for Students	Non-teaching management staff, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officer
Limited Powers for the Staff Union	Non-teaching management staff, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officer

Square Meter Measurements of Teaching Facilities	Non-teaching management staff, teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officer
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#### 4.3.4.1.2 Responses

##### **Gaps in Academic Staff Establishment**

Findings from respondents that preferred anonymity revealed that in some situations, some academic staff members that were appointed to some academic posts did not possess requisite qualification and experience; for instance, some were appointed as lecturers without prior teaching experience and when they possessed a Master’s degree but were not on PhD track. This contravenes national quality assurance requirements and poses risks to the long-term sustainability of academic excellence in private universities in Western Uganda.

##### **Mentorship Programs for Students**

Responses from members of the non-teaching management staff revealed there was little effort exhibited with regard to the faculty participating in mentoring students. However, responses from the teaching administrative staff revealed that they had to a significant degree created initiatives to improve teaching such as; making follow-ups on students who were struggling academically and those in their internship placements. However, other responses revealed that some lecturers had always mentioned that their time invested in these supportive engagements is not always recognized. One of the participants noted the following:

*“The departments are trying their level best to put in place programs to support academically struggling students; the lecturers are putting in extra effort to*

*identify and help these students. However, some lecturers at times express that we are trying to infringe on their time without giving them some motivation” (RQ-2M).*

However, these initiatives appear to be unevenly implemented, relying heavily on individual lecturers’ goodwill rather than structured faculty expectations.

### **Limited Powers for the Staff Union**

Responses from members of non-teaching management staff, teaching administrative staff and Quality Assurance Officers of selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed that there existed a staff union. This was confirmed by the records from the documentary review too. The universities permitted the existence of the staff unions, though other responses highlighted that some members of the teaching staff have always raised concerns that at times the university administration does not listen to and honor some of the staff union’ recommendations and this would affect their performance. This limited responsiveness of university management to staff union input constrains effective social dialogue and compromises the potential of staff unions to contribute constructively to institutional decision-making and improved working conditions.

### **Square Meter Measurements of Teaching Facilities**

Responses from members of non-teaching management staff revealed that the capacity benchmarks from NCHE about standards of measurements of square meters per student for education facilities did not take into account certain factors regarding these education facilities; for instance, when measuring space for each student for the lecture rooms, library space and computer laboratory space, it is assumed that students in different programs use these resources concurrently yet

each different cohort of students is scheduled to visit each facility at different times. Responses from members of the teaching administrative staff and quality assurance officers were in agreement with this. In practice, this allows institutions to optimize space through shared and rotational use. This points to a need for more flexible and context-sensitive standards that recognize patterns of utilization rather than relying on generalized assumption about facility usage.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This section presents the discussion on exploring the contribution of accreditation of study programs to implementation of teaching and learning, examining how the quality of teaching staff affect implementation of teaching and learning, investigating how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to implementation of teaching and learning and examining the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning. According to the results, there was moderate impact of quality assurance practices on implementation of teaching and learning.

#### **5.1 Exploring the contribution of study program accreditation to Implementation of teaching and learning in selected private Universities in Western Uganda**

Regarding discussions on exploring the contribution of accreditation of study programs to implementation of teaching and learning, great focus hinged on NCHE standards with regard to; minimum entry requirements for each academic program, admission criteria/procedure, recommended number of students per academic program, learning resources and efficient facilities to support the relevant academic programs, academic program objectives, assessment procedures and student learning outcomes (SLOs) among others.

## Massification of Students

Results indicated that for each academic program to be accredited, there are stipulated standards for minimum requirements of relevant courses for the students to be admitted to that particular program according to NCHE requirements, guidelines and procedures (NCHE 2014); this is in reference to NCHE statutory instrument number 34 of 2008 section 9.

However, findings from selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed that these universities mainly relied on revenue collected from tuition fees as the primary source of funding; this left them with no option but to look for money by admitting a large number of students, a number of them with low/minimal grades to different programs to ‘*survive*’ and this has compromised the standard of education these universities provided to their students. This is in agreement with some scholars like Kidega et al. (2023), Niyonzima (2019) and Eryenyu et al. (2024) who argued that massification has been undertaken by many nations including Uganda. Relatedly, scholars including Alemiga et al. (2019), Kidega et al. (2023) and Fisher & Santana (2020) asserted that the massification of higher education has resulted in challenges in university quality, program’s relevance and connection to industry and institutions’ inability to develop critical thinkers.

The above stated findings were contrary to Sharaf & Helal (2020) who stressed that it is the institutions’ responsibility to comply with the admission policy to ensure fairness and equal opportunities “to guarantee a high level of higher education” (p. 152). This aligns with some scholars Harvey (2005), Amaral & Rosa (2010), Ewell (2010), Kidega et al. (2023) and Kisambira & Babirye, (2024) who highlighted that these institutions of higher learning must be ready to make every possible change in

content delivery and teaching methodologies in order to enhance student learning and put strategies in place to offer adequate support to the growing population of students with learning needs.

This entails that such high student numbers place significant strain on teaching and learning processes, as lecturers are compelled to handle oversized classes that limit individualized instruction, timely feedback and effective assessment practices; consequently, learner engagement is reduced due to limited interaction.

### **Study Program Alignment to Societal Needs**

This study carried out in selected private universities in Western Uganda found out that though the academic programs were moderately aligned to societal emerging needs, during implementation, students were not given great exposure in their learning with competency-based, situation-relevant experiences and emerging needs of society among others. These findings concur with some previous scholars Matovu (2018) and Baiko et al. (2023) who mentioned that a number of challenges of relevance of the study programs and their relevance to the industry have cropped up; institutions have been blamed for not being able to train critical thinkers.

Relatedly, the study carried out by Ochwa-Echel (2016) highlighted that universities were not offering programs/courses that are relevant to the current market needs; this is because the institutions do not liaise with the private sector. However, he asserted that assessing the needs of the private sector would require some research which these private universities do not have the where withal and capacity to carry out; there is a lot of dialogue and interaction with the stakeholders needed, this requires money and personnel.

Though more findings revealed that faculties were planning for more exposure of the students beyond the lecture rooms to acquire relevant skills and field-based learning experiences so as to be relevant; this practice had not met the NCHE (2012) and NCHE (2014) regulatory standards, that have indicated that the quality of teaching and learning is measured by how best the university is meeting NCHE program accreditation regulatory standards on: the design, content, teaching methods; relevance of the subject matter to be taught to societal emerging needs well stipulated in expected SLOs among others. (Ajit & Jayanta, 2012).

This misalignment limits effective implementation of teaching and learning as instruction tends to remain detached from real-world contexts. This in turn reduces learner engagement since teaching approaches do not fully integrate practical, experiential learning strategies that promote relevance.

In congruence, studies have highlighted that academic programs which meet quality standards should be able to meet the criteria, approaches and should be able to cover adequate skills, knowledge and attitudes required by the students to reflect their responsiveness and remain relevant to the changing needs of society (Romanowski, 2021; Wandera, 2013).

### **Review of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

Findings revealed that the accreditation of study programs always defined the student learning outcomes (SLOs) expected to be exhibited by students of each program at the end of every course unit; yet these learning outcomes were not always evaluated and reviewed in selected private universities in Western Uganda. This standard set by NCHE states that for each academic program to be accredited, it must define standards or minimum requirements to be expected from the output

(Expected Learning Outcomes); to prescribe what is essential in preparing students with predictable content for every University seeking accreditation of its academic programs which must always be evaluated yearly and reviewed at the end of every five years (NCHE, 2014; Micheal, 2022).

The above mentioned standard is echoed in Baiko's study that revealed that universities were expected to undertake curriculum review to ensure that emerging issues in relation to societal needs and the new approaches in science and technology are considered; yet it was always a challenge for universities to meet this set standard (Baiko et al., 2023).

This gap undermines effective implementation of teaching and learning, as instruction is not always guided by systematic feedback on whether intended outcomes are being achieved. Also, the quality of instruction is affected, since lecturers may continue using pedagogical strategies that may not be aligned to students' actual learning needs.

### **Physical Infrastructure and Equipment to Support Study Programs**

Findings revealed there was lack of adequate physical infrastructure and equipment to support various study programs in the selected private universities in Western Uganda; other reports revealed there was little money for the maintenance of the available facilities, yet these universities continued to admit more students despite lack of adequate facilities. Facilities and manpower mentioned included digital library, rooms for researchers in the library, internet connectivity in lecture rooms and everywhere on campus, enough computer laboratories, qualified technicians and specialists, availability of equipment and teaching aids in the lecture rooms, services and facilities available and accessible to persons with special needs among

others. Relatedly, NCHE (2022, as cited in Kidega et al., 2023) mentions that there are a lot of students in the lecture halls, and it doesn't seem like their surroundings are conducive to receiving good education.

The above mentioned findings contradicted observations of prior scholars, Alabi *et al.* (2018) and Mugizi (2021), who noted that in higher institutions of learning, an efficient physical infrastructure is the foundation of establishing quality systems and meeting quality standards. In consonance, IUCEA (2010) observed that an institution should have clear procedures to ensure that the quality of its facilities needed for student learning are adequate and appropriate for each study program offered.

The above mentioned limitations significantly limit lecturers to deliver practical, interactive and technology-supported instruction. The quality of instruction is compromised, particularly in programs that require specialized learning spaces. Also, inadequate and poorly maintained facilities depicted in overcrowded lecture rooms, outdated equipment and limited learning resources hamper active participation, hence hindering effective implementation of teaching and learning.

### **Teaching Non-Accredited Academic Programs**

Findings revealed that at times the universities under study would teach non-accredited academic programs; this was because they did not want to lose students who had applied to join these courses. They would instead enroll these students as they developed the programs and forwarded them to National Council for Higher education for accreditation. This contravenes the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act 9 (2001) as amended in 2006 Section 119A that states; "For avoidance of doubt, no person shall operate a University, other Degree Awarding Institution or a Tertiary Institution without prior accreditation of its academic and professional

programs by the National Council for Higher Education”. This concurs with the previous study of Tayeb Brahimy et al. (2016) that mentions, it is prohibited to offer any unaccredited program of study for which the general public should enroll.

The above practice undermines the integrity of the teaching and learning process. Inconsistencies and limited accountability in study program accreditation procedures pose risks to academic standards.

### **Duplication of Study Programs**

Findings from final-year students in selected private universities in Western Uganda revealed that these universities have kept on duplicating study programs. From their interaction with students from other universities, respondents revealed they would find out that there was changing of names from one university to the other, yet content would be found out to be the same; there was lack of creativity in this practice, they recounted. This concurs with the previous findings of Matovu (2018), who mention that higher education institutions have been poorly equipped and also duplicated courses to cater for the large number of students. This has resulted into compromising the standard of the content delivered to students.

Also, Mamdani (2007, as cited in Bunoti, 2012) in his book scholars in the market place, blamed universities of duplicating courses for the sake of generating revenue from private students.

When there is replication of study programs, teaching tends to rely on recycled content and conventional delivery methods rather than innovative and context-responsive pedagogical strategies, hence compromising the quality of instruction. It

also results in limited opportunities to adopt learner-centred approaches hence, undermining student learning outcomes.

### **Internationally Agreed Recognised Program Accreditation Criteria**

Findings revealed that there happens to be no internationally agreed recognized program accreditation criteria in the selected private universities in Western Uganda; yet quality assurance exists parallel to the international organization for standardization (ISO) standards for goods and services. However, some researchers ascertain that even with these procedures in place, they would not necessarily address the complex situations of international higher education mobility, cultural differences and judicial systems (Magagula 2005, as cited in Obwogi, 2011).

