

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



**HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL
P.O.BOX 6311 KIGALI**

**CODE OF PRACTICE – CROSS-BORDER/TRANSNATIONAL
PROVISION**

INTRODUCTION

All foreign institutions which offer higher education programmes in Rwanda, including those higher education institutions subject to the accreditation requirements of other national, regional or international agencies, are subject to meeting the requirements of the Higher Education Council.

Rwandan higher education institutions which operate outside the country are subject to the requirements of the Higher Education Council for all their local as well as cross-border academic activities. In addition to satisfying the requirements of the Higher Education Council such institutions have to satisfy the relevant quality assurance policies and procedures of the countries in which they operate. The Higher Education Council will cooperate closely with national quality assurance agencies in countries where Rwandan higher education institutions have an operational presence, in order to share relevant information. All higher education providers who are operating across borders need to ensure equivalence in the quality of provision at different sites of delivery in Rwanda and abroad.

This Code of Practice is designed to:

- Encourage international co-operation in the provision of higher education in Rwanda;
- Protect students and other stakeholders in Rwanda from low-quality provision and disreputable providers of cross-border/transnational higher education (degree and accreditation mills) and ensure that qualifications awarded in Rwanda are benchmarked to the Rwandan National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;
- Facilitate the recognition of qualifications awarded through transnational arrangements in Rwanda;
- Ensure that all higher education delivered in Rwanda is subject to the Higher Education Council's requirements for the awarding of higher education qualifications in Rwanda;
- Ensure that higher education delivered in Rwanda meets the social, economic and cultural needs of Rwanda
- Ensure that Rwandan higher education institutions who deliver award bearing qualifications abroad meet the requirements of the quality assurance agency of the country in which they operate as well as the requirements of the Higher Education Council.
- Protect the reputation of Rwandan higher education and the standing of its awards.

This Code of Practice has been developed by reference to:

1. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's *Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education*;
2. *The Accra Declaration on GATS and the Internationalization of Higher Education in Africa* – Association of African Universities 2004;
3. The International Association of Universities policy statement, *Sharing Quality in Higher Education Across Borders: A Statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide*, 2005;
4. The Codes of Practice of South Africa, Namibia, Uganda, the UK and the UNESCO/Council of Europe *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education*.

All higher education institutions or other providers of higher education in Rwanda must either be public institutions established by law or private that have been granted accreditation by the Order of the Minister in charge of higher education.

Authorisation to deliver and /or market the qualifications of a foreign provider must be obtained from the Higher Education Council who may require that the provider holds a validation event prior to recruitment to and the delivery of the programme to ensure that the standards of the qualification meets the requirements of the Rwandan National Qualifications Framework.

Terminology

Agents

Third parties, such as brokers, facilitators or recruiters, that act as intermediaries between awarding and providing institutions for establishing transnational educational arrangements. An agent is not usually involved in the provision of educational services.

Agreement

A document agreed formally by the partners that contains all collaborative arrangements made between the awarding and providing institutions.

Awarding Institution

A higher education institution issuing degrees, diplomas, certificates or other qualifications.

Cross-border Higher Education

Cross-border higher education refers to a wide range of educational activities that are part of international academic linkages and agreements, international development/aid projects or international commercial trade initiatives. Cross-border higher education is characterised by the movement across borders of (a) students and teachers, (b) providing institutions, and (c) a wide range of curricula and programmes used in a variety of modes. **See also Transnational Education**

Educational Services

Any study programme, course of study or parts of a course of study that leads, after successful completion, to a qualification. This also includes services such as preparatory/introductory modules to facilitate access to a course of study, or training modules that lead to professional development.

Partners

The awarding and providing institutions involved in transnational arrangements.

Providing Institution

An institution or organisation which is delivering all or part of a study programme.

Transnational Arrangement

An educational, legal financial or other arrangement leading to the establishment of (a) **collaborative arrangements**, such as: franchising, twinning, joint degrees whereby study programmes, or parts of a course of study, or other educational services of the awarding institution are provided by another partner institution; (b) **non-collaborative arrangements**, such as branch campuses, off-shore institutions, corporate or international institutions, whereby study programmes, or part of a course of study, or other educational services are provided directly by an awarding institution.

Transnational Education

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to an education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.