This may directly affect student mobility across universities, as qualifications and program standards are difficult to compare and validate across institutions and borders. Students may therefore face challenges when transferring credit units, enrolling in similar programs elsewhere or having their qualifications recognized internationally; all of which limits opportunities for academic progression and cross boarder learning.

## 5.2 Exploring the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of Teaching and Learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda

With the discussion on exploring how the quality of teaching staff affect implementation of teaching and learning, the focus was on teaching staff welfare procedures, competences and performance. Teaching staff welfare procedures focused on their recruitment, promotion, retention, rewards and the role of staff associations; competences and performance hinged on staff' skills and professional development having an impact on implementation of teaching and learning.

### Academic Staff Recruitment Procedures

Results indicated that some teaching staff members who were recruited in the selected private universities in Western Uganda lacked the basic requirements needed to teach at a university, expertise, and competence in related subjects; some were found to be handling course units that were not in their area of expertise contrary to the requirements by NCHE standards. This concurs with studies of Ifeoma (2013) and Fisher & Santana (2020), who pointed out that qualified and competent human resources are one of the most significant economic demands confronting higher education institutions in developing nations such as Uganda. Ifeoma (2013), recounted in his research; *“where shall we find enough of these anyway”*? It remains unclear where suitably qualified faculty members can be obtained to instruct these students.

Yet prior studies of Liviu et al (2016) and Kansiime (2023), identified competence as a great tool of teaching staff in empowering students to acquire transferable skills that are needed during their time at university and prepare them for a life beyond

the lecture rooms. These standards have been set in Statutory Instrument No. 50 of 2010 for research and academic positions aimed at enhancing university teaching and learning procedures.

The above findings were contrary to the NCHE (2014) recruitment policy of the academic staff at Higher Institutions of learning and the University and Other Tertiarily Institutions Act (2011), Section 119 of the Act states that; “A University or tertiary institution shall not employ a lecturer, instructor or other person recruited for the purpose of teaching (instruction) whose qualifications do not conform to the NCHE by regulation”. In agreement Ninette et al. (2015), Bagonza (2018) and Baiko et al. (2023), assert that the quality of university lecturers and their competencies is seen as an important input in teaching and learning. This has been supported by earlier studies; for instance, Senteza Kajubi (1998), as cited in Bunoti (2012), noted that there is no education system that can be better than the quality of it’s teachers.

When NCHE standards on staff qualifications and specialization are not adhered to, the quality of instruction is compromised, for instance lecturers may struggle with content depth, coherence and accuracy. They may not apply diverse and interactive teaching methods that promote meaningful learning such as inquiry-based approaches or effective assessment techniques. This calls for need for a strong organizational culture that values competence and adherence to regulatory standards to foster a teaching and learning environment that supports high quality academic outcomes.

### **Departmental Academic Staff Review Committee**

It was found out that these selected private universities in Western Uganda lacked a well-established and recognized appeals committee to address conflicts and grievances that arose from academic staff dissatisfaction and conflicts for instance, about promotions. These results therefore concur with observations made by (Gonzalez, Liu & Shu, 2012). This contravened the standard for NCHE Statutory instrument no.80 of 2005 section 11 that required institution of an Academic Staff Review Committee at departmental, faculty and university levels composed of senior members of the academic staff to be in charge of reviewing the welfare and performance of staff members in accordance with the institutional rules and regulations (NCHE, 2005).

This directly compromises the quality of instruction, as demotivated staff are less likely to invest effort in innovative pedagogical approaches. Tensions among academic staff may translate into limited academic support for students since effective teaching thrives in institutions where staff feel fairly treated and supported through transparent governance structures.

### **Professional Academic Staff Association (PASA)**

Results indicated lack of transparent procedures for the operational Professional Academic Staff Association (PASA) that would help the staff to negotiate for benefits like job security, bargaining for better pay, handling grievances etc. This would create a spirit of unity and awareness of staff welfare rights and privileges. This was essential in improving the quality of the academic staff but all this went unnoticed. In addition, lack of a functional legal policy against unjust dismissals experienced by

employees in academia was prolonged by lack of an operational Professional Academic Staff Association (PASA).

When the academic staff is unsure of their rights, and have limited access to fair negotiation mechanisms, it can lead to low morale, fear of job loss and reduced commitment to professional responsibilities. Lecturers may feel less motivated to engage learners actively, provide timely feedback or implement innovative teaching methods. Therefore, strengthening leadership accountability and governance systems is essential for protecting staff welfare and promoting a positive teaching and learning environment.

### **Academic Staff Professional Competences and Training**

Results indicated that some teaching staff in these selected private Universities in Western Uganda were taken up to teach students without thorough training on exposing students into more challenges related to learner engagement and their learning experiences. They were not exposed to enough orientation and training and most of them lacked pedagogical training; this reveals strong similarity with the findings of Kidega et al. (2023), who highlighted that there is a shortage of competent educators available to meet the demand of increased student enrolment and this compromises the quality of education.

However, scholars, including Okae (2016), Ranjani (2013) and Liviu et al (2016), argue that lecturers' competences on emerging issues in relation to outcomes of quality assurance practices on higher learning education need to be improved through regular professional training and academic workshops. Notably, a study carried out by Muganga et al. (2024), argued that when private universities innovate their pedagogical practices it improves the quality of the education they deliver.

These studies are in congruence with previous studies Neema (2016) and Markus et al. (2018), that have argued that each academic staff should endeavor to prove themselves as a reservoir of knowledge and skills which must be nurtured and developed in order to adequately pass on both theoretical and practical competences to students in the various fields of work.

The above mentioned results align with findings by the British Council that revealed how effective teaching and learning with competent lecturers could lead to an increase of employability of their products with relevant skills in different countries (British Council Report, 2016). More so, studies conducted by Al-Mutairi (2011) and Kang'ahi et al. (2012, as cited by Ereh et al., 2019) and Kansiime (2023), mentioned that without adequate and trained lecturers, performance of students cannot be improved. Relatedly, previous scholars Matei et al. (2016), Neema (2016) and Baiko et al. (2023), ascertain that if universities are not able to train competent graduates be it doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, lawyers, public servants, etc because of “lack of quality”, the universities would have failed their mission.

When lecturers lack adequate pedagogical skills, the quality of instruction is compromised, as lessons may not be well structured, learner-centred or aligned with intended student learning outcomes. Students may struggle to fully understand course content and develop the expected knowledge and competencies. Deliberate allocation of resources toward staff training and development is therefore essential for enhancing implementation of teaching and learning in private universities in Western Uganda.

## Research and Publication

More findings revealed inadequate research engagement of the teaching staff. Yet, studies stress the adage of 'publish or perish' is meant to distinguish between a university instructor and a school teacher. This is consistent with the (NCHE Quality Assurance Framework (2008:9-10, as cited by Nabaho et al., 2016), which states;

*“What distinguishes a university lecturer from a school teacher is the production of knowledge through, mainly, research. A school teacher transmits already known knowledge while a university lecturer is expected to consistently, through research create new knowledge he/she delivers to students”.*

Gibbs, 2008:18, as cited by Nabaho et al. (2016) and Kisambira and Khadijah (2024), contend that research indirectly enhances the quality of teaching; thorough awareness of the discipline's main concepts and methodologies, obtained from actively participating in disciplinary research translates into thorough descriptions and comprehensive explanations for students.

Limited staff involvement in research constrains the quality of instruction and restricts the use of inquiry-based and research-informed pedagogical strategies. This results in teaching being more content-focused and less reflective of emerging knowledge and real-world applications. Strengthening research engagement among academic staff is therefore essential for fostering a more engaging and intellectually stimulating learning environment.

## Academic Staff Overload

Results further indicated that underfunding in these selected private Universities in Western Uganda has left them with some of the most talented working overseas for better conditions; the teaching staff was overloaded with more teaching course units, teaching large classes and marking numerous scripts was frequent. In consonance, Kidega et al. (2023), mentions in his study that the academic staff is required to handle an increased teaching load, in addition, they oversee practical lessons, conduct tutorials, administer tests, mark a lot of scripts and handle administrative duties.

Excessive workload limits lecturers' ability to adequately prepare lessons, adopt diverse teaching methods and apply learner-centred pedagogical strategies. As a result, instruction often becomes content driven and lecture-based, with limited opportunities for interaction, feedback and active student participation.

Relatedly, previous findings of, Matovu (2018) and Ntim (2016), noted that most of the universities currently face a serious lack of senior staff, particularly professors and lack of access to global knowledge. This is in agreement with the study carried out by Kuria, et al. (2012 as cited in Baiko et al., 2024) that found out that inadequate number of senior academic staff among other challenges was found to be one of the problems facing universities in the East African region. This is in congruent with the study carried out by Kidega et al. (2023), which mentioned that professors and associate professors are in short supply in Uganda's higher institutions of learning as academic staff members with advanced degrees relocate abroad in search of "greener pastures". Relatedly, NCHE (2012, as cited in Kidega et al., 2023),

highlights that there are not enough professors in any department at any of Uganda's higher education establishments.

Senior academics play a critical role in curriculum leadership, mentoring junior staff and ensuring depth and rigor instruction. Their absence affects the quality of instruction as less experienced staff may have limited guidance in course design, assessment and alignment of student learning outcomes. Cultivating a supportive and enabling organizational culture is therefore critical for retaining senior academic staff.

### **Lecturer Divided-Devotion of Service**

Results from the universities under study showed the available full- time academic staff spent most of their time offering part-time services in several other institutions; these have a negative effect on the delivery of quality education and dedication to realize the university's Vision and Mission of academic excellence.

The above findings concur with Ochwa-Echel (2016), Juliet Atwebembeire et al. (2018), and Azabo Gaile and Wunti (2017, as cited in Gakowe et al., 2022), who asserted that the majority of universities are understaffed, and even the full-time academic staff members available spend most of the time moonlighting in other several universities. This divided-devotion of service has a negative impact on the delivery of quality education. Yet, Kansay (2012, as cited in Baiko et al., 2024), highlighted that quality assurance mechanisms in universities are dependent on the recruitment of an adequate number of academic staff.

The above mentioned practices weaken the quality of instruction and limits the use of learner-centred and interactive teaching approaches that require adequate time

and presence. As a result, learner engagement declines, as students receive minimal academic support and limited opportunities for meaningful interaction.

### **Academic Staff Development (ASD) Policy**

Research findings indicated that there existed an academic staff development (ASD) policy in these selected private universities in Western Uganda though more responses revealed that this was not desirably implemented. In agreement, scholars like Kasule and Neema (2015 as cited by Gakowe et al., 2022) have argued that universities in Uganda have outdated and incoherent staff development policies which have proven a catalyst of poor performance of academic staff especially in areas of teaching, research and community service. According to the findings, lack of clear academic staff development procedures left the process of teaching and learning in want.

The above contravenes findings in a study by Sandra Griffiths who linked staff professional growth to quality assurance procedures in which the behavior of staff is seen as one of the determinants of quality. Griffiths asserts that a comprehensive staff development policy is vital in helping employees positively respond to changes in demands and conditions. It's pertinent that universities make sustained commitment to staff development and training (Griffiths, 1993; Anyamele 2007, as cited by Obwogi, 2011). Sokoli and Koren (2017), concur with the stated findings by mentioning that without adequate, trained lecturers and constant updating of the knowledge base, performance of students can't be improved.

The above mentioned scholars observed that management must be committed to managing the professional competences of their academic staff and identifying outputs such as high rate of completion for students. This seems to be in agreement

with Ifeoma (2013), Markus et al. (2018), and Kansiime (2023), who asserted that vibrant ongoing staff development programs will help the academic staff continually improve their behavior, attitude, values, skills and competences. In this way, they enhance their expertise and become more proactive in their approach and effective in performing the assigned tasks. In consonance, Riccio, (2010, as cited in Gakowe et al. 2022) asserted that if they want to remain competitive, survive and stand the test of time, all universities have no choice but to develop their employees.

This implies that when staff development initiatives are weakly implemented, lecturers are less equipped with contemporary pedagogical skills and innovative instructional strategies. This often results in continued reliance on traditional lecturer-centered teaching methods which limits active learner engagement.

### **Unbecoming Behaviors**

Study findings from the students indicated that during their time of study, some of their lecturers were quite oftenly involved in unbecoming behaviors like giving free marks to their fellow students in exchange for sex or money, absenteeism from duty, sexual harassment, inappropriate language use, arriving late to teach, forging student' lecture attendance records, failure to provide students with timely feedback on their assignments, despite the fact that most of these would go un identified.

The above findings were consistent with the findings of previous scholars, for example, Matovu (2017, as cited in Baiko et al., 2024), identified lack of professionalism amongst academic staff that was reflected in low team work, poor assessment practices, absenteeism, lack of mentorship to students among others. This concurs with the study by Mugizi (2021), who highlighted some lecturers not

marking examinations but instead forge marks and cheat exams for students and identified delayed handing in of marks. Similarly, Muganga et al. (2024), echoed that students in entirely on-site programs obtain degrees without ever setting foot in class; raising concern about academic dishonesty. Yet Lucander & Christersson (2020), ascertained that employees should have unquestionable reputation; more so university lecturers who are expected to exhibit a reputable image to the students they teach.

The above statement is in congruent with the earlier study by Juliet Atwebembeire et al. (2015), who notes that low level of ethical credibility in universities & scandals of behavior from some teaching staff affects the quality of teaching. Also, Alemiga & Kibukamusoke (2019) and Fisher & Santana (2020), highlight that poor-quality teaching of academic staff greatly donates to graduating half-baked students.

When lecturers engage in such practices, the instructional environment becomes less credible and less conducive to meaningful learner engagement; consequently, student learning outcomes are adversely affected. Upholding professionalism and ethical standards is therefore critical to fostering genuine learner engagement and achieving intended learning outcomes.

### **5.3 Investigating how internal monitoring/evaluation procedures Contribute to implementation of teaching and learning in selected Private universities in Western Uganda**

Findings on investigating how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to implementation of teaching and learning pointed out what was expected of higher institutions of learning for a secure, conducive learning environment and related internal monitoring/evaluation procedures to ascertain student' life-long self-directed learning and continuous improvement.

#### **Limited Employee Consultation on QA Guidelines**

Findings revealed that just a few members of the academic, administrative and support staff was consulted during the development, implementation and reviewing of internal QA guidelines, manuals and assessment tools in the selected private universities in Western Uganda. Scholars like Mabirizi et al. (2024), mention that this poses a risk of quality assurance implementation becoming a topic of controversial debate that may lead some academic staff members to experience anxiety, reluctance, and potential confrontation. This concurs with the study that was carried out by Kisige et al. (2021), that found out that quality assurance policies existed but were poorly communicated to members of staff, resulting in limited implementation at various units.

Again, studies like Okae (2016), and Matei et al. (2016), have pointed out that majority of academic staff members are either not aware, or only partially aware of what is contained in copies of the quality assurance draft policy documents or manuals; or, do not understand how to use them effectively in curriculum planning

and delivery; this makes it an issue of controversial debate and causes resistance. Yet, Tavares et al. (2017), and Baiko et al. (2024), identified a need for full involvement of staff members in the development of quality assurance manuals and guidelines to build a quality culture.

This entails that lack of awareness of QA procedures can lead to inconsistent service delivery due to uncertainty, lack of ownership and inconsistent application of standards. When the staff members are fully involved, they understand what is required, feel valued and are motivated to deliver high-quality services.

### **QA Associated with Evaluation and Judgements**

From the findings, respondents revealed that most of the university members associated quality assurance with evaluation and judgments. This relates to the studies carried out by Lucas (2014), and Atwebembeire et al. (2016), which noted that the procedure of quality assurance monitoring and evaluation was accused of being a bureaucratic burden and holding too much managerial authority in its hands and appeared to 'control and regulate academics'. This concurs with previous researchers Kelly, Ang, Chong, and Hu (2008), Reisberg (2010), and Anderson (2008, as cited in Markus *et al.*, 2018) who observed that there are problems associated with these procedures.

Other scholars; Ramsden (2003, as cited by Obwogi, 2011) argue that the quality assurance systems in most countries lead to a culture of compliance and not commitment amongst the academic staff. This view is in congruent with Obwogi (2011) who warned that attempts to improve the practice of teaching in universities by approaches that seemed to be judgemental may fail.

In practice, when the academic staff genuinely embrace QA monitoring procedures, they are more likely to reflect on their teaching methods, adopt more effective instructional strategies and design assessments that better measure student learning. This genuine approach also increases learner engagement, as students benefit from more responsive and interactive learning experiences.

### **Moderate Student' Engagement in Evaluation Procedures**

Further findings revealed that the time provided to students in the evaluation process of internal QA practices of the selected private universities in Western Uganda was not sufficient. From the interviews that were carried out with students in their final year, it was revealed that feedback levels were still low and the feedback channels were limited; responses from these students indicated some level of discontent because they were not given feedback from the evaluation exercises and in most cases there were no changes in the lecturers' performances even after the areas that needed improvement had been earmarked.

Yet, NCHE statutory instrument No. 34 of 2008 that states; "student' involvement in internal assessment is useful in improving teaching performance in the quality assurance regulations". This concurred with Ankunda & Mureebe (2023), Kansime & Sigh (2023), who ascertained that student' involvement in evaluation of the learning procedure is linked to the search for strategies to improve education quality; and if higher institutions of learning were to maintain quality service delivery, their students were to participate in internal M&E practices as much as possible; this is in consonance with (Katende, 2024).

Similarly, IUCEA (2010), and Wandera et al. (2023), stipulate that Higher institutions of learning should encourage students 'evaluations of teaching and learning; this is

a standard that should be regularly maintained in order to get feedback from students about the program, the staff, the delivery methods etc. and use the outcomes for improvement of the teaching and learning procedures.

However, A UNESCO Report (2017), made an observation that students' evaluation on teaching and learning procedures is usually not taken seriously and the data generated is often not used for decision making in the improvement of higher education provision and no feedback is given to students. Similarly, at Cairo University, Nabaho, et al. (2016, as cited in Alshamy, 2021), established that student' feedback was not taken seriously by students themselves. He ascribed this to students' conviction that their input wouldn't make any difference due to little evidence of a feedback culture in the early stages of education.

In relation to the above, the views of other scholars Kwan (1999, as cited in Atwebembeire et al., 2018), observed that most academics are negative towards procedures of student' evaluations; this could be linked to the academic independence that lecturers assume as entitlement, hence the exercise of rating of what they are teaching by their students is sometimes interpreted as an infringement on this freedom.

Involving students more deeply in these processes supports better implementation of teaching and learning because it encourages lecturers to reflect on their methods and make necessary improvements. Also, students feel valued and heard, which motivates them to take an active role in their learning, leading to improved student learning outcomes as teaching becomes more responsive to students' needs and learning challenges.

## **Minimal Infrastructure Monitoring Procedures**

More findings revealed that there were minimal facilities and physical infrastructure monitoring procedures in the selected private universities in Western Uganda. This was classified in terms of university level infrastructure, lecture rooms infrastructure and university utilities quality. Facilities mentioned included resources for a digital library, internet access in lecture rooms and around the campus, enough lecture rooms for all lectures, working computers, projectors for use in teaching and learning, technology and medical laboratories, certified specialists and technicians, safety requirements, sports & recreational facilities, accommodation facilities, decent eating facilities affordable to students, accessible facilities and services for people with special needs among others. This was also evidenced by findings from observation.

This is in consonance with previous scholars, Nepal and Maharjan (2015, as cited in Mugizi, 2021) who pointed out that the universities did not effectively monitor their infrastructure standards and this left one to doubt the quality of teaching and research provided.

Yet previous studies carried out by Kuh and Gonyea (2015), Oliveras-Ortiz et al. (2017, as cited in Mugizi, 2021) highlight monitoring and evaluation procedures for the infrastructure as being paramount; clear guidelines and procedures should be in place at an institution, they asserted; to guarantee that the high-quality facilities required for student learning are available, sufficient, and suitable for each program provided; the computer, lab, and library facilities should all be well inspected and their standard operating procedures in place. This is in congruent with (IUCEA, 2010; Alabi et al., 2018; Bagonza et al., 2019; Bahati & Karungi, 2020). This necessity

concur with provisions by NCHE in Uganda (2014), Bagonza et al. (2019), and Wandera et al. (2023), who argued that the quality of a given university is reflected in adequacy of the above mentioned physical facilities required by the university and the related monitoring, evaluation and improvement procedures.

When facilities are well maintained and properly monitored, lecturers can use appropriate teaching methods and students can engage more effectively in learning activities, leading to improved learning outcomes.

### **Collaboration in Setting Performance Standards**

Findings revealed that the members of the academic staff usually lodged in their concerns that they were barely consulted during the process of establishing and evaluating standards and procedures for performance that involved their areas of expertise. This implied that the academic staff members would take on the duties assigned to them without being given the option to tailor them to their unique aspirations and abilities. Still, findings indicated inconsistent evaluation and performance criteria and gaps in stating standards on expected performance.

The above contradicts findings of the study conducted by Kagaari (2010, as cited in Atwebembeire, 2018) which demonstrated that collaborative developing of performance standards is vital in ensuring that the task assigned to individual employees is completed according to the stated plans, corrective measures are carried out in case of any deviations from the established standards. Relatedly, the need for feedback is emphasized by Yeoh, Ho and Chan, 2012, as cited in Atwebembeire, 2018) as a means of the academic staff understanding their areas of strengths and weaknesses, hence devising means of improvement.

Consequently, this collaboration enhances student learning outcomes because the standards become more realistic, measurable and aligned with classroom realities.

#### **5.4 Exploring the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in Implementation of Teaching and Learning in Selected Private Universities in Western Uganda**

With regard to exploring the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning, results focused on the daily operations of these institutions to ensure compliance with NCHE guidelines, integrity, standards and expectations; this is in reference to NCHE (2014:2). Further, results hinged on processes and systems by NCHE external assessors (peer reviewers) to evaluate the institutions or program to determine the level of adherence against agreed-upon criteria, regulations, policies and practices. This is consistent with previous researchers; Matei et al. (2016), Tutko & Naumov (2014), Stensaker (2003, as cited in Stensaker et al., 2011), and Mrema et al. (2023), who highlighted that individual higher education institutions (HEIs) have been given the autonomy to develop, revise and supervise internal higher education quality standards without compromising the minimum requirements of the national higher education standards.

While institutions retain autonomy to design and manage internal quality assurance mechanisms, this autonomy is exercised within clearly defined NCHE minimum standards, thereby preventing significant deviations that could compromise educational quality. Consequently, this procedure not only enforces compliance but also indirectly strengthens institutional capacity for self-regulation and continuous improvement in implementation of teaching and learning standards.