Scope of the Code

The Code refers particularly to cross-border/transnational arrangements which involve the provision of study programmes and the issuing of qualifications. Consequently reference is made to:

- Institutions and programmes involved in concluding any type of transnational arrangement whereby an institution provides educational services outside its country of origin;
- Teaching staff, regardless of their country of origin , who work in an institution/study programme established through a transnational arrangement;
- Students, regardless of their country of origin who are registered for a course of study or parts of it leading wholly or in part to a higher education qualification , in an institution/programme established through a transnational arrangement;
- Agents, that are third parties, acting as brokers, facilitators or recruiters in transnational arrangements;
- Other stakeholders like employers and the public at large, interested in the quality of higher education.

Precepts

1. Transnational arrangements should be negotiated, agreed and managed on the basis of a written and legally binding agreement or contact setting out the rights and obligations of the parties, and signed by the authorised representatives of the parties.
2. The academic standards of all awards made under a collaborative arrangement must meet the quality and standards requirements of the Rwandan *National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education* and the *Code of Practice*.
3. The policy and mission of institutions established through transnational agreements , their management structures and educational facilities as well as the goals, objectives and content of specific programmes, sets of courses of study, and other educational services must be published, and made available upon request to the authorities and beneficiaries from both the sending and the receiving countries.
4. Collaborative arrangements should be fully costed and should be accounted for accurately and fully.
5. The educational objectives of partner organisations should be compatible with those of the delivering/awarding institution.

6. An institution should undertake, with due diligence, an investigation to satisfy itself about the good standing of a prospective partner or agent, and of their capacity to fulfil their designated role in the arrangement. This investigation should include the legal status of the prospective partner or agent, and its capacity in law to contract with the institution.
7. Information given by the awarding institution, providing organisation or agent to prospective students and to those registered on a study programme established through transnational arrangements should be appropriate, accurate, consistent, and reliable. The information should include directions to students about the appropriate channels for particular concerns, complaints and appeals. Where the programme is delivered through a collaborative arrangement, the nature of that arrangement and the responsibilities of the parties should be clearly outlined. The awarding institution is responsible for and should control and monitor information made public by agents operating on its behalf, including claims about the recognition of the qualifications in the sending country, and elsewhere.
8. Staff members of the institutions or those teaching on the programmes established through transnational arrangements should be proficient in terms of qualifications, teaching, research and other professional experience. The awarding institution should ensure that it has in place effective measurers to review the proficiency of the staff delivering programmes that lead to its qualifications. The qualifications and experience of academic staff teaching on programmes established through transnational agreements should be the same as those required in the originating country. The proportion of full time to part time academic staff teaching on the programme should be no less favourable.
9. Transnational educational arrangements should encourage awareness and knowledge of the culture and customs of both the awarding institutions and the receiving country among students and staff.
10. The awarding institutions should be responsible for the agents it, or its partner institutions, appoint to act on its behalf. Institutions using agents should conclude written and legally binding agreements or contracts with these, clearly stipulating their roles, responsibilities, delegated powers of action as well as monitoring, arbitration and termination provisions. The agreements or contracts should be established with a view to avoiding conflicts of interests as well as the rights of students with regard to their studies.

11. Awarding institutions are responsible for issuing qualifications resulting from their transnational study programmes. They should provide clear and transparent information on the qualifications' in particular through the use of the Diploma Supplement, facilitating the assessment of the qualifications by competent recognised bodies, the higher education institutions, employers and others. This information should include the nature, duration, workload, location and language(s) of the study programme leading to the qualifications.
12. The admission of students for a course of study, the teaching /learning activities, the examination and assessment requirements for educational services provided under transnational arrangements should be equivalent to those of the same or comparable programmes delivered by the awarding institution and meet the requirements for the equivalent qualification in the Rwandan National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. Where students on a transnational programme are on an identical programme to one delivered in the home institution at least one of the same external examiners must be used.
13. The minimum level of information that prospective and registered students should have about a collaborative programme is the programme specification approved by the awarding institution. The procedures leading to the approval of the programme for delivery by an institution should have included a validation event which involved experts in the subject area external to the awarding institution being consulted. Where a programme is franchised to a provider the awarding institution should carry out a validation event at the institution being franchised to deliver the programme before students are recruited. The awarding institution should satisfy itself that the institution to be franchised to deliver the programme has the necessary physical and staffing resources to deliver the programme.
14. The awarding institution should monitor regularly the information given by partner organisations or agents to prospective students and those registered on a collaborative programme. The awarding institution should ensure that it has effective control over the accuracy of all public information, publicity and promotional activity relating to its collaborative provision.