## **Capacity Parameters for Education Facilities**

With reference to the checklist for quality and universities capacity parameters for evaluation of universities and programs under the University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 benchmarks for education facilities are stipulated. For instance for lecture rooms and library space requirements state as thus, 2.5m squared per student (ideal); 2m squared per student (good); 1m squared per student (acceptable). Computer lab standards are stated as 3m square per student (ideal), 2.5m squares per student (good) and 1m squares per student (acceptable). Responses revealed that the capacity benchmarks from NCHE do not take into consideration certain factors regarding these education facilities; for instance, when computing space for an individual student for the lecture rooms, space in the library and computer laboratory, it is assumed that students in different academic programs use these facilities at the same time yet each different cohort is scheduled to visit each facility at different times.

The application of static space-per-student measurements may not accurately reflect actual facility utilization and institutional capacity. A more nuanced approach that considers scheduling patterns and program-specific usage could therefore enhance the validity of capacity assessments.

## **Strategic Plan Implementation**

The researcher found out that the selected private universities in Western Uganda had the strategic plan in place, and from the documentary review it was found out that the strategic plan had a clear set of priority activities and the road map indicated the accomplishment of priority activities in a stipulated period. However, findings revealed that some activities were not fully implemented to some extent

because of lack of funds; sometimes they would find themselves operating on crisis. This is in consonance with prior researchers Shin et al. (1998), and Ndagire et al. (2023), who noted that evaluating the strategic plan of an institution takes a lot of time, cost and effort, yet the institution may still not attain the desired quality due to changes in methods, processes, attitude and behavior of people and this may affect the completion of organizational goals and objectives.

This may have implications on implementation of teaching and learning in that institutions may quite oftenly respond to immediate challenges instead of following the planned roadmap. This situation undermines consistency in instructional delivery and limits opportunities for improving pedagogical practices, thereby affecting the attainment of desired learning outcomes.

### **Involvement of Stakeholders in the Budgeting Process**

Findings related to institutional financial planning and management indicated that these selected private universities in Western Uganda did not involve all stakeholders in the budgeting process; a requirement by the NCHE standard; for example, teaching and learning priorities at departmental level, student welfare, staff welfare, support staff priorities among others and this had an impact on the delivery of quality of higher education.

Not having all stakeholders of the university involved in the budgeting process negatively affects its operations because some important areas of the university activities are not addressed. This constrains lecturers' ability to effectively deliver curricular, adopt innovative teaching methods and respond to students' learning needs.

However, members strongly pointed out a need to involve more members of the university community for greater impact. This result concurs with Tavares et al. (2017), Kansiime (2023) and Ndagire et al. (2023), who noted that “the higher the involvement of various units in the planning and implementation of financial procedures, the more they impact positively on teaching and learning. In consonance, Kagaba (2024), asserts that planning and budgeting should encompass the entire body of stakeholders, including the governing board, administration, faculty, staff, students and the community in order to meet emerging challenges and opportunities effectively.

This entails that inclusive budgeting is not merely a governance requirement, but a strategic mechanism for enhancing instructional effectiveness and sustaining quality teaching and learning outcomes in universities.

### **Submission of Evaluation Reports**

Responses revealed that various reports on curriculum evaluation, materials for teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation, staff welfare and development among others were not being annually submitted to the NCHE as per the quality assurance framework of 2014 section 2.5 that states “... each institution is required to inform National Council annually of mechanisms it has put in place for staff development and the number of beneficiaries in each discipline/programme”. However, reports would be submitted in scenarios when they were expecting a peer review visit.

The above mentioned contravened findings of previous scholars Enyangu et al. (2014), and Neema (2016), who argue that reporting is a very important aspect of information dissemination; the NCHE requires each institution to inform annually of

the mechanisms it has put in place for staff development and the number of beneficiaries in each discipline or program. However, NCHE (2014), and Alemiga & Kibukamusoke (2019), revealed that reporting is part of compliance and regulation which many Universities have not effectively adhered to.

Consequently, the absence of consistent reporting weakens evidence-based interventions that are essential for improving instructional quality, aligning teaching practices with curricular objectives and promoting sustained improvement in teaching and learning outcomes.

### **Curriculum Reviews**

Further findings revealed that one of the two selected private universities in Western Uganda had taken some time without submitting some of the 5 year curriculum review reports to the National Council for Higher Education. This contravened the National Council' standard that requires universities to always review their programs of study; align programs, courses, syllabi and assessments to the NCHE standards in order to demonstrate their response to society's emerging demands; whether social, economic, political, cultural, or environmental and submit these reports to the National Council for Higher Education for approval. This is in agreement with Colburn et al. (2016), Romanowski (2021), and Oktorina et al. (2023), who highlighted that universities are required to conduct curriculum development and review to ensure emerging concerns in relation to societal needs and innovative methods in science and technology are included.

When curriculum reviews are delayed or not formally reported, instructional practices risk becoming outdated, thereby constraining lecturers' ability to deliver relevant and innovative instruction. This may limit students' exposure to

contemporary knowledge and skills. Ultimately, such lapses compromise quality in implementation of teaching and learning.

### **NCHE Set Standards on Employees' Qualifications**

Findings revealed that in some situations, some university employees that were appointed, both administrative and academic did not possess requisite qualification and experience. Some would be appointed on recommendation of other higher authorities; this gap would again compromise the commitment of other members of staff to their work because it would seem some group was being favored against the other. This contravenes the NCHE (2014), standard that authoritatively commands that all universities in Uganda shall employ staff that meet the set standards; this is a mandate for all Universities as highlighted by Alemiga & Kibukamusoke (2019), and NCHE Statutory instrument No. 50 of 2010 section 2.3 that states, "Universities shall employ staff that meet the standards set by the NCHE".

The above contravenes prior findings by Ninette et al. (2015), who ascertained that quality teaching demands academic staff with appropriate qualifications, professional competences, motivation and commitment that is relevant to the level of programs assigned to them; without which quality teaching and learning will still be in want. This is in consonance with earlier studies by Materu (2007), and Baiko et al. (2024), which revealed that the system of activities and practices in a higher education institution is only as good as the quality of its teaching staff; they are core at the institution. Yet the study by Baiko et al. (2024), further mentions that many of the lecturers particularly in private universities still do not have the required academic qualifications.

These mentioned practices, especially when driven by recommendations from higher authorities rather than merit, create perceptions of favoritism that negatively affect staff morale, commitment and overall performance. This environment weakens adherence to established standards.

Relatedly, according to qualifications of staff, NCHE stipulated 60% of PhD holders as ideal, 50% as good and 15-50% as acceptable; for Masters holders, 70% or more of staff was ideal, 60% good and 50% acceptable; this was found wanting, this is in consonance with Kuria et al., 2012 as cited in Baiko et al., (2024) who found out that in East Africa, inadequate number of senior academic staff among other challenges was found to be one of the problems facing universities in the region. In the same statutory instrument mentioned above, the percentage of part timers was stated 20% of staff as ideal, 30% as good and 35% as acceptable.

However, the ratio of academic staff members on full-time basis versus the ratio of academic staff on part-time employment contravened the NCHE set standards and this compromised the quality of academic services delivered. This concurs with Tibarimbasa (2010, as cited in Biako et al., 2024) who noted that private universities depended majorly on part-time lecturers to reduce on costs because they are only paid when they are on session compared to full-time lecturers who receive monthly pay.

This staffing pattern undermines the quality of instruction, as part -time lecturers often have limited availability for curriculum implementation, student consultation mentoring and assessment follow-up. The overreliance on part-time staff also constrains the use of innovative and learner-centered teaching methods; lectures are less interacted into institutional pedagogical planning and quality assurance

processes. Consequently, learner engagement is reduced and sustained academic support for students becomes limited which compromises the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

### **Lecturer-Student Ratios**

Findings further revealed a number of gaps with regard to NCHE standards for the overall lecturer-student ratio and percentages of full/part time lecturers that was expected on ground. For instance, section 126 of the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 as amended in 2006 and NCHE statutory instrument No. 80 of 2005 stipulated the general teaching staff/student ratios expected to be adhered to as thus; 1:15 students - ideal, 1:25 students - good and 1:30 students as acceptable. In reality, in these selected private Universities in Western Uganda, a lecturer was assigned to teach about 100 students or more which was way beyond the NCHE standard. Findings by Kwesiga (2013), and NCHE (2011, as cited in Baiko et al., 2024) are in agreement, they stated that several universities in Uganda are still characterized by high lecturer-student ratios. This contradicts findings by Ifeoma (2013), who noted that for quality teaching and learning to be realised, the class size must accommodate effective teacher-student interaction.

These ratios significantly undermine quality teaching and learning, as lecturers are constrained in their ability to employ interactive and learner-centred teaching methods. Large class sizes limit meaningful learner engagement, reduce opportunities for individualized feedback and encourage reliance on lecture-dominated approaches. Consequently, student participation, continuous assessment and timely academic support are compromised, which may adversely affect student learning outcomes and overall academic achievement.

### **Rewards for Teaching Innovativeness**

Findings revealed that with teaching and learning, some lecturers were trying to be innovative for instance some were using online, blended instructional methods. However, some respondents revealed that some lecturers in these selected private universities in Western Uganda were still stuck to the traditional methods of teaching and lacked innovativeness; moreover, no incentives were awarded for innovation in teaching. This contravened recommendations of previous scholars Rice and Austin (1993, as cited in Obwogi, 2011) who asserted that it's every university's central goal to commit to high quality teaching; this needs to be expressed in the way which members of the teaching staff are evaluated and rewarded, formal and informal awards for outstanding teaching serve as strong incentives. This concurs with the study carried out by Adanne (2023, as cited in Injikuru et al., 2024) at the university of Abuja that found out that staff value recognition and support from supervisors, or else they will be demotivated from fulfilling their roles effectively. Therefore, encouraging and rewarding effective teaching methods may support better the quality of instruction and enhance student engagement.

### **Community Engagement Initiatives**

Results revealed that there were programs and initiatives focusing on community engagements and internship, and collaborations with other institutions and organisations. In these selected private universities in Western Uganda, there were MoUs signed for community engagement; there was evidence of community participation in university activities. However, more responses revealed more need for this engagement. This concurs with the findings of previous scholars, for example Kisambira and Babirye (2024), who asserted that community engagement has been

seen as more difficult, more expensive, and potentially undermining traditional forms of knowledge and instruction, despite its enormous value to both the institution and the community. As a result, community involvement programs have not received much institutional or financial backing. Yet, NCHE statutory instrument No. 34 of 2008 section 3.2.5 stipulates the need for knowledge creation, community engagement activities among others.

The above mentioned contravene studies by Alabi et al. (2018), and Hiire et al. (2020), who noted that if education should transform the people and have a positive effect on the community in which it exists, there should always be creation of new knowledge as well as advancement in knowledge. In consonance, Bowman (2023 and Janke et al. 2023, cited in Injikuru et al., 2024) argue that universities are increasingly expected to engage with their communities and demonstrate social responsibility; community service in academia should be highly valued, they asserted.

Related to the above, Araya-Pizarro and Verelst (2023), and Mann and Bowen (2021), among others concur that student' engagement in community-based activities improves educational results. In consonance, Muwanguzi et al. (2023), has asserted that community engagement assists in developing projects that allow the student to experience learning, inquire and reflect. Through community engagement projects, students engage with the community through inquiry-based learning, where academics give them a significant amount of autonomy and independence; this approach encourages co-learning, co-researching and co-inquiring as indicated by Nkonki (2023) in agreement.

This is a major concern because community engagement is not just an optional activity, it is a key component of meaningful teaching and learning. This opportunity empowers students to apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations, increases their engagement and enhances the overall effectiveness of teaching and learning.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of this study; about the contribution of accreditation of study programs to implementation of teaching and learning, the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning, the contribution of internal monitoring/evaluation procedures to implementation of teaching and learning and the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning.

#### 6.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that academic program accreditation plays a critical role in shaping the effective implementation of teaching and learning in higher education institutions. Adherence to accreditation standards during program implementation was found to be central to ensuring curriculum coherence, appropriate pedagogical practices and adequate learning resources, all of which directly influence the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes. The findings suggest that when accreditation requirements are systematically integrated into day-to-day teaching and learning processes, universities are better positioned to deliver programs that are responsive to national development needs and global academic expectations.

Also, the findings indicate that staff professional development strategies in the sampled private universities were largely inadequate in equipping lecturers with the requisite pedagogical expertise, innovative capacity, professional skills and a positive academic mindset necessary for high-quality teaching and learning. In several instances, institutional guidelines and practices governing academic staff were perceived as limiting lecturer autonomy and creativity; and consequently constraining the development of a supportive teaching and learning environment.

Although these selected private universities in Western Uganda had established policies and procedures related to academic staff welfare, including provisions for professional development and competence enhancement, the effectiveness of enforcing and operationalizing these policies remained limited. This undermined the creation of a collegial organizational culture that promotes professional growth and instructional excellence. As a result, teaching and learning practices did not consistently translate into meaningful improvements in student learning outcomes. The study therefore underscores the critical role of institutional leadership in fostering an enabling organizational culture that supports staff development and pedagogical innovation, which are essential in effective implementation of teaching and learning for a globalized knowledge-based economy.

Also, the study concluded that internal monitoring and evaluation is central to the effective implementation of teaching and learning in higher education institutions. When adequately applied, these processes support continuous improvement in instructional practices and student learning outcomes by ensuring that teaching resources, academic procedures and support systems are systematically reviewed.

However, the findings reveal that adherence to internal quality assurance standards remains inadequate. Moderate monitoring of instructional practices, assessment processes, lecturer and student engagement, departmental operations, facilities and equipment and limited investment in instructional resources compromises effective learner engagement. As a result, teaching and learning is often implemented without sufficient evidence-based reflection and improvement. Therefore, internal monitoring and evaluation must be integrated with strategic planning and targeted resource allocation to strengthen instructional quality and student engagement. Without such commitment, private universities risk falling short of their mandate to contribute to meaningful teaching and learning.

The study concluded that private universities largely relied on compliance with NCHE external assessment standards in the implementation of teaching and learning. It further highlights the need for a progressive shift from a compliance-oriented approach to one that promotes regular participation and the creation of a supportive policy environment. Such an environment would strengthen institutional internal monitoring and evaluation of instructional processes and foster continuous self-improvement, which constitutes a critical foundation in management of quality standards for effective NCHE external assessment.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Issues of quality teaching and learning in higher institutions of learning are increasingly gaining a significant focus of attention as the demand for expertise and abilities grows in this increasingly globalized, technology-based economy.

Universities should have a suitable long-term plan on requirements for accepting large numbers of students and systems in place, encourage and uphold teaching methodologies that meet the demands of high student ratios for instance, peer learning groups to enhance exposure through student-led study sessions, participatory teaching strategies such as the utilization of case studies, problem-based learning, student' group work, field-based learning experiences, student-centered strategies among others.

Universities should incorporate activity based and contextual-related learning approaches such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) into curriculum development and implementation procedures to actively engage students with real-world problems, where lectures are paused for problem-solving to meet the demands of high student ratios. This can be utilized through methodologies like simulations with realistic hands on experiences, project-based learning among others. This enhances real-life oriented teaching methodologies and promotes real world problem solving skills and reasoning, team work and collaboration, communication, presentation and research, critical thinking, life-long learning habits; this bridges theory with practice in situation-related experiences.

Relatedly, another teaching methodology that should be encouraged among others is competency-based learning where universities need to focus on real-world skills to enable students demonstrate mastery of specific skills and knowledge. This promotes life-long learning and practical application of knowledge.

Private Universities need to establish a specialized committee to review the formulated measurable student learning outcomes (SLOs) in order to create an outcome-based monitoring and evaluation system. These learning outcomes need to

be connected to students' demonstration of knowledge, expertise, abilities, and values in meaningful contexts; and create a variety of direct and indirect means of authentic assessment to determine mastery of a variety of competencies. Authentic assessment procedures can include, performance, collaborative assessments and self-assessment and reflection among others. The faculty should then demonstrate consistency of course outcomes with program outcomes, instructional techniques, and assessment procedures.

In relation to the above, private universities need to set up a committee for revising coursework plans for the programs and their implementation not simply to engage students in theoretical courseworks but also to encompass each of the courseworks measured against achievable student' learning outcomes needed for the students' future career path. They should also enhance performance assessments by evaluating students' skills and abilities by observing them in action like experiments, oral examinations and other performance hence focusing on practical application. Oral examinations will help in students' self-assessment and reflection, students will assess their own learning progress and reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and areas of improvement; this will help them to take ownership of their learning. Collaborative assessments should also be encouraged where students work in groups on a project to it's completion and present it's findings.

Again, universities in the East African region should establish a qualification framework which would harmonize student' admission requirements across the region and regulation of programs in the East African countries in order to realize greater achievements (Knight, 2013; Nkunya, 2011). This would help universities in the region to admit students with almost similar requirements/qualifications and

competences across the region (IUCEA, 2011). The Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) should likewise put measures in existence to check qualifications for academic staff across the region.

There is need to enhance regional and international comparability of the quality standards of teaching and learning procedures provided in the region (Friend-Pereira, et al., 2002). This will be realized through establishing an East African credit transfer system to facilitate and harmonize teaching and learning quality standards and systems in the region (IUCEA, 2011). This would enable students transfer across universities in the region for one reason or the other during their study period.

Universities need to boost their human resources by hiring more experienced academics and increasing staff professional development programs, which should increase efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and methods of teaching that address teaching effectiveness needs; the academic staff must have pedagogical training. The Universities need to have clear guidelines on professional training for the academic staff and should aim at continuously training them in relevant areas of competency-based teaching methodologies.

Private universities need to establish a long-lasting, recognized neutral committee to regulate and investigate academic staff with regard to welfare proceedings.

The NCHE ought to motivate all private universities to conduct rigorous peer reviews of their academic personnel using avenues within each university to guarantee a merit-based promotion of academic staff. Furthermore, stakeholders of these universities need to establish a culture of institutional professionalism, quality and commitment by implementing open and transparent promotion policies. Any

academic promotions in the faculty must be openly announced for purposes of rewarding excellent performers. This will enhance quality teaching and learning.

Another issue in quality teaching is the need to motivate academic staff for teaching excellence to promote better results of student' learning strategies and graduate output. Quite often, in higher institutions of learning, lecturers who use innovative methods in teaching are not rewarded. Teaching excellence would have been re-weighted for some rewards as highlighted by (Alabi et al., 2018). For instance, becoming a Professor in Uganda and other academic promotions rely largely on research publications; it often down plays other factors such as innovativeness in teaching, students' lecturer evaluation results, lecturer' evaluation by supervisor among others.

There is need to train lecturers in innovative approaches to teaching large classes (Osman & Hornsby, 2014 as cited in Kidega et al., 2023). This calls for lecturers' re-orientation to participatory teaching strategies such as the utilization of case studies, problem-based learning, student' group work, field-based learning experiences, student-centered strategies among others.

Universities need to encourage the lecturers to gradually and cautiously roll out the integration of AI tools in their teaching and student' personalized learning experiences. It influences the way students learn and interact as highlighted by (Mwima Ivan, UCU guild president, 2024) on LinkedIn. AI can be used to create interactive lessons, group sessions across the world, provide real-time feedback, and personalize learning paths to individual student needs through boosting student engagement, creativity and achievement, develop real-world skills and enhance teaching methods. It also plays a vital role in equipping students with essential skills

of problem-solving, critical thinking and digital among others. However, some studies have raised concerns about its academic integrity and potential misuse.

With a proper university internal monitoring and evaluation system in place, universities should identify developmental needs, equip students with appropriate skills relevant to emerging societal needs, adequate and transferable knowledge and skills as pointed out by (IUCEA, 2011; Henard & Roseveare, 2012); focusing on continuous improvement. In relation to this, universities need to establish a well-developed assessment plan of what students are able to do for their life-long self-directed learning.

There is a demand for ongoing and continued dedication to research and development. African universities need a larger base of continuing, long-range academic research programs in areas that interface with the needs and priorities of the productive sector (Ozor, 2016).

Again, the Universities' M&E framework and guidelines need to be continually revisited to correspond to emerging trends and demands of student-centered, competence-based teaching and learning, aiming at solving societal emerging issues and problems. This will reduce on these institutions' compliance tendencies to collaborative and performance-based M&E, and will promote the growth and development of institutional internal monitoring and evaluation procedures designed to foster an environment that encourages continuous self-improvement.

In an effort to foster a quality culture in higher education, relevant stakeholders ought to be identified and consulted on implementation of development initiatives to ensure that various points of view and needs are integrated. Such stakeholders include the students, teaching and non-teaching staff members, governing

board/council members, local leaders, local authorities, opinion leaders (who may include religious leaders, traditional leaders and retired public officers), Civil Society Organisations and community members as highlighted by (World Bank, 2002; Kisige et al., 2021).

Again, Thune, 1998 as cited in Victoria, 2005 ascertains that if stakeholders should play a significant part in quality assurance procedures, the question remains, to what extent should they get involved and what implications could this have on the institutions and within quality assurance systems themselves.

Universities must strive to implement the required reforms that would enhance the connection of university education to the productive sector in Uganda. These improvements include;

- (i) Improved communication between universities and the productive sector.
- (ii) Implementation of programs which build or boost institutional capacity in universities and the productive sector.
- (iii) Industrial related research and education systems.

Relatedly, Hayward (2006); Eryenyu et al., (2024) asserted that, if quality assurance is to be carried out effectively, those involved in it's implementation must see it as an important aspect in their daily operations and use it to impart critical information to higher education institutions.

Waruru (2013) heightens that universities must end the blame game and start engaging the business sector to explore areas of cooperation and establish viable linkages that could result in both parties gaining from a symbiotic relationship. Additionally, he believes that universities can profit from collaborative research

with the private sector which might then help universities fine-tune the programs to match contextual societal demands.

In addition, the methods of teaching ought to incorporate an appropriate balance between real-life experience and theory; for instance, students are required to be involved in early community engagements and other situation-related exposures to identify problems and devise remedies to address those problems. This kind of training enables students to be more practical and to apply their talents in the learning procedures. In addition, the relevancy of academic programs to these community engagements should be considered.

Universities should establish robust institutional systems and mechanisms to ensure continuous adherence to the standards and guidelines governing the operation of universities in Uganda. In addition, institutions should be formally obligated to prepare and submit comprehensive annual compliance and performance reports to the NCHE, as a means of strengthening accountability, monitoring quality assurance processes and promoting sustained improvement in teaching and learning.

Governing boards should increase budget for expansion of infrastructure and facilities to enhance quality strategies and procedures. The existing teaching facilities for instance lecture rooms, library facilities including e-resources as well as their status were found wanting. With the daily growth of student numbers, it is important to provide additional facilities for libraries, e-learning platforms, lecture rooms, spaces for recreation, and services for students with special needs, modern laboratory equipment and increased access to internet facilities among others.

As echoed by Muganga et al., (2024), private universities should maintain a solid adherence to their ideological orientations, as this would allow them to regain the

trust and support of a significant portion of their clientele. Giving considerable attention and consideration to adhering to the university's mission and vision is crucial. In so doing, private universities can effectively uphold their established objectives without any deviations.

The NCHE needs to reevaluate its accreditation process and should not tolerate institutions that fail to meet set standards. Evaluations need to be conducted on an annual or periodic basis. Moreover, if quality teaching and learning is to be assured, political influences or considerations should not be a factor in accreditation and assessment processes.

#### Suggestions for further research

- Relationship of curriculum evaluation and review and socio-economic development.
- Impact of lecturer's peer evaluation on student's learning experiences and lecturers' performance
- Harmonising higher education quality standards and systems at regional level: An emphasis on student's transfer credit system.
- Effect of universities' involvement in the productive sector on teaching and learning.
- Contribution of harmonizing education stakeholders' participation to quality education.
- Effect of student's problem based learning approaches on teaching and learning in universities.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR 8 UNIVERSITY NON-TEACHING MANAGEMENT STAFF

#### Objective 1 - Explore the contribution of Accreditation of Study Programs to teaching and learning

1. (a) Are all educational programs offered at this university always first accredited by NCHE before their implementation in class?

(b) If not, mention atleast two scenarios when you have implemented programs before their accreditation.

2. According to your understanding is there any contribution of the process of accreditation of academic programs to teaching and learning at this university. If yes, state at least five contributions.

3. a) Elaborate more about the standards/ requirements for accreditation of different study programs offered at this University.

b) Do you find any challenges to implement the guidelines for accreditation of academic programs? If yes, mention at least 3 of them.

4. Explain the procedures taken at the university to ensure study program readiness for accreditation.

5. a) How often do you evaluate the accredited study programs in relation to their relevance to the needs of the community?

b) How often do you review these academic programs?

6. Do you have any collaboration with professional bodies? If yes, which collaborations and how do they enable you to meet the mission and strategies of the university to offer quality teaching and learning?

**Objective 2 - Explore how the quality of teaching staff affect teaching and learning**

7. (a) What is the quality of the teaching staff at this university? Talk about their level of education, teaching experience, research experience and level of professionalism.

(b) How are academic staff welfare procedures always handled in terms of recruitment procedures?

8. In your understanding, what is the effect of quality of teaching staff on teaching and learning?

9. Do students take part in evaluating academic staff? If yes elaborate how?

10. Do you have in place of a plan for training the teaching staff?

If yes;

How often is it done?

What are the procedures involved?

11. Do you have a staff development program in place?

If yes, how is it implemented?

**Objective 3 - Investigate how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to teaching and learning**

12. Are stakeholders usually consulted during the planning/budgeting process? If yes, in what ways is the procedure done?

13. How do monitoring/evaluation procedures prepare students to perform better in their learning?

14. How do you perceive procedures of teaching and learning? What are the indicators of performance improvement in relation to teaching and learning?

15. How do you monitor teaching and learning to realize the learning outcomes during the students' course of study?

16. Do you have functional academic and examination regulations and guidelines? Give some highlights of the key components.

17. How are resources (financial resources, equipment and materials), a challenge to realize the implementation of quality assurance practices at this university?

18. Mention at least four ways how internal monitoring/evaluation has contributed to teaching and learning in reference to NCHE guidelines?

19. In what ways are the following facilities monitored for effective teaching and learning? a) Library

b) Lecture space

c) Laboratories

d) Computer laboratories, and area for expansion

e) Office space (Administrative and Academic)

f) Student' Welfare and Accommodation.

**Objective 4 - Explore the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning**

20. How often does NCHE visit this university to do monitoring and evaluation?
21. Briefly talk about atleast 5 NCHE external quality assurance standards which must be complied with by universities according to NCHE in Uganda.
22. Mention atleast four (4) ways in which the university has tried to comply with the standards listed above.
23. What challenges have you met in trying to comply with the standards if any?
24. What is the effect of NCHE external assessment on teaching and learning?
25. What is being done by this university to ensure quality of teaching and learning in relation to external assessment?
26. As a university, do you make reports to NCHE? If yes, how often and of what kind?
27. Do you have a mechanism in place for following up teaching and learning procedures in your institution? If yes, how do you do it and how often is it done?
28. Do you have NCHE assessment tools in place? Please, elaborate more on them.

## **APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR 6 TEACHING ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF FROM TWO SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

### **Objective 1 - Explore the contribution of Accreditation of Study Programs to Teaching and Learning**

1. Have you at any one time taught non-accredited study programs here at this university? If yes, of what effect is it to the students?
2. How often does the university re-evaluate strategies, methodologies and learning outcomes used in the learning process? Of what effect is this process?
3. Do you prepare students before you commence teaching? If yes, elaborate how you do it in relation to program accreditation standards.
4. a) What is the contribution of accreditation of study programs to teaching and learning in relation university goal and mission?  
  
b) Do you meet any challenges to meet program accreditation standards? If yes, please, mention at least four (4) of them.
5. How do you rate the implementation of teaching and learning so far in relation to the objectives and learning outcomes of accredited programs?

### **Objective 2 - Explore how the quality of teaching staff affect implementation of teaching and learning**

6. What is the quality of the teaching staff in your department at this university? Talk about their level of education, teaching experience, research experience and level of professionalism.

7. What is the teacher/student ratio in comparison to National Council for Higher Education standards?

8. In your understanding, what is the effect of quality of teaching staff on teaching and learning in your faculty/department?

9. (a) How do you rate the number of academic staff involved in research and publication?

(b) Of what effect is this to teaching and learning procedures?

10. Are there some members of staff in your department involved in teaching courses they did not specialize in? if yes, how does this affect the students?

11. Do students take part in evaluation of academic staff? If yes elaborate how and how often?

12. Do you have academic staff welfare procedures in place? Please, elaborate more.

13. Does the teaching staff report any challenges encountered during their work? If yes, through what channels and how is this addressed?

14. a) How often do you organize trainings/refresher courses for the academic staff in your department?

b) Of what impact are these trainings/refresher courses to their performance?

15. Does the teaching staff usually apply innovative methods in the teaching and learning process? If yes in what ways?

**Objective 3 - Investigate how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to implementation of teaching and learning**

16. What is being done by this university to ensure quality of teaching and learning?

17. (a) Does the teaching and learning, as evidenced by papers, course examinations, comprehensive examinations, and these or other projects indicate satisfactory preparation in the discipline?

(b) What are the indicators used to measure this?

(c) Does it explore any other student' competencies apart from class work? If yes, elaborate more.

18. Please assess the effectiveness of student participation in the academic life of the program, including undergraduate research/ internship and other opportunities for student/faculty collaborative work.

19. How do you perceive implementation of teaching and learning? Mention atleast four (4) indicators that show this has been successfully realised?

20. Do you have external examiners? If yes, how often do they interact with the department and what assessments do they make?

21. Do the programs on ground effectively monitor students' academic progress? If yes, how?

22. What efforts are being made to create an intellectual and social climate that fosters student development and learning (e.g. clubs, student chapters of professional organizations, etc.)?

23. Do you carry out self-assessment in your tasks as teaching staff? If yes, in what ways?

24. Do students evaluate the academic staff? If yes, how often? How often do you give students feedback?

25. Do you engage students in any other activities out of class? If yes;

a) Please describe them.

b) How do they impact on their teaching and learning?

26. What is the contribution of internal monitoring/evaluation procedures to teaching and learning?

**Objective 4 - Explore the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning**

27. In your own words, mention atleast four (4) external quality assurance practices and standards you are engaged in?

28. What is the effect of external assessment on teaching and learning procedures?

29. Are members of staff involved/ consulted in NCHE quality assurance external assessment practices? If yes, in what ways?

30. Do the programs you teach provide a rich learning experience and distinctive education in the discipline? Does it prepare students to make a real contribution to society? If yes, in what ways.

31. What external quality assurance standards do you observe meeting in the process of teaching students at this university, and how do you do it?

32. (a) What are the NCHE expectations about the teaching and learning processes?

(b) In what ways do you try to meet these expectations?

33. Do you give reports to NCHE with regard to practices on ground adhering to NCHE requirements? How do you do it and how often?

34. Do you have a staff union in place? If yes, how is it recognized by university authorities?

### **APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR 26 FINAL YEAR STUDENTS**

#### **Objective 1 - Exploring the contribution of Accreditation of Study Programs to Implementation of Teaching and Learning**

1. What is the importance of studying accredited study programs at your university?
2. a) Have you been so far exposed to learning experiences beyond the classroom? If yes, in what ways?  
  
b) During your time of study, do you find any challenges with how the academic programs are delivered? If yes, please, elaborate about these challenges.
3. What is the admission criteria used by this university? During your time of admissions, did you find a scenario of students joining your program with low grades? If yes, elaborate more.
4. During the course of your studies, have you been communicated to about the expected learning outcomes of the program you pursued? If yes, was it helpful in any way? If yes, how?

#### **Objective 2 - Explore how the quality of teaching staff affect implementation of teaching and learning**

5. During the time of your studies at university, would you get cases of lecturers who had the same qualifications like the students they were teaching? If yes, comment more about it.
6. Do you hear of cases of lecturers who do research work for students in exchange for money? If yes, comment more about it.

7. Do lecturers attend to their lectures regularly? If no, how often do they attend to you and how does this affect the performance of students?

8. What is the effect of quality of teaching staff in teaching and learning?

9. Have you come across scenarios where some lecturers sexually harass students at the university? If yes, in what ways?

10. Do some lecturers and students engage in the selling and purchasing of marks? If yes, give details.

b) How does this affect the teaching and learning process?

**Objective 3 - Investigate how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to implementation of teaching and learning**

11. In what ways is your university promoting quality of teaching and learning?

12. Have you been involved in monitoring and evaluating different activities at your university? If so, mention atleast four (4) ways how you have been involved.

13. Have you encountered a scenario where some of your fellow students copy examinations? If yes, what happens when one was caught cheating examinations?

14. Do you have a students' appeals procedure in place in case a student wants to appeal? If yes, how is it handled?

15. What is the contribution of internal monitoring/evaluation to teaching and learning?

16. Is there a class attendance policy at your university? If yes, elaborate its main provisions.

17. Is there an examination malpractice policy? If yes, give its main provisions.
18. How are you comparing knowledge and skills you have acquired from your university with field practice during internship placements?
19. How often do your lecturers prepare you for field work practices?
20. What lessons have you learnt while at campus and ready to carry along with you after this final year?
21. What challenges do you encounter during the teaching and learning process?
22. Do you find what you learnt at campus relevant to what you are practice when you go for internship or field work practices? If yes, please, elaborate more.
23. What advice would you give to the university on areas of improvement in promoting quality teaching and learning?
24. According to your assessment, what skills, knowledge and competencies do students lack to perform better? How would you advise universities to address this challenge?

**Objective 4 -Explore the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning**

25. How often has NCHE so far visited your campus during your time of studies?
26. Of what effect is external assessment on teaching and learning?
27. Do you have a student union in place? If yes in what ways is it recognized by the university authorities?

## **APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR 2 QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICERS FROM TWO SELECTED PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES**

**Objective 1 - To explore the contribution of Accreditation of Study Programs to Implementation of Teaching and Learning.**

1. What quality assurance measures do you have in place for accrediting study programs?

2. Do you think student' needs have been catered for in relation to the objectives and learning outcomes of the programs at this university? Please, elaborate more.

3. Do lecturers discuss with students about the learning outcomes and competencies expected of them during the teaching and learning process? If yes, please elaborate more.

4. What is the contribution of accredited programs to implementation of teaching and learning?

5. a) What is the admission criteria used by this university? Do all students admitted to programs of study meet the minimum requirements to join these programs? If no, elaborate more.

b) Are students from other universities free to transfer to your university during their course of study? Please, elaborate more on requirements for credit transfers.

**Objective 2 - Explore how the quality of teaching staff affect implementation of teaching and learning**

6. What quality assurance measures do you have in place for the selection and recruitment of the right academic staff?

7. Do you have cases of lecturers whose qualifications are of the same level as their students? If yes, comment more about it.

8. Have you heard of cases where lecturers sexually harass students at this university? If yes, elaborate more.

9. Have you had cases where lecturers and students here engage in selling and purchasing of marks? If yes, give details.

10. Do you have cases of lecturers who do research for students in exchange for money? If yes, comment more about it.

11. Do lecturers attend to their lectures regularly? If no, how often do they attend to students and what are the remedies to this practice?

12. Do students sign lecture attendance sheets? What happens when a lecturer does not attend to a class? How is it monitored?

13. What is the effect of quality of teaching staff on implementation of teaching and learning?

14. Do you give students an opportunity to evaluate the academic staff? If yes, how is it done and how often? Do students get any feedback? If yes, how is it done?

15. What programs have been put in place with regard to staff development?

16. Do you submit reports to NCHE about staff development and other procedures/requirements? If yes, how often?

**Objective 3 - Investigate how internal monitoring and evaluation procedures contribute to implementation of teaching and learning**

17. What is being done by this university to promote quality of teaching and learning?
18. Do you have class attendance policy at this university? If yes, elaborate its main provisions.
19. Do you have examination malpractice policy? If yes, give its main provisions.
20. How do you perceive teaching and learning procedures at this university? What are the indicators of quality teaching and learning?
21. Have you had some cases of your students copying during examinations? If yes, what are measures put in place when one is caught cheating examinations?
22. Have you had some cases of students at this university hiring mercenaries to sit exams or write dissertations for students? If yes, is there any control measure to stop the vice?
23. Do you have a students' appeals procedure in place? If yes how does it address their issues?
24. Is there a system in place for consulting the teaching staff during the development and implementation of QA guidelines?, if yes, elaborate more?
25. How do you assess whether what is being taught to students is relevant to their career path?
26. In what ways are the following facilities monitored for effective teaching and learning?
  - a) Library
  - b) Lecture space
  - c) Laboratories

d) Computer laboratories, and area for expansion,

e) Office space (Administrative and Academic)

f) Student' Welfare and Accommodation.

27. Do you assess any other university programs /activities? If yes, please mention them and how is it done?

28. How often do students go for field work practice/ internship? How is this monitored in relation to expected learning outcomes?

(a) How has it been done?

29. What practical skills/ competencies do quality assurance monitoring tools address?

30. What is the contribution of monitoring/evaluation to implementation of teaching and learning?

31. How are different units of the university monitored in relation to achieving the students learning outcomes?

32. Do you involve academic staff in monitoring and evaluation? If yes, in what ways do you involve them?

b) What recommendations do you give on academic staff involvement in evaluation procedures of the university?

**Objective 4 - Explore the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards in implementation of teaching and learning**

33. Do you enlighten students about external assessment practices? Please, elaborate more about this.

34. What is the effect of NCHE external assessment on management of standards to ensure quality teaching and learning?

35. What are the NCHE external assessment practices and procedures is your university trying to adhere to?

36. How often do you make reports to NCHE with regard to compliance with guidelines and procedures and what is expected on ground?

(b) How is it done?

37. Do you think external assessment has an effect on teaching and learning practices? If yes, please, elaborate more.

## APPENDIX V: OBSERVATION GUIDE

	Observable items	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good
1	Conditions of lecture space				
2	Current conditions of library facilities				
3	Availability of teaching aids in lecture rooms				
4	Availability of safety facilities for students with disabilities				
5	Status of the science laboratories				
6	Status of computer labs				
7	Availability of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)				
8	Conditions of students' hostels				
9	Conditions of university structures				
10	Campus ambiance				
11	Availability of Co-curricular activities				
12	Availability of Clubs/Associations				
13	Alumni Association on ground				
14	Evidence of convocation proceedings				
15	Evidence of staff/student union				
16	Evidence of student' appeals procedure				

## APPENDIX VI: STUDY BUDGET

Item	Description	Quantity	Unit cost	Amount
<b>A: Stationary</b>				
Books	A4 Counter Books	6	5,000/=	30,000/=
Pens	Water Proof Pens	6	10,000/=	60,000/=
	Ordinary Pens	2 Packets	5,000/=	10,000/=
	Markers	1 Packet	20,000/=	20,000/=
File Folders	Plastic Files	30	3,000/=	90,000/=
Charts	Flip charts	6	20,000/=	120,000/=
Printing/Photo copying	Assorted			2,000,000/=
<i>Sub-Total</i>				<b>2,330,000/=</b>
<b>B: Consumables</b>				
Water	Cartons	1	10,000/=*2days*6 Divisions  =120,000/=	120,000/=
Biscuits	Cartons	1	10,000/=*2days*6 Divisions  =120,000/=	120,000/=

Meals	Breakfast & Supper	Lunch	Research Assistants (4)	30,000/= * 2 days * 6 Divisions = 960,000/=	1,440,000/=
<i>Sub-Total</i>					1,680,000
<b>C: Field Trips</b>					
Transport	Fuel for 12 trips		50 litres	4,000/=	2,400,000/=
Facilitation	Subsistence trip (12)	@	Research Assistants (4)	50,000/=	2,400,000/=
Hiring Venue	Conferences		6	100,000/=	600,000/=
<i>Sub-Total</i>					5,400,000/=
<i>Total</i>					9,410,000/=
<i>Contingency</i>				5%	470,500/=
<i>Add: Tuition</i>			7,322,000 p.a.	7,322,000 x 3	27,966,000
<i>Grand Total</i>					37,840,500/=

Source: Researcher, 2021

## APPENDIX VII: STUDY WORK PLAN/SCHEDULE

	Task	Start Period	Times in Weeks	Period Completed	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
1.	Literature Study	June	5	July	↔			
2.	Finalizing research problem	August	3	September	↔			
3.	Planning research Design	October	3	November	↔			
4.	Compiling a research proposal	January	4	April		↔		
5.	Further literature studies	May	3	June		↔		
6.	Write chapter 2	July	3	September		↔		
7.	Write chapter 3	October	3	November		↔		

8.	Analyse literature work	January	4	March			↔	
9.	Write chapter 4	April	3	June			↔	
10.	Design solution to research problem	July	2	August			↔	
11.	Write chapter 5	September	4	November			↔	
12.	Write an academic paper 1	October	2	November			↔	
13.	Review & edit draft chapters	January	4	March				↔
14.	Write an academic paper 2	April	4	May				↔
15.	Review & edit draft chapters	June	3	August				↔

16.	Write an academic paper 3	July	2	August				↔
17.	Finalise thesis	September	4	October				↔
18.	Proof reading	November	3					↔
19.	Correct Mistakes	December	3					↔
20.	Hand thesis in for examination	December	2					↔

## **APPENDIX VIII: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Title of Research: Quality Assurance Practices and Implementation of Teaching and Learning in Selected Private Universities in Western Uganda.

Principle Investigator: Namara Mable; Tel. contact +256-775429700

Affiliated to Uganda Christian University, Department of Education P.O Box 4, Mukono, Uganda.

### **1. Introduction and Purpose of the Study**

This study is being conducted to explore quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in selected private universities in Western Uganda. The general objective of this study is to explore the outcomes of quality assurance practices in implementation of teaching and learning. The information you give us, will be confidential and only used for purposes of this study. In the process of report writing, your name will never be used and so everything you tell us will remain anonymous. We shall ask questions exploring quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning in this university. If you do not want to respond to a particular question, you can simply say so, and we will not insist.

### **2. Description of the Research**

This is a Narrative research design of exploring quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning covering selected private universities in Western Uganda.

### **3. Subject Participation**

Participants will be non-teaching management staff, faculty deans, heads of departments, quality assurance officers, students in their final year of study.

#### **4. Potential Risks and Discomforts**

This is a survey involving two-way conversation between the researcher and the respondents on the contribution of accredited of programs, effect of quality of teaching staff, contribution of monitoring and evaluation and effect of external assessment on graduate performance.

Minimal risk is expected.

#### **5. Potential Benefits**

The findings will inform quality assurance officers in higher institutions of learning about the various strategies they would apply to ensure adequate assessment of instructors for quality teaching and learning.

#### **6. Confidentiality**

The information you give us, will be confidential and only used for purposes of this study. In the process of report writing, your name will never be used and so everything you tell us will remain anonymous. We shall ask questions exploring quality assurance practices and implementation of teaching and learning at this university. If you do not want to respond to a particular question, you can simply say so, and we will not insist.

Every participant will be asked to sign a written study informed consent form before participating in the study as this ensures voluntarism and acceptability to participate in the study.

## 7. Authorization

By signing this form, you will be authorizing us to use the information from this research; for example, for Education and evidence interventions to improve teaching and learning.

## 8. Participation

Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to not participate in this study, it will not affect your work in any way.

## 9. Withdrawal from the Study and/or Withdrawal of Authorization

As a participant in this study, you can withdraw at any point if you choose not to continue.

## 10. Whom to contact in case of ethical related concerns.

In case of any Ethical related concerns or inquiries, you can contact UCU-REC chairperson; Prof. Peter Waiswa on 0772 405 357, [pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug](mailto:pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug) or UCU-REC Secretariat, Mr. Osborn Ahimbisibwe on 0775737627 or [oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug](mailto:oahimbisibwe@ucu.ac.ug)

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research program; to tick appropriately

Yes

No.

I understand that I will be given a copy of this signed Consent Form.

Name of participant (Optional): .....

Signature	
-----------	--

Date: .....

Name of person obtaining consent .....

--	--

Date: .....

#### **APPENDIX IX: Uganda Data Collection COVID-19 Risk Management Plan**

In recognition that we remain in a global COVID-19 pandemic where the situation is still volatile and uncertain, data collection will proceed under strict COVID-19 risk management protocols as informed by the Uganda Ministry of Health, International Best Practice for Data collection and Uganda Christian University’s own data collection principles and standards. With respect to these sources of guidance, all data collection in Uganda will be done under the strict guidance and authority of Uganda Christian University leadership. Overall the approach will reflect an abundance of caution and it will be necessary to remain flexible in order to respond to changing circumstances as the global pandemic and local Uganda situation evolves.

Uganda Ministry of Health (MOH)

The MOH has encouraged people to stay safe. MOH has provided numerous guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Ugandans to follow as they go about the day-to-day activities in the current times to prevent Covid-19 infections. These guidelines cover a range of scenarios that are relevant to our context including workplace meetings, use of public transport, mass gathering (currently discouraged), and use of masks. All research team members and data collectors will be required to read and adhere to the relevant MOH guidelines. These are available at <https://www.health.go.ug/covid/project/guidelines/> and the most recent updates will be provided to all at data collector training.

### International Best Practice for Data Collection

The United Nations has established clear and comprehensive guidance on mitigating and managing the risk of COVID-19 transmission during field surveys, covering general principles, planning, field organization, fieldwork and post-field work. These categories of risk management form the framework for this research study risk management plan. Documentation is available at [https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/news/docs/COVID-19\\_TechnicalGNote\\_final.pdf](https://unstats.un.org/iswghs/news/docs/COVID-19_TechnicalGNote_final.pdf) and the most recent updates will be provided to all team members and data collectors.

### General Principles

Do no harm- Within the context of this general research principle, we will do all that is necessary to prevent and/or limit the transmission of COVID-19 amongst team members, field staff and survey participants and their families.

Minimise field data collection -we will only undertake field data collection that is absolutely necessary.

Clear Policies and Practices- we will ensure availability and training in high quality, timely and well-documented guidelines for safe data collection.

## Planning

Survey Flexibility- careful consideration will be given to ensure that the planned survey tools are flexible enough to be adjusted according to the local situation. This will involve ongoing review and prioritization of survey items to allow for the potential reduction and/or the introduction of questions relevant to the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

Assessing COVID-19 Situation- all planning will involve regular and timely assessment of the prevailing COVID-19 situation, at national and local levels (including intermediate places where travel through an area is required to reach a study site). All relevant advice from government, Uganda Christian University and local actors will be sought and applied to develop a realistic and conservative picture of the COVID-19 risk.

Decision-making-final decisions on whether or not to commence or halt data collection will be made collectively by a multi-disciplinary team comprising of Uganda Christian University leadership, The research Team and local study site leadership. The local study site leadership will be able to veto any decision by the team to commence data collection.

Budgeting-the study budget will be finalized based upon a COVID-19- safe data collection protocol and will include contingencies for additional COVID-19-safe costs such as additional time, extra transportation to ensure appropriate physical distancing and personal protective equipment.

## Field Organisation

Study site Orientation- university leaders & staff at each site selected to participate in the study will be given a virtual orientation on the requirements of the study, expectations for coordinating and managing COVID-19-safe logistics at their site during data collection.

Study site Management- coordination and management of surveys in COVID-19 safe conditions will follow the standard national and local government advice. Unless otherwise advised, this should include:

Avoiding overcrowding and body contact; all should keep at least 1.5 meters between each other.

Select appropriate interview locations that balance the need for privacy and COVID-19 safety. The ideal would be outdoors, but if indoors, adequate ventilation should be ensured.

All individuals participating should be temperature screened daily.

Anyone feeling generally unwell (fever, cough, etc.) should be excluded from participation.

All participants must be encouraged to wash and sanitize their hands on arrival for the meetings and as frequently as possible.

Meeting premises should be provided with adequate handwashing facilities with soap and water or alcohol-based gel (hand rub).

The interview areas should be kept clean and hygienic -clean all surfaces with disinfectant after each interview (soap and water or JIK) (e.g., chairs, desks and tables).

Ensure adequate waste management facilities (waste bins and bin-liners, cans).

Ensure availability of adequate personal protection equipment (eg masks).

## Field Work

### Enumerators

If appropriate and practical, wear a mask throughout the interview to protect all concerned.

Respect physical distancing by maintaining at least 1.5 meters between enumerator and interviewees at all times.

Carry out your own assessment of COVID-19 risk at the site for yourself and the interviewees.

Advise interviewees of the COVID-19 safe measures being taken and why.

Avoid handshakes or any physical contact with study site staff and interviewees.

Offer a mask to the interviewees.

Wash and sanitize hands and interview site (chair, doors, electronic tablets etc) between each interview.

Regularly monitor self for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, loss of taste and smell) and at least before and following site visits.

If symptoms of COVID-19 are experienced, the enumerator should be excluded from the site visit or interview and follow the country's health quarantine protocols.

If an interviewee displays symptoms of COVID-19 they should be excluded from interview and their supervisors advised through the study site leadership.

## Interviewees

Each interviewee should cover his/her mouth and nose with a tissue or a handkerchief when coughing and sneezing.

Ensure used tissues or masks are disposed of in a waste bin or a designated area where it can be safely disposed of.

Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after using the tissue or handkerchief .Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth always.

Avoid all physical contact including handshakes and hugging.

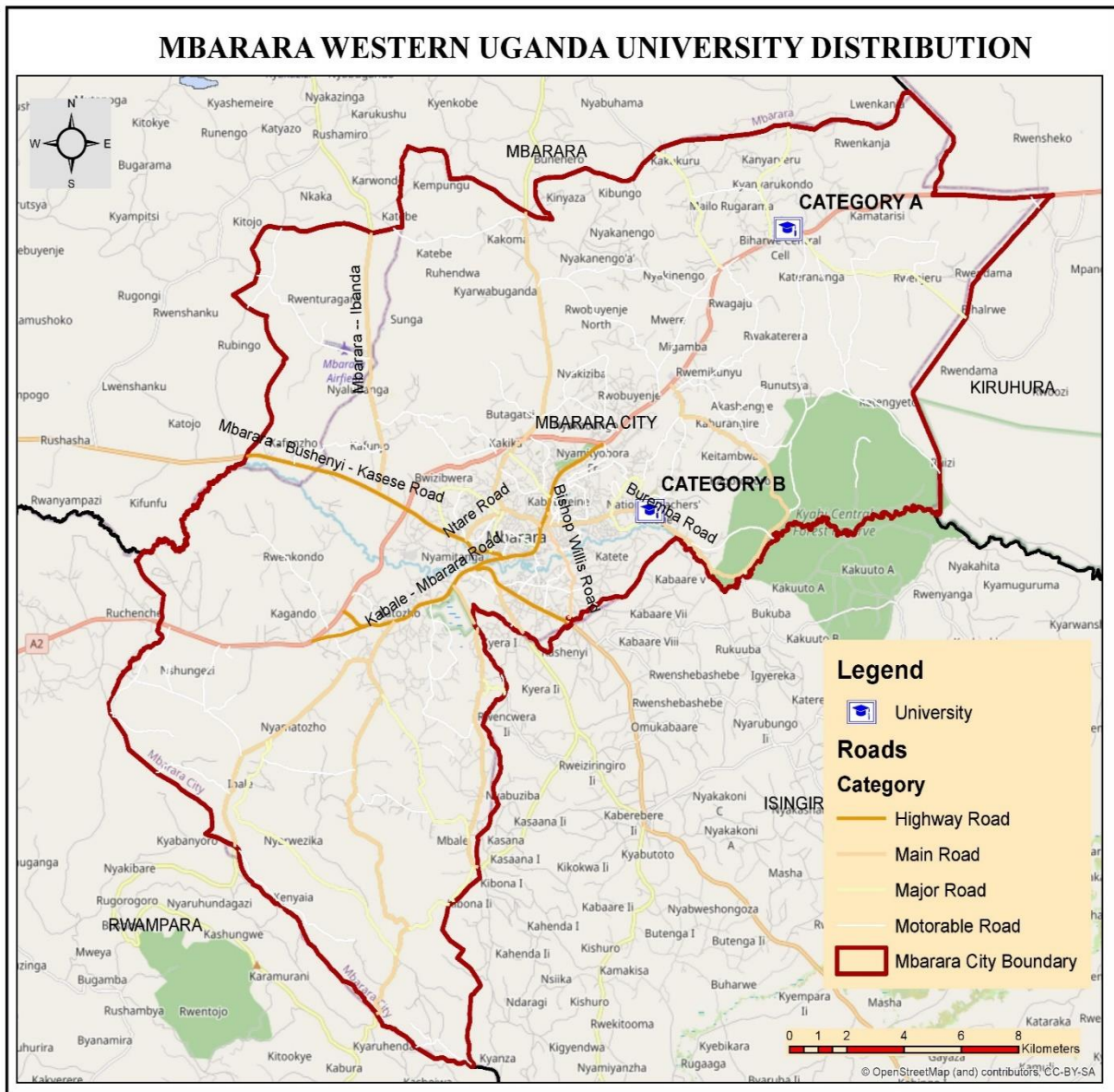
## Post-field Work

Maintain contact with enumerators and project site leadership for 2 weeks to monitor the health status of all involved in the study

Ensure contact tracing of all who had close contact with any COVID-19 positive individual(s)

Provide all necessary support to any who contracted COVID-19 as a result of participation in the study.

FIGURE 1:1 Map of the study area





## Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

*(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)*

Our Ref: SS2465ES

10 July 2025

Namara Mable  
Equator University of Science and technology  
Kabale

**Re: Research Approval: Assessment of Quality Assurance Practices on Performance of Graduates of selected Private Universities in Western Uganda**

I am pleased to inform you that on **10/07/2025**, the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) approved the above referenced research project. The Approval of the research project is for the period of **10/07/2025** to **10/07/2026**.

Your research registration number with the UNCST is **SS2465ES**. Please, cite this number in all your future correspondences with UNCST in respect of the above research project. As the Principal Investigator of the research project, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. Keeping all co-investigators informed of the status of the research.
2. Submitting all changes, amendments, and addenda to the research protocol or the consent form (where applicable) to the designated Research Ethics Committee (REC) or Lead Agency for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes. UNCST must be notified of the approved changes within five working days.
3. For clinical trials, all serious adverse events must be reported promptly to the designated local REC for review with copies to the National Drug Authority and a notification to the UNCST.
4. Unanticipated problems involving risks to research participants or other must be reported promptly to the UNCST. New information that becomes available which could change the risk/benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for UNCST notification after review by the REC.
5. Only approved study procedures are to be implemented. The UNCST may conduct impromptu audits of all study records.
6. An annual progress report and approval letter of continuation from the REC must be submitted electronically to UNCST. Failure to do so may result in termination of the research project.



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

Office of the Vice Chancellor  
Research Ethics Committee UG-026



20<sup>th</sup> June, 2025

Namara Mable (PI),  
+256 775 429700  
[mabnam82@gmail.com](mailto:mabnam82@gmail.com)

To: Namara Mable, Principal Investigator

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL OF RENEWAL AND AMENDMENT NOTICE

Re: UCU-REC Application titled: *Assessment of Quality Assurance Practices on Performance of Graduates of Selected Private Universities in Western Uganda.*

Application Number: UCUREC-2022-315

Version: 4.1

Type:  Initial Review  
 PROTOCOL AMENDMENT  
 Letter of Amendment  
 CONTINUING REVIEW  
 Material Transfer Agreement  
 Other, Specify:



I am pleased to inform you that the Uganda Christian University REC, through expedited review held on 20/06/2025 approved RENEWAL and AMENDMENT of the above referenced study.

The initial Approval expired on 26/01/2024 and the current renewal of the research is for a period of 20/06/2025 to 20/06/2026.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.

1 of 2

Research and Ethics

P.O. Box 4, Mukono, Uganda, Plot 67-173, Bishop Tucker Road, Mukono Hill  
Tel: +256 (0) 312 350 885 Fax: +256 (0) 4142 90 800 Email: [rec@ucu.ac.ug](mailto:rec@ucu.ac.ug) Web: [www.ucu.ac.ug](http://www.ucu.ac.ug)  
UCUREC is accredited by Uganda National Council for Science & Technology, FDA, and National Institutes for Health of the United States of America



# UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa

26/01/2023

To: Namara Mable

0775429700

Type: Initial Review

Re: **UCUREC-2022-315: Assessment of Quality Assurance Practices on Performance of Graduates of Selected Private Universities in Western Uganda., pdf, 2023-01-10**

I am pleased to inform you that the Uganda Christian University REC, through expedited review held on **25/01/2023** approved the above referenced study.

Approval of the research is for the period of **26/01/2023** to **26/01/2024**.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and addenda to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval **prior** to the activation of the changes.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or any new information which could change the risk benefit: ratio must be submitted to the REC.
4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by participants and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Continuing review application must be submitted to the REC **eight weeks** prior to the expiration date of **26/01/2024** in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. You are required to register the research protocol with the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) for final clearance to undertake the study in Uganda.

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by Uganda Christian University REC:

